

## A Survey of Hieroglyphic Inscriptions from Hittite Anatolia<sup>1</sup>

Hajime Yamamoto

### **Abstract:**

Hieroglyphs were a writing system used in Hittite Anatolia during the late second millennium as well as the first millennium BCE. Hittite hieroglyphic monuments can still be found in Turkey. The monuments attributed to the Hittite kingdom, which flourished during the years of 1650–1180 BCE, might reflect the political situation in that period, including the range of Hittite territories in Anatolia.

The author examined several Hittite hieroglyphic monuments from 2016 to 2018 in the regions of Central Turkey (2016), Western Turkey (2017) and Southern Turkey (2018). The monuments in southern Anatolia suggest the existence of a territory that competed with the Ḫattuša government, and the monuments in western Anatolia suggest there was a land that supported the Hittite dynasty. These monuments are important for understanding the end of the Hittite dynasty of Ḫattuša, since the historical information after the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, drawn from Hittite cuneiform texts, is rather limited.

### **Keywords:**

Hittite Kingdom, Hieroglyph, Inscription, Monument, Turkey

## 1. Introduction

Hieroglyphs were used in Hittite Anatolia as well as cuneiform signs during the late second millennium. The hieroglyphs were initially employed on royal seals and, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, they were also used for the inscriptions on monuments. Even after the collapse of the kingdom, their use continued in the Anatolia and northern Syria regions.<sup>2</sup> These hieroglyphic-inscribed monuments were left *in situ* in Turkey. Among these monuments, this paper introduces the ones erected during the Hittite kingdom period, which the author has investigated over the last three years.



**Map of Hittite Kingdom**  
 based on Michele Cammarosano, [A Map of the Hittite World](https://osf.io/cbyv8/) (2019/10/19)  
<https://osf.io/cbyv8/>

Ehringhaus in 2005 introduced the known monuments built in the Hittite period.<sup>3</sup> Recently, Hawkins, an authority on Anatolian Hieroglyphic inscriptions, discussed the sanctity of the monuments.<sup>4</sup> As Hawkins suggested, some appear to have possessed sanctity because they were often located in mountains or on riverbanks, which were objects of worship for the Hittites. Since they were not necessarily placed at prominent spots such as on a hilltop, they likely did not function as border stones. However, we may be able to make conjectures about the political situation in Hittite Anatolia from their locations. These monuments are concentrated in Southern Turkey, but some remain along

the Aegean Coast in Western Turkey. Historically, these regions were important for Hittite control of Anatolia.

## 2. Survey in 2016

In 2016, the author visited the Hieroglyphic monuments in central Anatolia to survey the inscriptions made during the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

### 2-1. Fraktin and Taşçi

The first monument visited was located at a village named Fraktin, Develi district, Kayseri. The relief, curved on an outcropping near the Zamantı River, portrays the Hittite king ̘attušili III and the queen Puduḫepa pouring libations to the Storm god and the goddess ̘epat, respectively. Above the figures, their names and titles are inscribed in hieroglyphs. The queen's epithet continues to its right, reading, "daughter of the land Kizzuwatna, beloved of gods."<sup>5</sup> This epithet emphasizes the fact that her place of origin was Kizzuwatna, a country in southern Anatolia, which had been annexed to the Hittite kingdom around the 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>6</sup>

Contemporary reliefs also remain on the banks of the Zamantı River at a village named Taşçi, 30 km southeast of Fraktin. One relief portrays three figures with the words "Manazi, daughter of Lupakki the Army-Scribe (son of ?) Zida the MEŠEDI (-man), servant of ̘attušili." If this ̘attušili refers to ̘attušili III, then this relief was also inscribed around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, as was that in Fraktin.<sup>7</sup>



**The relief of Fraktin  
(photo by the author)**



**One of the reliefs of Taşçi  
(photo by the author)**

## 2-2. İmamkulu and Hanyeri

A monument contemporary to the ones mentioned above is placed on a hill in İmamkulu, Tomarza district, Kayseri, 20 km west of Taşçı.<sup>8</sup> The hill is along a pass to Adana from Kayseri. There are several figures centered around “the Storm-god,” with a naked goddess with two wings on its right and a warrior on its left. The latter figure is described in Hieroglyphs as “Kuwalanamuwa, prince.” There is also a relief with the name of a prince, Kuwalanamuwa, on the same pass-road, about 10 km east of İmamkulu at Hanyeri, Tufanbeyli district, Adana. This second relief is carved on the surface of a rock cliff, showing a divine figure standing on the left and a larger warrior figure on the right. The warrior wears earrings, a skull cap on his head, and pointed shoes on his feet. He also holds a spear in his right hand and carries an arrow on his left shoulder with a dagger attached to his wrist.

These monuments have been dated to around the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and they were placed along the pass from central Anatolia to the south. This indicates that the road on the pass was an important transportation route of that period. It also implies that these monuments had the function of indicating boundaries between the Hittite heartland and Kizzuwatna, which was once an independent land in Anatolia and the original home of Queen Puduḫepa.



**The relief of İmamkulu**  
(photo by the author)



**The relief of Hanyeri**  
(photo by the author)

## 2-3. Konya: Yalburt and Hatip

After visiting the monuments along the pass from Kayseri to Adana, the author went to the monuments of Yalburt and Hatip in Konya, in Central Turkey. The monument of Yalburt was a pool created near the top of the mountain, some 20 km northwest of the city center of Ilgın. The rock blocks, which surround the one-time water reserve, record the conquests of the lands in southwestern Anatolia by the Hittite king Tuduhliya IV.<sup>9</sup>

The last monument visited in 2016 was Hatip, about 10 km south of the city center of Konya. The reliefs and hieroglyphic inscriptions, though worn down, remained on a cliff in the village. On a surface of the cliff, to the right of a warrior figure, an inscription reads “Kurunta, the Great King, the Hero, the son of Muwatalli, the Great King, the Hero.”<sup>10</sup> Kurunta was a nephew of Ḫattušili III and a cousin of Tuduhaliya IV, and he was appointed as king of Tarḫuntašša by Ḫattušili III. The area of Hatip would have been located within the territory of Tarḫuntašša, which was probably west of Kizzuwatna. Given the fact that one of his titles in this inscription is “Great King,” a title used only by a king in Ḫattuša, some scholars argue that Kurunta claimed an equal rank with the king in Ḫattuša.<sup>11</sup>



**The blocks of Yalburt  
(photo by the author)**



**The first block of Yalburt  
(photo by the author)**



**The relief of Hatip  
(photo by the author)**



**From Ehringhaus 2005, p. 104**

### 3. Survey in 2017

The author surveyed the monuments in western Anatolia in 2017. These monuments date from the kingdom of the “land of Mira,” which was part of the Arzawa lands that became vassal states of the Hittite kingdom at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

#### 3-1. Karabel and Akpınar

The first reliefs visited were located on a mountainside of the Karabel Pass, some 30 km west of the city center of Izmir.<sup>12</sup> Karabel A,<sup>13</sup> the largest relief among them, shows a warrior figure with a bow and arrow in his hands, a dagger at his waist, and a pointed cap on his head. To the right of this figure, the hieroglyphic inscription reads, according to Hawkins, “(King) Tarkasnawa, king of <the land> Mira, [son] of BIRD-li (?), king of the land Mira, grandson of [...], king of the land Mira.”<sup>14</sup> If we follow his understanding, the figure was the king of Mira during the reign of Tuduhaliya IV.<sup>15</sup>

Near the Karabel reliefs, there is a huge relief with a divine figure on the mountainside of Mt. Sipilos in the north of Manisa, which is called Akpınar by locals. Since the hieroglyphic signs next to the figure are read as “Ku(wa)lanamuwa,” whose name also appears in İmamkulu and Hanyeri (see above), the monument might have been built sometime in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>16</sup>

#### 3-2. Surat kaya

The inscriptions of Surat kaya were found near the top of Mt. Beşparmak (ancient Mt. Latmos) extending from Muğla and Aydın. Graffiti-like hieroglyphic signs remain in a large cavity of a huge rock. The readings of some signs have been suggested as “the land of Mira” and “Great Prince Kupaya.”<sup>17</sup> If these are correct readings, the name might be Kupanta-Kurunta, the king of Mira in the reign of the Hittite king Muršili II.

Some Arzawa lands in western Anatolia were subjugated by the Hittite kingdom during the reign of Muršili II at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE. In the reign of Tuduhaliya IV, the land of Mira, as one of those lands, might have been viewed as strategically important for the Hittites in order to confront the anti-Hittite power base to the southwest. A pro-Hittite dynasty was established in Mira, and the territories of this state were adjacent to the Hittite borders. The monuments, located within the territory of Mira, seem to indicate the political closeness of the rulers of Mira to the leaders of the Hittite land.



**Karabel A**  
**(photo by the author)**



**Monument of Akpınar**  
**(photo by author)**



**Inscriptions of Suratkaya**  
**(photo by author)**

## 4. Survey in 2018

The survey in 2018 focused on the monuments in central and southern Turkey. These included the monuments of Sirkeli and Hamite erected in the kingdom period as well as those in Kızıldağ and in Burunkaya, which were probably constructed after the collapse of the Hittite kingdom.

### 4-1. Sirkeli and Hamite

The relief and inscription at Sirkeli are carved on a rock standing on the bank of the Ceyhan River, at the lower elevations of Sirkeli Höyük in Adana. The inscriptions next to the figure wearing a long robe read as follows: “Muwatalli, the Great King, the Hero, the son of Muršili, the Great King, the Hero.”<sup>18</sup> The figure is that of king Muwatalli II, who transferred the capital from Ḫattuša to Tarḫuntašša in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The area where the Sirkeli monument stands might be within or near the territory of the land of Tarḫuntašša.

The author then visited the monument of Hamite near Sirkeli. The warrior figure depicted on the surface of the rock, standing on a plain near the Ceyhan River, holds a mace in his right hand, an arrow on his shoulder, and a dagger at his waist. His appearance closely resembles that of the warrior seen in Hanyeri (above). The inscription next to the figure reads “x-Tarḫunta, the son of Tarḫuntapiya.” The name of Tarḫuntapiya is known from the list of witnesses to the signing of a treaty between a Hittite king and Ulmi-Tešub, the king of Tarḫuntašša.<sup>19</sup> Since the treaty was concluded by either Ḫattušili III or Tuduhaliya IV, we may assume that the relief of Hamite was also created sometime in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE. In any case, the reliefs in Sirkeli and Hamite might have been placed in the territory of the land of Tarḫuntašša, or at least they show a strong connection with that land.



**Relief of Sirkeli**  
(photo by author)



**Relief of Hamite**  
(photo by author)

#### **4-2. Kızıldağ and Burunkaya**

The survey of the monuments attributed to Tarḫuntašša continued in Konya after Adana. One of them was the monument at Kızıldağ, a mountain in the suburbs of the Karaman district. A possibly royal figure is depicted on a rock surface near the mountaintop. The figure holds a staff in his left hand and a bowl in his right hand. Next to his head are the signs of “Great King Hartapus.” Another inscription, placed on the rock southeast of the inscription “Great King Hartapu,” records, “The Sun, Great King, Hartapus, Hero, beloved of the Storm-god.”<sup>20</sup> As mentioned earlier, the title “Great King” was used only by the Hittite king in Ḫattuša.

The final inscription surveyed was on the hill named Burunyaka in the village Güçünkaya, in the Aksaray district. It reads “[In] the place (to/for?) the celestial Storm-God, the divine Great Mountain (and) every god, the Sun, Great King, Hartapu..., (he) who conquered every country...”.<sup>21</sup> Here, the royal names of Hartapu and Muršili appear. The king Hartapu might have been a king of Tarḫuntašša, which seems to have been located in this region, before and even after the collapse of the Hittite kingdom.

The territories of the Great King Hartapu might have extended to the areas where Kızıldağ and Burunkaya now stand. The identification of Muršili in the monuments mentioning Urḫi-Teššub (Muršili III was his royal name) has been suggested.<sup>22</sup> Since Urḫi-Tešub was deposed from the throne by his uncle Ḫattušili III, his family line was excluded from kingship succession in Ḫattuša. However, Kurunta, as the brother of Urḫi-

Teššub, was appointed as king of Tarḫuntašša by Ḫattušili III. Therefore, we can assume that the descendants of Kurunta or Urḫi-Teššub, sons of Muwatalli II, had responsibility for ruling the kingdom, and they might have competed against the central government in Ḫattuša sometime during the final days of the kingdom.



**Figure of Kızıldağ**  
(photo by author)



**Inscription of Burukakaya**  
(photo by author)

## 5. Conclusion

Strictly speaking, the Hittite stone monuments surveyed in this paper might not have been border indicators, but they can be used as keys to understanding the range of the Hittite kingdom's territory, indicating the regions that were the core of the kingdom and regions that were either vassal territories or areas that simply shared cultural features with the kingdom. The monuments were not only of the Hittite kingdom *per se* but also of the land of Tarḫuntašša and its possible succeeding state in the south-central part of Turkey and of the land of Mira in western Turkey. These monuments may have served a religious purpose on the one hand, but on the other hand they clearly had political connotations. For example, the ruler of each state might have taken advantage of the sacral function of the reliefs to claim their territorial control. In this regard, they can be seen as indicators of the political relationship between the authority of Ḫattuša and the rest of Hittite Anatolia.

---

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This work was supported by The Kyoto University Foundation in 2016 and JSPS KAKENHI Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists (B) number 17K13549. The pictures of the monuments discussed in this paper can also be seen at the following website of Hajime Yamamoto: <https://hittiteanejphy.com/>
- <sup>2</sup> For those Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions and their translations, see J. David Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions, Vol. 1, Parts 1–3, Inscriptions of the Iron Age* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000) and Annick Payne, *Iron Age Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions* (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL Press, 2012).
- <sup>3</sup> Horst Ehringhaus, *Götter, Herrscher, Inschriften: Die Felsreliefs der Hethitischen Grossreichszeit in der Türkei* (Mains am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2005).
- <sup>4</sup> J. David Hawkins, “Hittite Monuments and Their Sanctity,” in *Sacred Landscapes of the Hittites and Luwians: Proceedings of the International Conference in Honour of Franca Pecchioli Daddi Florence, February 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup>, 2014* (Anacleto D’Agostino, Valentina Orsi and Giulia Torri, eds., Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2015), 1–10.
- <sup>5</sup> J. David Hawkins, “Hittite Monuments and Their Sanctity,” p. 3.
- <sup>6</sup> For Kizzuwatna and its annexation to Hittite territory, see Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 139.
- <sup>7</sup> For the reliefs of Taşçı and the reading of its inscription, see J. David Hawkins, “Excursus 7. Interpretation of the rock inscription TAsÇI,” in *Die Prinzen- und Beamtiensiegel der hethitischen Großreichszeit auf Tonbulln aus dem Nişantepe-Archiv in Hattusa, mit Kommentaren zu den Siegelinschriften und Hieroglyphen von J. David Hawkins* (Boğazköy-Ḫattuša XIX) (Suzanne Herbordt, ed., Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2005), pp. 292–293.
- <sup>8</sup> J. David Hawkins, “Hittite Monuments and Their Sanctity,” pp. 3-4.
- <sup>9</sup> For the Yalburt inscriptions, see J. David Hawkins, *The Hieroglyphic Inscription of the Sacred Pool Complex at Hattusa (Südburg)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), 66–85.
- <sup>10</sup> Horst Ehringhaus, *Götter, Herrscher, Inschriften: Die Felsreliefs der Hethitischen Grossreichszeit in der Türkei*, p. 102.
- <sup>11</sup> Kurunta, the king of Tarḫuntašša, might have been engaged in a conflict with Tuduhaliya IV. See Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, pp. 319–321. Singer argues the possibility that two Great Kings existed in the Hittite kingdom. See Itamar Singer, “Great Kings of Tarhuntašša,” *Studi Micenei ed Egeo Anatolici* 38 (1996), 63–71. Given this possibility, even if direct conflicts between Tarḫuntašša and Ḫattuša did not occur, we can assume they competed with each other to some extent.
- <sup>12</sup> Billie Jean Collins, *The Hittites and Their World* (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL Press, 2007), 18.
- <sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the relief was destroyed in 2019.
- <sup>14</sup> J. David Hawkins, “Tarkasnawa King of Mira,” *Anatolian Studies* 48 (1998), 1–31.
- <sup>15</sup> See Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, p. 306.
- <sup>16</sup> J. David Hawkins, “Hittite Monuments and Their Sanctity,” pp. 2–3. However, there has been no confirmed identification of this “Kuwalanamuwa” with those in Hanyeri or İmamkulu.
- <sup>17</sup> Anneliese Peschlow-Bindokat and Suzanne Herbordt, “Eine hethitische Großprinzeninschrift aus dem Latmos. Vorläufiger Bericht,” *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 2001, 363–367. Kupanta-Kurunta, the king of Mira, was an adopted son of the previous king of Mira, who subjugated Muršili II and his wife, who was a Hittite princess. However, Oreshko rejected the reading of “Kupaya.” Rostislav Oreshko, “Hieroglyphic Inscriptions of Western Anatolia: Long Arm of the

---

Empire or Vernacular Tradition(s)?" in *Luwian Identities: Culture, language and religion between Anatolia and the Aegean* (Alice Mouton, Ian Rutherford and Ilya Yakubovich eds. Leiden: Brill, 2013), 345–420.

- <sup>18</sup> Horst Ehringhaus, *Götter, Herrscher, Inschriften: Die Felsreliefs der Hethitischen Grossreichszeit in der Türkei* (Mains am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2005), 95–101.
- <sup>19</sup> "Prince" Tarḫuntapiya appears as one of the witnesses to the treaty signing between a Hittite king and Ulmi-Tešub, the king of Tarḫuntašša. See Theo P. J. van den Hout, *Der Ulmitešub-Vertrag: Eine prosopographie Untersuchung* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), 211–215. There have been discussions on the identification of Ulmi-Tešub with Kurunta.
- <sup>20</sup> Other inscriptions mention "Hartapu, the Great King" in Kızıldağ. For the inscriptions, see J. David Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions, Vol. 1*, pp. 433–436. For Hartapu, see Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, pp. 351–353.
- <sup>21</sup> J. David Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions, Vol. 1*, pp. 437–438.
- <sup>22</sup> Trevor Bryce, *The Routledge Handbook of the Peoples and Places of Ancient Western Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 392. The possibility that "Muršili" appearing in Kızıldağ and Burunkaya was Muršili II cannot be excluded.