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Reaction 5: From Hattusa to Carchemish  
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**Summary:**

The article "From Hattusa to Carchemish" examines the intricate process of reconstructing Hittite history, tracing the transition from Hattusa, the empire’s long-standing capital, to Carchemish, which emerged as a pivotal administrative center. For centuries, the Hittites remained an enigma, their story obscured until 19th-century explorers in Turkey and northern Syria uncovered clay tablets and inscriptions—some later connected to biblical references. A defining moment arrived in 1906 when Hugo Winckler’s excavation at Bogazköy revealed an extensive archive of diplomatic correspondence. This discovery proved crucial in deciphering the Hittite language, ultimately securing its place within the Indo-European family. Scholars such as J.A. Knudtzon made notable strides in translation, though the presence of Hurrian and other regional languages complicated their efforts considerably.

The article recounts the fiery destruction of Hattusa, an event that ushered in the Neo-Hittite period under Suppiluliuma I. He established Carchemish as a viceroyalty, weaving together Hittite, Hurrian, and Semitic influences into its governance. Yet reconstructing this era remains challenging due to fragmented archaeological evidence and discrepancies in dating. The narrative also explores the empire’s decline, suggesting that Hattusa’s political dominance eroded gradually until its eventual abandonment. Meanwhile, regions like Tarhuntassa and Kizzuwatna retained their vitality, with hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions gaining prominence. The article concludes by considering how Neo-Hittite culture merged into Syrian and Mesopotamian societies through Carchemish, highlighting scholarly debates that have lingered since the 1970s. Still, it acknowledges the persistent difficulty of crafting a precise timeline given the gaps in surviving evidence.

**Analysis:**

While "From Hattusa to Carchemish" offers a detailed survey of Hittite history, its argument is undermined by certain logical inconsistencies. One striking issue is the tension between the portrayal of the empire’s decline as a slow process and the vivid account of Hattusa’s destruction by fire. Such a catastrophic event likely triggered a swift collapse of central authority, yet the article sidesteps this possibility, leaving the reader to wonder how governance persisted amid such upheaval.

Another shortfall appears in the treatment of Carchemish as Hattusa’s successor. The article underscores its importance but fails to clarify how it sustained imperial control after the capital’s ruin. Without a deeper look at the mechanisms ensuring continuity, the claim feels more speculative than substantiated. Similarly, the discussion of hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions lacks substance. Although their prevalence in the Neo-Hittite period is noted, the article offers no specific examples or insight into their role in administration or cultural expression, leaving a critical piece of the puzzle unexplored. This omission raises questions about whether these inscriptions reflected a purposeful evolution or a last-ditch effort to cling to Hittite identity.

To bolster its case, the article would benefit from addressing two central questions: How did Hattusa’s sudden destruction reshape regional power dynamics? And what practical purpose did hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions serve during the Neo-Hittite era? Grounding the answers in archaeological evidence would lend greater weight and clarity to this historical reconstruction.