

**KARABEL, “TARKONDEMOS” AND THE LAND  
OF MIRA  
NEW EVIDENCE ON THE HITTITE EMPIRE PERIOD IN  
WESTERN ANATOLIA\***

The site of the ancient Hittite capital Hattusa adjoins the modern Turkish village of Boğazköy (now Boğazkale) in central Anatolia, some 150 km east of Ankara. Still today it is unforgettably impressive. The excavations conducted since 1906 by German archaeologists have revealed the high palatial citadel and a series of massive temples, all within an immense circuit of fortifications<sup>1</sup>. From these buildings the archives of the Hittite kings have been recovered, comprising thousands of clay tablets inscribed in the Cuneiform script of Mesopotamia and a number of languages, principally that of the Hittites themselves<sup>2</sup>. These records permit the reconstruction of the history of Anatolia, from the foundation of the kingdom c. 1650 BC down to the fall of the Hittite Empire c. 1200 BC<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to these Cuneiform archives, the Hittites also wrote monumental stone inscriptions in a Hieroglyphic script<sup>4</sup>. The use of Cuneiform and Hieroglyphic does not overlap at all except on the Hittite royal seals, where the kings' names are written in both scripts. Such seals are known almost exclusively from impressions on clay sealings<sup>5</sup>.

\* This is a Summary of the paper read at the Colloquium “Homer, Troia und das Dunkle Zeitalter”. An extended version appears in *Anatolian Studies* 48 (1998) – see below, n. 14.

<sup>1</sup> Published in periodical reports: K. Bittel *et al.*, *Boğazköy I, II* (Abhandlungen Preuss. Ak. Wiss., Berlin 1935, 1938), III–VI (Abhandlung D. O.-G., Mann, Berlin 1957–1984). Final publication series, K. Bittel (ed.), *Boğazköy – Hattuša I–XV* (W.V.D.O.G., Berlin 1952–1992). For annual preliminary reports, see P. Neve, *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 1979–1994; J. Seeher, *ibid.*, 1995 onwards.

<sup>2</sup> Published principally in the series *Keilschrifttexte aus Boğazköi (KBo)* I–VI (Leipzig 1916–1921), VII–XL (Berlin 1954–1997); and *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boğazköi I–LX* (Berlin 1921–1990). See E. Laroche, *Catalogue des Textes Hittites* (Paris 1971).

<sup>3</sup> See recently T. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford 1998); H. Klengel, *Geschichte des hethitischen Reiches* (Handbuch der Orientalistik, Leiden 1999).

<sup>4</sup> J.D. Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions* (Berlin 1999), I/1, Introduction pp. 1–34. For the main texts of the Hittite Empire, see *id.*, *Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten*, Beiheft 3 (Wiesbaden 1995).

<sup>5</sup> H.G. Güterbock, *Siegel aus Boğazköy (SBo)* I–II (Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft 5, 7; 1940, 1942); T. Beran, *Die heth. Glyptik von Boğazköy* (Boğazköy-Hattuša V; Berlin 1967); R.M. Boehmer and H.G. Güterbock, *Glyptik aus dem Stadtgebiet von Boğazköy* (Boğazköy-Hattuša XIV, Berlin 1987). A massive new find of seal impressions in 1990

The best known period of Hittite history is the latest, that of the Empire, c. 1400–1200 BC. At this time the Hittites conquered the city states of Syria, then ruled them directly through a line of viceroys, members of their royal family, with their seat at Karkamiš on the Euphrates<sup>6</sup>. This dominion is best documented by the archives found at Ugarit, a vassal state on the north Syrian coast<sup>7</sup>.

Expansion into Syria brought the Hittites at first into conflict with Egypt under its 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> dynasties, but subsequently peace and alliance were established. On the Anatolian plateau itself, the Hittite kingdom waged a continual struggle both against their kinsmen the Luwians in the west, and barbarous tribes of the northern mountains, the Gasga. In the later Empire the Hittites attempted to control the southern mountains by the establishment there of a new kingdom, Tarhuntassa, placed under the rule of a prince of the royal line.

At a date early in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, archaeology reveals Hattusa to have been fiercely destroyed, ending for ever its imperial sway<sup>8</sup>. Contemporary Egyptian sources name the "Sea Peoples", bands of sea-borne raiders, as the agents of destruction<sup>9</sup>. Recent discoveries, however, together with new interpretations of long-known documents, suggest the possibility of a clearer understanding of the catastrophe, in particular by establishing more clearly the geographical locations of the main states.

The historical geography of Anatolia in the period sourced by the Boğazköy texts (Middle-Late Bronze Age) has proved an on-going problem since they first became available, and nowhere was this more acutely felt than in southern and western Anatolia, generally acknowledged as the site of the Arzawa lands, also probably the Lukka lands<sup>10</sup>. A major advance has been registered since the mid-

and 1991 is in process of being published by H. Otten (royal seals) and S. Herbordt in collaboration with the author (officials' seals).

<sup>6</sup> H. Klengel, *Geschichte Syriens* (Berlin 1965), I.1, Karkemiš 6. Karkemiš unter hethitischen Vizekönigen; J.D. Hawkins, Karkamiš, §§ 5–6 (in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* V/5–6; Berlin 1976–80).

<sup>7</sup> Published largely under the editionship of the excavator C. Schaeffer in the series *Ugaritica*, vols. III–VI (Paris 1956–1969); also J. Nougayrol, *Palais Royal d'Ugarit*, vols. III–IV (Paris 1955, 1956). Note also the recent series edited by M. Yon, *Ras Shamra-Ugarit I–XI* (Paris 1983–1995).

<sup>8</sup> This at least is the traditional interpretation of the evidence as expressed by K. Bittel in a number of publications, e.g. *Hattusha. The capital of the Hittites* (New York 1970), pp. 90, 132 f.; Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, SB 418 (Vienna 1983), p. 25 ff. J. Seeher now proposes an alternative interpretation involving gradual decline and abandonment: see his most recent archaeological reports from Boğazköy (above, n. 1).

<sup>9</sup> The well known statement by Ramesses III of Egypt in his 8<sup>th</sup> year that the Sea-Peoples destroyed Hatti, Qode (Cilicia?), Karkamiš, Arzawa (western Anatolia) and Alaşiya (Cyprus?): see Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* IV, § 64; Edgerton and Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramesses III* (Chicago 1936), p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> First comprehensive survey of Hittite historical geography: Garstang and Gurney, *The Geography of the Hittite Empire* (London 1959). Many of these original proposals,

1980s, with the publication and interpretation of the Hieroglyphic inscription of Tudhaliya IV from Yalbur<sup>11</sup>, and the Cuneiform treaty on the Bronze Tablet of the same king<sup>12</sup>. These two documents have established that the later territory of Rough Cilicia constituted the Late Bronze Age kingdom of Tarhuntassa with its western border at Perge in Pamphylia, and that the Lukka lands did indeed occupy all of (or more than) classical Lycia in the south-west<sup>13</sup>. These recognitions, by establishing the geography of the south and south-west, correspondingly reduced the areas of uncertainty in the west.

In 1997 I was fortunately able to establish the reading of the Hieroglyphic inscription attached to the long-known Karabel relief, which lies inland from Izmir in a pass across the Tmolos range between Ephesos and Sardis. This can be shown to give the name of Tarkasnawa, King of Mira, and those of his father and grandfather, also kings of Mira but with names of uncertain reading. This is the same king known from his silver seal (referred to as 'Tarkondemos' from an early and incorrect identification), and impressions of other seals of his have more recently been found at Boğazköy. Clearly he was an important historical figure<sup>14</sup>.

Three generations of kings of Mira, spanning the period from Mursili II to Tudhaliya IV (late 14<sup>th</sup> to later 13<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.), were already known from the Boğazköy texts<sup>15</sup>. It is likely that Tarkasnawa was the son of the last of these, Alantalli, and a contemporary of the later reign of Tudhaliya IV (late 13<sup>th</sup> century). As such he is likely to have been the recipient of the 'Milawata letter', written by Tudhaliya to an important western ally whose name is lost from the text<sup>16</sup>.

much debated since they were made, have been confirmed by more recent discoveries, particularly where western Anatolia is concerned. See also del Monte and Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der hethitischen Texte* (Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes 6, also 6/2, Supplement, Wiesbaden 1978, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> M. Poetto, *L'iscrizione luvio-geroglifica di Yalbur* (Studia Mediterranea 8; Pavia 1993); J.D. Hawkins, *Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten*, Beiheft 3 (above, n. 4), pp. 66–85.

<sup>12</sup> H. Otten, *Die Bronzetafel aus Boğazköy. Ein Staatsvertrag Tuthalijas IV* (Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten, Beiheft 1; Wiesbaden 1988); G. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (Atlanta, Georgia 1996), no. 18c.

<sup>13</sup> J.D. Hawkins, *Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten*, Beiheft 3 (above, n. 4), pp. 49–57.

<sup>14</sup> Extended treatment of this discovery and its historical and geographical implications is given in my article Tarkasnawa King of Mira (*Anatolian Studies* 48 [1998], pp. 1–31).

<sup>15</sup> Mashiulawa and his nephew adopted as son Kupanta-DKAL installed as rulers by Mursili II in his years 4 and 12 respectively. Kupanta-DKAL was still on the throne early in the reign of Hattusili III, but on the Bronze Tablet (early reign of Tudhaliya IV) Alantalli, possibly his son, is named as king. For sources, see S. Heinhold-Krahmer, Mira (in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* VIII/3–4 [1994]).

<sup>16</sup> KUB XIX 55 + KUB XLVIII 90: see H. Hoffner, *Archiv für Orientforschung* 19 (1982), pp. 130–137; most recent discussion, F. Starke, *Studia Troica* 7 (1997), p. 464 with bibliography.

Mira has been recognized as the most prominent Arzawa kingdom, probably incorporating the rump of Arzawa itself after Mursilis defeat and dissolution of that kingdom<sup>17</sup>. The reading of the Karabel inscription confirms at a stroke the location of Mira in its vicinity and disproves all other proposed locations. Mira itself is known to have had a common inland frontier with Hatti on the western edge of the Anatolian plateau in the neighbourhood of Afyon<sup>18</sup>. Karabel, being placed on the route northwards from the territory of Ephesos in the Cayster valley to the Hermos valley, shows by its reading that Mira extended this far west, in effect to the coast. The probability is that this western extension of Mira represents the rump of the Arzawan state with its capital at Apasa, which is thereby doubtless confirmed in its identification with Ephesos<sup>19</sup>. It is also likely that such a large political entity could only be kept together by good control of communications, so one might postulate that the spine of this kingdom of Mira-Arzawa must have been the Meander valley, the main highway from the plateau to the west.

Thus the size and importance of Mira is clearly revealed. Its neighbours too may be more precisely located by reference to its established location. In particular the Seha River land, known to have shared a frontier with Mira<sup>20</sup>, is confirmed in its identification with the Hermos valley, entered from the south by the Karabel pass. The attested interest of the state in the land of Lazpa (= Lesbos) may be understood by the recognition that its sway included the Caicos valley too, and its connections with the Arzawa land Wilusa, which lay beyond but was reached through its territory, push the latter kingdom back into its home in the Troad, in the past so hotly contested<sup>21</sup>.

Mira controlling the Meander valley would have had Late Bronze Age Miletos lying to its immediate south across the Latmic gulf (now silted up), and the LBA remains currently under investigation here, which show a Minoan followed by two Mycenaean levels, make its identification with the city Millawanda/Milawata virtually certain<sup>22</sup>. The environs of Millawanda as known from the 'Tawagalawa letter' in-

<sup>17</sup> Argued in greatest detail by S. Heinhold-Krahmer, *Arzawa* (Texte der Hethiter 8; Heidelberg 1977), pp. 136 ff., 211 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Hatti-frontier marked by the rivers Astarpa and Siyanta, linked especially to the land Pedassa, where the Hatti-Tarhuntassa frontier description also begins: for detailed argument see Hawkins (above, n. 14), V. 2.1-2.

<sup>19</sup> First proposed by Garstang and Gurney, *Geography* (above, n. 10), p. 88. Recent discovery of a Late Bronze Age wall on the citadel of Ephesos provides corroboratory support for the identification.

<sup>20</sup> On the Seha River land and its location, see especially P.H.J. Houwink ten Cate, (*Jaarbericht „Ex Oriente Lux“* 28 [1983-1984] pp. 33-79).

<sup>21</sup> Bibliography in del Monte and Tischler (above, n. 10), s.v. Wiluša.

<sup>22</sup> For sources on Millawanda, see S. Heinhold-Krahmer, *Milawa(n)da* (*Reallexikon der Assyriologie* VIII/3-4); for the archaeology of Bronze Age Miletos, see the report of the present excavators B. and W.-D. Niemeier *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 1997, pp. 189-248. Doubts on the identity of Millawanda with Miletos based on philological arguments are addressed by A. Morpurgo Davies, apud Hawkins (above, n. 14), footnote 207.

clude a cluster of toponyms, many with good classical correspondences, which may be located on the great highway running south-east out of the Meander valley, up the pass of the river Marsyas, through inland Caria to Lycia<sup>23</sup>.

Thus it may be argued that the recognition of the Karabel inscription as the work of a king of Mira provides the key to the historical geography of western Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age. The web of interlocking locations arising from this cannot but bear on the vexed question of the land of Ahhiyawa<sup>24</sup>. Now it may be argued more strongly than ever both that there remains no place for this country on the Anatolian mainland, and that Ahhiyawa lying 'across the sea' impinges mainly on the Anatolian west coast, above all at Millawanda-Miletos. This therefore remits the problem of the character and extent of the land of Ahhiyawa under its sometime Great King to the field of Aegean island or perhaps mainland Greek archaeology<sup>25</sup>.

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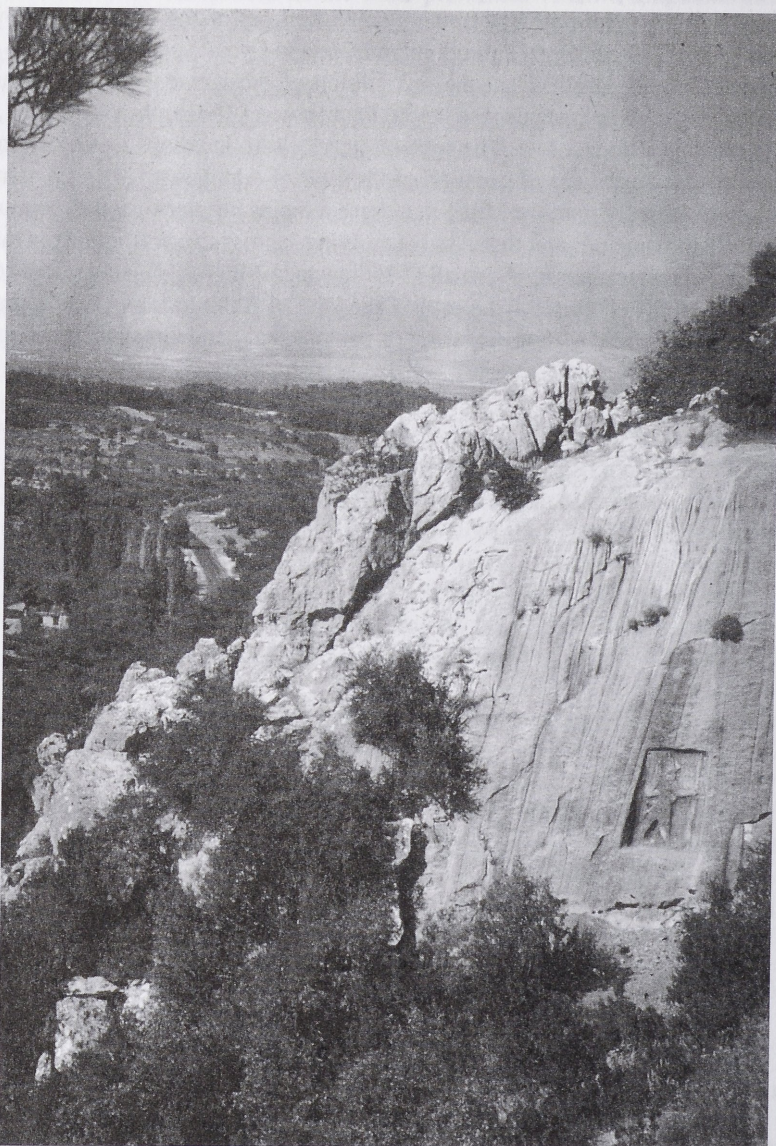
J.D. Hawkins

<sup>23</sup> Itinerary in the Tawagalawa letter (*KUB XIV 3*) reviewed in detail Hawkins (above, n. 14), V. 5.4–6.3.

<sup>24</sup> For a recent review of the evidence with bibliography, see T. Bryce, Ahhiyawans and Mycenaeans – an Anatolian viewpoint (*Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 16 [1989], pp. 297–310); also J. Freu, Hittites et Achéens. Données nouvelles concernant les pays d'Ahhiyawa (*L.A.M.A. XI*, Nice 1990, pp. 1–69). The latter work however adopts a historical geography with which I disagree substantially.

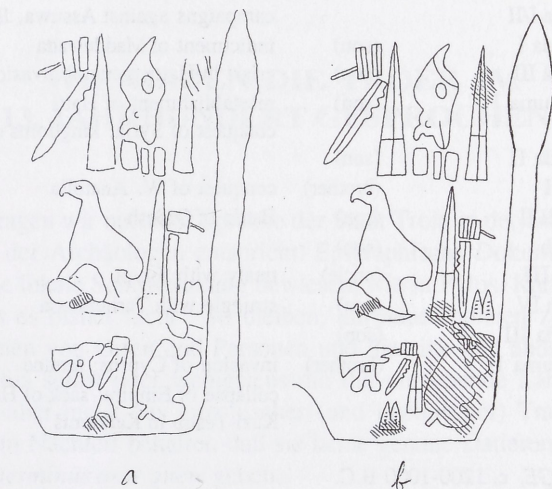
<sup>25</sup> Evidence reassessed by Penelope Mountjoy, The Eastern Aegean West Anatolian Interface in the Late Bronze Age: Mycenaeans and the Kingdom of Ahhiyawa (*Anatolian Studies* 48 [1998], pp. 33–67).

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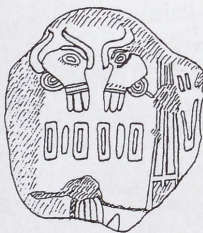


View of Karabel from South

Karabel, "Tarkondemos" and the Land of Mira



c



d



e

a-b. Tracing of inscription KARABEL A,  
and reconstruction of the inscription

c. "Tarkondemos" seal (from W. Wieght,  
*The Empire of the Hittites*, London, 1884)

d-e. Seal impressions from Bogazköy, Bo. 388/z, Bo. 385-6/z  
(from Güterbock, *apud* K. Bittel et al., *Bogazköy V*, Berlin, 1975)

HITTITE EMPIRE, c. 1450-1200 B.C.

(LATE BRONZE AGE)

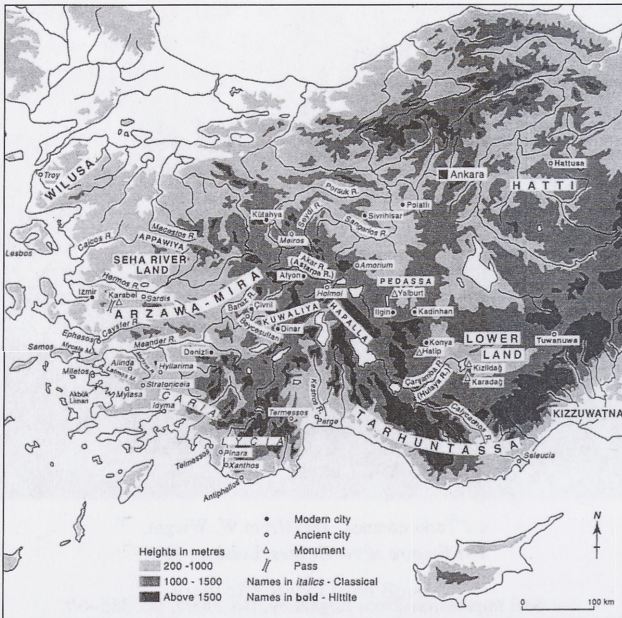
	Tudhaliya I/II		campaigns against Assuwa, Išuwa, Aleppo
1400	Amuwanda I	(son)	indictment of Madduwatta
	Tudhaliya III	(son)	crisis in Hatti; general invasion
1350	Suppiluliuma I	(son)	reestablishment of Hatti
			conquest of Syria: kingdoms of Karkamiš, Aleppo
	Amuwanda II	(son)	
	Mursili II	(brother)	conquest of W. Anatolia
1300	Muwatalli II	(son)	Battle of Qadesh
	Urhi-tešub	(son)	
	Hattusili III	(uncle)	treaty with Egypt
1250	Tudhaliya IV	(son)	struggle with Tarhuntassa
	Amuwanda III	(son)	
1200	Suppiluliuma II	(brother)	invasion of Cyprus; famine
	...		collapse of Empire; sack of Hattusa
			Kuzi-Tešub in Karkamiš

DARK AGE, c. 1200-1000 B.C.

(IRON AGE)

... new evidence for continuity

Chronological table: the Hittite Empire



Map of Western Anatolia