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Hieroglyphic Inscriptions: Archaeologies of Sacred Space

From the Late Bronze Age to the end of the Iron Age on the Anatolian peninsula, the practices of making commemorative rock reliefs and inscriptions, constructing open-air shrines and sanctuaries, and carving out rock-cut tombs have been an ever-evolving place-making technology that inscribed and re-articulated places.¹

1 Introduction

The Hittite Empire reveals a dual writing tradition employing two distinct scripts, the international medium of cuneiform, preserved mainly on clay tablets, and a local Anatolian hieroglyphic writing system, attested predominantly on stone for the purpose of monumental display inscriptions. We cannot know how representative the surviving documents and monuments are for the original use of both scripts; much early writing has not survived and extent and content of the lacuna cannot be reconstructed.² Hieroglyphic display inscriptions are attested from at least the period of Talmi-Tešub of Aleppo, a contemporary of Muwatalli II (ca. 1295–1272 BC) and Hattusili III (ca. 1267–1237 BC);³ if not earlier.⁴ If Talmi-Tešub's inscription is the earliest surviving dateable hieroglyphic inscription, it could be argued that one would expect earlier such inscriptions to have existed in the Anatolian centre of the Hittite Empire, in particular in the environment of the capital city Hattusa, before the tradition spread to more peripheral regions. Certainly, the Syrian city of Aleppo is not a contender for the area of origin of this script.⁵ Anatolian hieroglyphs on stone, dating to the later Hittite Empire (13th century BC), form a small corpus ranging from short epigraphs accompanying glyptic representations to full length inscriptions; material supports include both natural rock surfaces and sculptured stone elements such as building blocks or altar stones. To date, these have been studied mainly with a view to reading and interpreting their content. While it has been considered that they served

1 Harmansah 2015, 390.

2 Payne 2015, 11–12.

3 All dates giving exact years should be understood as approximate and follow Bryce 2005, xv.

4 The inscription ALEPPO 1 is traditionally viewed as the earliest surviving inscription. However, this depends on the dating of the SÜDBURG inscription, currently under renewed debate. Cf. Klinger 2015; Oreshko, forthcoming; Payne 2015, 78–84.

5 Payne 2015, 67–69; 84.

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as demonstrations of power,⁶ or expressions of territorial claims by the royal family,⁷ little attention has been paid to the role these display writings play in the formation of public and, more specifically, sacral space. Most recently, Harmansah has suggested that these monuments might have been not just a means of constructing territories of power but further of ‘naturalizing’ state power, the act of embedding monumental writing in natural settings exploiting the existing landscape for state discourse.⁸

This paper will consider a selection of Bronze Age monuments with hieroglyphic writing connected to places of cultic relevance,⁹ with a focus on how these monuments shape and are shaped by the landscape of their respective localities; found as they are in places of natural prominence, e.g. incorporating rocky outcrops, and frequently connected to water in the shape of rivers or springs. Common to all these monuments is that they can be said to constitute cultic space. Yet as each locality offers an individual natural habitat, as inscriptions are carved into the existing landscape, one may note differences in the form of each monument. It is therefore important to consider each within the context of its own micro-geographical environment.¹⁰

2 Monuments

2.1 NİŞANTAŞ

Several sacred spaces inscribed with hieroglyphs are located within the confines of the Hittite capital city, Hattusa, and at near-by Yazılıkaya. Within the city’s confines, the rocky outcrop of Nişantepe carries a badly weathered hieroglyphic inscription known as NİŞANTAŞ. It occupies a dominant position within the upper city, roughly equidistant to the three processional city gates of the *via sancta*, at the point where the axes of three gates intersected.¹¹ This area below the Büyükkaya Palace is further located in close proximity to the so-called Südburg, another cultic space (cf. below). Few original remains and carved foundations indicate that the rock originally carried a building accessible via two separate gates, an outer gate adorned with sphinxes, an inner lion gate, recalling two of the three processional gates albeit in smaller format;

⁶ Payne 2008.

⁷ Seeher 2009, 120.

⁸ Harmansah 2015, 384.

⁹ Namely NİŞANTAŞ, SİRKEĠİ, FRAKTİN, TAŞCI and SÜDBURG; however, these are by no means the only Bronze Age inscriptions connected to the cultic sphere.

¹⁰ Most recently, the Bronze Age monuments were published together by Ehringhaus 2005; for further photographic material cf. also online <http://www.hittitemonuments.com> (last accessed: 16.11.2017).

¹¹ Neve 1993, 22.

a ramp would have led up to the building on the summit.¹² (Fig. 1) Outside of the building, above the inscription, i.e. in the northern corner of the plateau is a badly eroded cup-mark, measuring 9 cm in diameter.¹³ Such cup-shaped holes were used for libating, and are commonly associated with Hittite sacral spaces. While this cup-mark is one of a series located along the processional way from Büyyükkale around the upper city, it is thought to be more closely linked to the monument than to the processional way.¹⁴

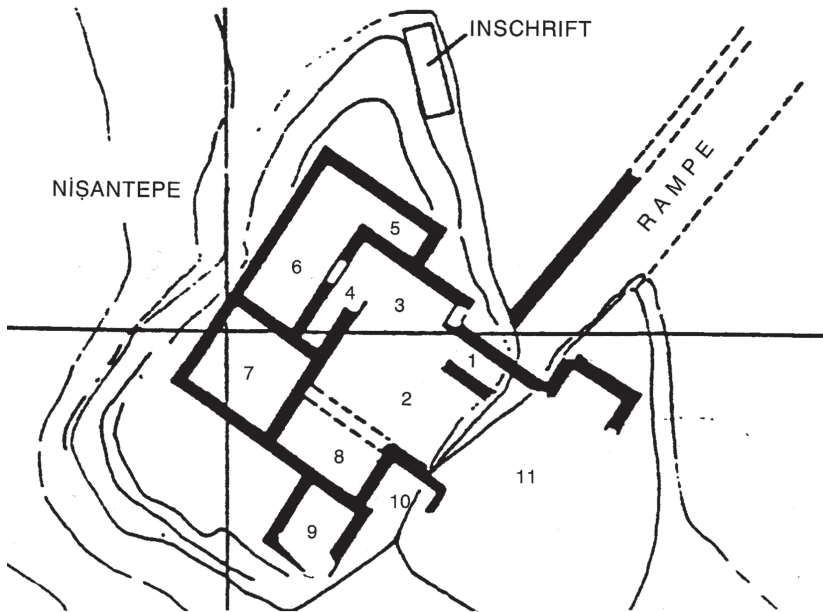


Abb. 174 Nişantepe, Plan.

Fig. 1: Nişantepe (Neve 1993: 64, Abb. 174).

The inscription begins at the north-eastern corner of the rock, and extends southwards across a natural crack in the stone, thus adapting to and utilizing the natural environment. As already mentioned, it is badly eroded and therefore only partly legible.¹⁵ The inscription was executed at the end of the Hittite Empire period under Suppiluliuma II (ca. 1207–(?) BC). Singularly – as far as the readability of the hieroglyphic

¹² Neve 1993, 58–63.

¹³ Neve 1996, 44.

¹⁴ Neve 1996, 51.

¹⁵ A current 3D scanning project by Massimiliano Marazzi shows the potential to confirm, and possibly even improve upon current readings. Marazzi gave a presentation on “3D-Aufnahmen und Untersuchungen 2014: Südburg und Nişantaş” at the workshop *Documentation, Interpretation, Preservation*

inscription permits any verdict – it seems to be matched with a text on a cuneiform tablet.¹⁶ The tablet contains several separate texts, recording military activity against Cyprus, and commemorating the building of a sacred *ḫekur*¹⁷ monument and the erection of a statue by Suppiluliuma for his father, Tudhaliya IV:

This statue, [my father] Tudhaliya did not [make (it)]; I, Suppiluliuma, the Great King], king of Hatti, son of Tudhaliya, the Great King, grandson of Hattusili, the Great King, great-grandson of Mursili, the Great King, made it. And as my father, the Great King Tudhaliya, was a true king, thus I inscribed (his) true manly deeds. As I did not neglect (anything), I did not leave (anything out). I built an eternal *ḫekur*. I made a statue and carried it to the eternal *ḫekur*. I established it.¹⁸

From this passage we infer that Suppiluliuma made a statue of his father which he inscribed with a text honouring memorable events of his father's reign. No such statues from the Bronze Age Hittite Empire have been discovered so far,¹⁹ yet several inscribed statues of the Iron Age successor states survive, including a splendid example of a 9th century BC name-sake, Suppiluliuma of Patin, discovered in 2012 at Tell Tayinat.²⁰ It appears as if the cuneiform tablet KBo 12.38 even preserves a record of the content of, if not the NİŞANTAŞ, a similar inscription (col. ii, 22ff.).²¹ The existence of text copies in two different scripts and languages, i.e. a cuneiform Hittite and a hieroglyphic Luwian version, despite some doubt,²² appears less of a problem today as current understanding reconstructs a Hittite-Luwian bilingual socio-linguistic environment at the end of the Hittite Empire period.²³

Both monument and inscription incorporated different levels of visibility. View, and thus legibility of the inscription differ markedly according to lighting conditions affected by season and time of day; moreover, as with all monumental hieroglyphic

& Presentation. *Innovative Digital Technologies in Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology, Epigraphy and Cultural Heritage Preservation* at Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg on March 24th, 2015.

16 KBo 12.38. The tablet was found in 1961 in the area of the 'Haus am Hang' in the Lower City, near Temple 1. For transliteration and translation of the text cf. Güterbock 1967 (with lit.).

17 The ^{NA4}ḫekur SAG.UŠ is alternatively translated as 'everlasting peak', 'imperial mausoleum' or simple 'eternal *ḫekur*'. It refers to a commemorative rock-cut monument, posthumously dedicated to a royal ancestor. It signifies a cultic but not necessarily a burial place (Singer 2009, 169–170).

18 Col.ii, 4–20.

19 There are, however, partial remains from the vicinity of the Hittite capital. In Yazılıkaya chamber B, the basis for a statue, presumably of Tudhaliya IV, remains, the feet of which were found in the near-by village of Yekbaz; from this one can extrapolate that the original statue would have been ca. 3.8m high (cf. Ehringhaus 2005, 27, Abb. 41).

20 Cf. online, <http://news.utoronto.ca/archaeologists-unearth-extraordinary-human-sculpture-turkey> (last accessed on 16.11.2017).

21 For the cuneiform tablet, cf. Güterbock, 1967, 80–81, who first commented on the closeness of the cuneiform and hieroglyphic texts; for the hieroglyphic text, cf. Hawkins, forthcoming.

22 Cf. van den Hout 2010, 257.

23 Cf. Yakbovich 2010, 362–375; van den Hout 2006; Goedegebuure 2008.

inscriptions, one needs to consider that the relationship between content and material presence may not be comparable to that of inscriptions erected by more comprehensively literate societies. While neither levels of literacy at the time of execution nor significance of inscriptions to illiterate, and possibly semi-literate observers are known to us, it may be prudent not to accept blindly that communication of content would have been the primary or even necessarily a function of such an inscription. One might take the speculation by Balza and Mora that “hieroglyphic inscriptions could have been useful in some specific cases for immediate and ‘superlinguistic’ communication and thus for wider circulation on the ideological level”²⁴ even further and suggest that the iconography and/or the mere material presence of writing might signify separate uses in their own right, such as marking or even constituting a sacred space. There is no way of knowing which of these possible functions – and if several, in which order of importance – hieroglyphic inscriptions performed, yet it seems likely that there may have been a complex interplay between different levels of accessing, or ‘reading’, such inscriptions, all contributing to their ‘sense’ in the widest meaning of the word. There is, further, no reason to expect that these may have been uniform across all monuments of this type.

Whatever the motivation behind the erection of the NİŞANTAŞ inscription, carving it in relief across the smoothed surface of the rocky outcrop, a natural environment, even including the existing crack of the rock within the inscribed space, shows that the inscription was an integral part of creating a sacred space within the confines of what the landscape had to offer. The inscription should have been visible, if not legible from the access ramp, thus signifying the first marker of the monument for anyone approaching the sacred space. Access to the building on the summit, if correctly interpreted as a *ḫekur*, would presumably have been restricted, concealing what otherwise must have been a highly visible landmark. How access to one *ḫekur* monument was regulated is recorded on the Bronze Tablet, a treaty between Hittite king Tudhaliya IV and his cousin, Kurunta of Tarḫuntassa:

Regarding the eternal *ḫekur*, my father decided by the mouth of Marassanta²⁵: “Kurunta shall not (come) close to the eternal *ḫekur*!” My father made a tablet for Marassanta, and Marassanta holds it still. But my father did not know this: how the matter of the eternal *ḫekur* is inscribed at the seat of the Storm God.²⁶ When my father heard the (inscribed) words, my father himself changed his decision. And when I, Tudhaliya, the Great King, became king, I sent (out) a man,

²⁴ Balza/Mora 2001, 220.

²⁵ It is not certain who Marassanta was; he may or may not be identical with an imperial court official attested during the reign of Hattusili III and Tudhaliya IV (Otten 1988, 44).

²⁶ I do not believe that the inscription at the seat of the Storm God refers to any of the surviving hieroglyphic inscriptions, as none of these contain anything regulating access. However, in light of the use of the verb *andan guls-*, ‘to inscribe’, it does seem to refer to (monumental) hieroglyphic rather than cuneiform inscription (cf. Waal 2011). If the ‘seat of the Storm God’ (Hittite *kuntarra-*) equated to (part of) the building(s) associated with *ḫekur* monuments, maybe the *sanctum sanctorum*, one might have

and he saw how the matter of the eternal *ḥekur* is inscribed at the seat of the Storm God. ... I have given the eternal *ḥekur* back to him, and in future, let no one take the eternal *ḥekur* away from the progeny of Kurunta!²⁷

Limiting access to the monument was a way of imposing boundaries. Outside of considerations related to ownership or decorum, imposing boundaries might further have signified a means of counterbalancing performative acts aimed at transcending boundaries, e.g. between the living person present at the cultic locality and the deceased ancestor commemorated there. Complex visibility-invisibility relationships may have been employed to both contain and visualize the sacred or divine.

To date, no *ḥekur* monument has been identified beyond doubt, and indeed, the Nişantepe monument comes closest to being identified both materially and through textual references, on the basis of the proposed identification of KBo. 12.38 with the hieroglyphic inscription. Yet there are further possible candidates, likewise including hieroglyphic writing, remains of building structures possibly related to cultic activities and, frequently, cup-marks, i.e. hollows carved into stone, mostly into the ground, for libation purposes. The earliest suspected *ḥekur* monument, SİRKELİ, was built by Muwatalli II (ca. 1295–1272 BC), the Hittite king famous for moving his capital city to Tarḫuntassa.²⁸

2.2 SİRKELİ

A rock overlooking a bend of the river Ceyhan (classical Pyramus) at modern Sirkeli Höyük, carries the relief figure of king Muwatalli, identified with name and titles in hieroglyphs. (Fig. 2) Sirkeli Höyük is located in southern Cilicia, within the territory of the Hittite Land of Kizzuwatna, where an ancient road from Cilicia to Syria passed through.²⁹ Some 13 m downriver from the Muwatalli relief, there are traces of another, partially destroyed relief.³⁰ One might expect that this erased relief would have shown one of Muwatalli's sons: general opinion holds that it seems more likely to have been Mursili III/Urḫi-Tešub (ca. 1272–1267 BC) whose image may have fallen prey to *damnatio memoriae* upon the usurpation of the throne by Mursili's uncle, Hattusili III (ca. 1267–1237 BC), than Kurunta, whose hieroglyphic relief at HATİP, despite affirming his

to search for such an inscription e.g. on the building walls or above the entrance; presumably, such inscriptions would thus be irretrievably lost.

²⁷ Col. i 91–101; ii, 64–66.

²⁸ The exact location of the city of Tarḫuntassa is still unknown. The boundaries of the country at the time of Tudhaliya IV are specified in his treaty with Kurunta on the Bronze Tablet (col. i, 18–90); for a discussion of the geography (with additional sources) cf. Hawkins 1995, 49–57; Gander 2010, 62.

²⁹ Ehringhaus 2005, 95.

³⁰ Cf. Ehringhaus 2005, 100, Abb. 179–180; 101, Abb. 181–182.



Fig. 2: SİRKEĻĬ, Muwatalli II Photo: courtesy of Sirkeli Höyük Project, Institut für Archäologische Wissenschaften, Universität Bern

(legitimate) claim to the title of Great King, is undamaged. (Fig. 3) Taking into account the above quoted statements of the Bronze Tablet, it is plausible that damage to the second Sirkeli relief might have coincided with the period during which Kurunta was banned from Muwatalli's *ḫekur*, presumably in the aftermath of Hattusili's usurpation of the throne and before Hattusili reversed the prohibition. Whether this decision was indeed prompted by knowledge of the inscription at the seat of the Storm God, and thus motivated by respect for a sacred obligation, or merely reflects a change in the political situation, we cannot know.³¹ However, if Sirkeli was indeed the first ever *ḫekur*, and if this new type of sacred space was accompanied by new cultic practices, it is possible that Hattusili was originally ignorant of the regulations governing it but, when informed, might have felt religiously bound to adhere to them. According to Singer, the schism of the Hittite royal house necessitated a new form of ancestor cult, as the falling-out of the two competing sides of the royal family made a continuation

³¹ But access to the monument would clearly also have conveyed political status, as its affirmation of ancestral ties must have served to publicly display claims to the line of succession (cf. also Singer 2009, 174).

Hittite Royal Family

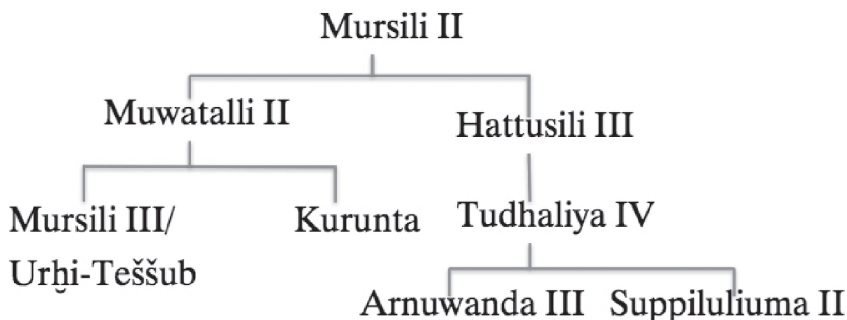


Fig. 3: Hittite Family Tree: A. Payne

of royal offerings in their previous form impossible.³² Since religious duties could not be neglected, the changed circumstances may have led to a reform of the ancestor cult and may, in turn, have been the motivation behind the erection of a *ḫekur* monument at Sirkeli.

Access to and visibility of the SĪRKELĪ reliefs today is no longer comparable to ancient times, as a modern reservoir at Arslantaş has caused the river to have lower water levels.³³ Further, the river has also changed its course since antiquity. On the summit of Sirkeli Höyük, there is ample evidence for a cultic space, including the remains of a building and cup-marks for libation. (Fig. 4) Unless it lies elsewhere, undiscovered, the combination of a large cultic locality with a depiction of Muwatalli makes Sirkeli the only serious candidate for Muwatalli's *ḫekur* as mentioned in the Bronze Tablet, though whether it was purely a memorial or also a burial place, is unknown. The manner in which writing contributes to the sacred complex at Sirkeli shows both differences and similarities to the NĪŞANTAŞ monument discussed above. A textual, content-based focus would emphasize the differences between full inscription (NĪŞANTAŞ) and glyptic representation with epigraph (SĪRKELĪ). Whether the latter's tight unit of relief and identifying hieroglyphs should be seen as an antecedent of lengthier monumental writing cannot be determined, as we do not know whether the small number of early monumental hieroglyphic writings is representative of what existed once, leave alone the reasons for executing either. Yet in a similar manner, relief and writing function as a marker of the outside boundary of the sacred complex at Sirkeli as at Nişantaş. In contrast to the NĪŞANTAŞ inscription, however, it remains uncertain to what extent the reliefs would have been visible as part of approaching

³² Singer 2009, 172–177.

³³ Ehringhaus 2005, 97.



Fig. 4: SİRKELİ (Ehringhaus 2005: 96, Abb. 172) Photo: courtesy of Sirkeli Höyük Project, Institut für Archäologische Wissenschaften, Universität Bern

the sacred space, if arriving by river or from beyond. Was their function to communicate with a human onlooker, or to mark the locality before a divine audience? Meanwhile, one may observe that the reliefs would have faced in the same direction as cult practitioners utilizing the cup-marks preserved on the summit, namely facing the river and the plain beyond, acting – regardless of its visibility or lack thereof – as an outward boundary marker of the sacred space. (Fig. 5) Would such a representation have served to both stake a claim of ownership and manifest a permanent material presence of the person depicted even in their absence?



Fig. 5: Sirkeli: Cup-marks and view over Ceyhan River and Gürgeldağı. Photo: Tayfun Bilgin

2.3 FRAKTİN

A similar alignment of reliefs, accompanying hieroglyphic writing and libation space can be seen at FRAKTİN, another possible *hekur* site. Located in a valley through which passed an ancient road connecting Hattusa with the Hittite Lower Land and, finally, Syria,³⁴ FRAKTİN is one of several hieroglyphic monuments found in close proximity of 20–30 km, from one to the next.³⁵ A rock of 6–8 m in height on the eastern shore of the river Enzel Dere, a tributary of the Zamantı Irmağı, carries a glyptic representation of two libation scenes with identifying hieroglyphic epigraphs. Both scenes are centred around an altar, the left scene showing Hittite King Hattusili III pouring a libation to the right of the altar, his personal(?) deity to the left of it. Both were presumably originally identified through a hieroglyphic legend but, unfortunately, the god's name is no longer preserved.³⁶ The right scene depicts Hattusili's wife, Puduhepa, likewise pouring a libation, facing her personal goddess Hapat who is sitting to the left of an altar. Remarkably, only Puduhepa is identified with an extended legend to the right of the glyptic representations:

³⁴ Mora/Balza 2011, 221.

³⁵ Starting from FRAKTİN, these are, TAŞÇI, İMAMKULU and HANYERİ. Cf. Ehringhaus 2005, 59.

³⁶ Cf. Payne 2015, 77 (with lit.).

DEUS [...] BONUS

MAGNUS.REX HATTI+*LI* MAGNUS.REX(DEUS)*HI**pu-tu-ha-pa* MAGNUS.DOMINA*ká-zu(waʔ)-na*(REGIO) FILIA DEUS *á-zi/a-mi*

God [name] – well-being – Great King Hattusili, Great King –

Hepat – Puduhepa, Great Queen, daughter of the Land of Kizzuwatna, beloved of the god(s).

The plateau above the relief shows several cup-marks close to the edge, suggesting that libation acts such as depicted by the relief may have taken place here. Cup-marks and relief are both oriented in a north-westerly direction,³⁷ with a view of a dominant landmark in the distance, Mount Erciyes Dağı (classical *mons Argaius*). This, too, compares to the view of Mount Gürgeldağı offered at Sirkeli, and might, in both instances, be thought to contribute to the cultic setting as the Hittites considered Mountains as seats of divinity.³⁸ Further, destruction levels suggest the existence of building(s) on the plateau.³⁹ Should SİRKEĻİ be correctly identified as the *ḫekur* monument of Muwatalli (and son?), the similarities in place-making practices would suggest that FRAKTĪN might have been the *ḫekur* of Hattusili III and his wife, Puduhepa.⁴⁰

2.4 TAŞÇI

Not only localities interpretable as *ḫekur* monuments were marked with hieroglyphic inscriptions, the usage of hieroglyphic writing extended to other types of (cultic) places as well. The hieroglyphic monument geographically closest to FRAKTĪN is of a different nature. On the western face of a limestone rock on the river Şamaz Dere, another tributary of the Zamantı Irmağı, is located a relief known as TAŞÇI A. It shows three right-facing figures, one female and two male. The bottom part of the relief is today covered by alluvial deposits. The place is not easily accessible, and further concealed through the surrounding vegetation, thus potentially visible but not easily

³⁷ Ehringhaus 2005, 61.

³⁸ The importance of mountain deities for the royal cult is attested e.g. by the close connection of Hattusili's son, Tudhaliya IV, with mountains. The hieroglyphic writing of his name as (MONS₍₂₎)*TU*, is a suspension writing determined with the sign for 'mountain', either depicting the outline of a mountain top in ligature with the sign for 'god' (iconically embracing the mountain top in the manner of a cloud), or the figure of a mountain deity (cf. Herbordt/Bawanypeck/Hawkins 2011, Kat. 89–135). Tudhaliya takes his name after the divine Mountain Tudhaliya (Alexander 1986, 92); he is also frequently depicted in the embrace of his personal deity, the mountain god Šarruma (e.g. at YAZILIKAYA, chamber B; possibly his *ḫekur*).

³⁹ Kohlmeyer 1983, 68.

⁴⁰ Cf. most recently Mora/Balza 2011, 222 (with lit.).



Fig. 6: TAŞÇI A photo: via Wikipedia, author: Klaus-Peter Simon https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taşçı_reliefs#/media/File:Tasci6.jpg



Fig. 6: TASÇI A photo: via Wikipedia, author: Klaus-Peter Simon https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taşçı_reliefs#/media/File:Tasci1.jpg

legible from the only point offering a frontal view, namely from across the stream. (Fig. 6, 7) Epigraphs identify the figures with names and titles, and offer a possible dating of the relief to the time of Hattusili III. One name is only partially legible, the other two are ‘Manazi, daughter of the army-scribe Lupakki [...]’⁴¹ and ‘Zita, guard, servant of Great King, Hattusili, Great King, Hero’. A second relief, TAŞCI B, can be found on a single, free standing rock less than 100 m upriver, on the same side of the river and, depending on water levels, standing either in the water or on the shore. This relief shows a single male figure, raising his right arm to his face, the triangular symbol of well-being above his outstretched left,⁴² identified by a short hieroglyphic legend which so far resists decipherment. Both reliefs face the river, and there is a clear indication that these places would have held cultic relevance. Above relief A, there is an opening in the rock which leads into a cavern with an even floor, measuring 1,50 in width and height.⁴³ Most of the floor space is given over to the opening of a shaft, now filled with earth, possibly once opening out at water level. This shaft is met by a man-made round shaft of 50 cm diameter; on the right wall of the cavern a bowl has been carved out of the rock – a vessel for receiving libations? In the rock face above relief B, there is likewise a cavern; the exact function of these caverns remains unknown yet the close connection of both localities with the river, the processional arrangement of the three figures of relief A, and, in particular, the suspected libation bowl suggest a cultic context, possibly of an apotropaic nature.⁴⁴

2.5 SÜDBURG

The final monument under consideration in this paper, chamber 2 of the SÜDBURG, returns the focus to the Hittite capital Hattusa. To the east of Nişantepe lies the so-called SÜDBURG area, an extensive cultic complex centred around a large ‘sacred pool’ of almost 6000 m².⁴⁵ (Fig. 8) Amongst remains from other buildings in this complex, there are two similarly shaped stone chambers, in axial alignment to the western (chamber 1) and northern (chamber 2) corner of the pool. The northern chamber, preserved under a Phrygian castle wall, has been successfully restored in its original shape. (Fig. 9) The parabolic vaulted chamber, measuring 4 m in depth, 3.3 m in height and 2–1.6 m in width, narrows towards the back. It is adorned with both relief figures and a hieroglyphic inscription. The back wall carries a relief of a sun-god

⁴¹ A further sign, INFANS or FILIA is preserved, suggesting that the affiliation may have continued further down on the no longer visible part of the rock surface.

⁴² The same symbol which the god of FRAKTİN carries.

⁴³ The following description is based on Ehringhaus 2005, 68–70.

⁴⁴ Ehringhaus 2005, 70.

⁴⁵ Neve 1993, 63.

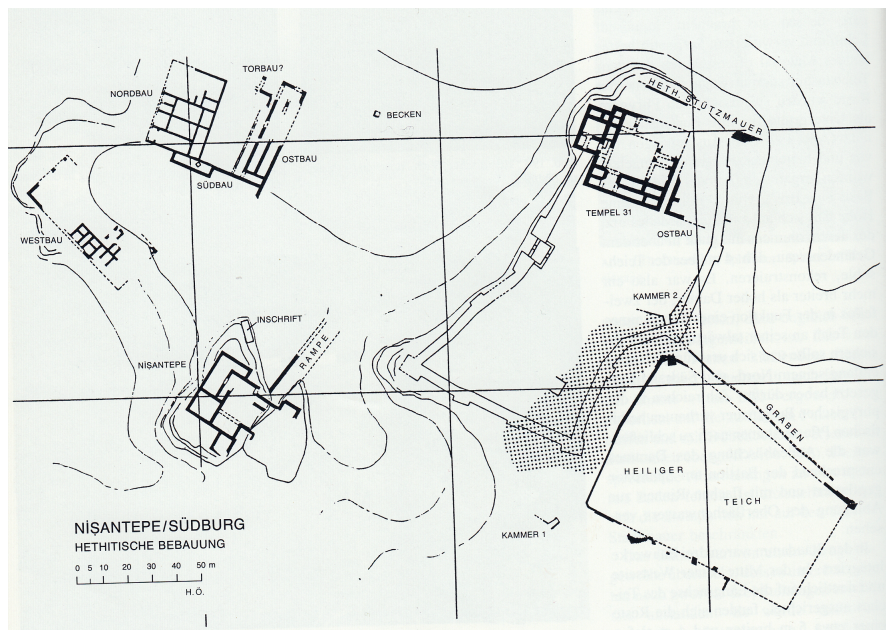


Fig. 8: Map of SÜDBURG areal (Neve 1993: 68 Abb. 194)



Fig. 9: SÜDBURG Inscription (Foto A. Payne)

underneath a winged sun-disc,⁴⁶ the left wall a male figure carrying a bow and spear. The hieroglyphic legend PURUS.FONS.MI MAGNUX.REX, ‘Suppiluliuma, Great King’, identifies him as the Great King Suppiluliuma.⁴⁷ It is thought that the pointed hat worn by this Suppiluliuma figure, usually a sign of divinity, indicates a posthumous representation, as Hittites kings ‘became gods’ (Hittite: DINGIR^{LIM}-is kis-) only upon death.⁴⁸ The inscription contains a lengthy historical section naming conquests and (re-)building of cities by Suppiluliuma, concluding with the following sentence: ‘in that year, I made here a Divine Earth-Road’ (§ 18).⁴⁹

This final sentence contains a self-denomination for the monument that carries the inscription. Written (DEUS)VIA+TERRA, the ‘Divine Earth-Road’, is also attested in the cuneiform record as ^DKASKAL.KUR,⁵⁰ and signifies an underground water-course, presumably referring to the rectangular hole at the end of the chamber, underneath the sun-god figure. Textual references confirm that ‘Divine Earth-Roads’ were landscape features of prominence, mentioned in several Hittite treaties in geographical boundary descriptions, and further, that they were, as suggested by both their cuneiform and hieroglyphic determinative, thought of as divine; in this respect ‘Divine Earth-Roads’ appear as witnesses to treaties and as recipients of libations.⁵¹ Such ritual sink-holes (Hittite ^Dapi-; *hattessar*) existed both as man-made structures and were worshipped in places where rivers naturally disappear underground,⁵² and would have designated an entrance to the underworld⁵³, a physical boundary to be transcended in the cultic act by means of water.

⁴⁶ For further discussion of this figure, cf. Erbil/Mouton 2012, 55 and note 9 (with lit.).

⁴⁷ Previously thought to have been either Suppiluliuma II, to whom the inscription was accredited, or his ancestor Suppiluliuma I, it should now be firmly identified as the latter on the following grounds. The previously suggested late date for the inscription (which had always seemed problematic, cf. Hawkins 1995, 21; 31) rested on a late archaeological dating of the complex; this is no longer upheld (cf. e.g. Seeher 2006a; Seeher 2006b; Seeher 2008). The best dating criteria for both this epigraph and the inscription must be the hieroglyphic sign PURUS which is attested in slightly diverging shapes for the two homonymous king. The form attested here equates to that used for Suppiluliuma I (Otten 1967, 226–229; Hawkins 1995, 31; Herbordt et al. 2011, Kat. 8–9, 146–148; for an in-depth discussion of the dating problem cf. Klinger 2015; Oreshko, forthcoming).

⁴⁸ Van den Hout 1995 argues for a change from this royal ideology in the 13th century BC, towards cultic veneration of still living kings.

⁴⁹ For an alternative translation cf. Börker-Klähn 1998; Masson 2001, 386; Erbil/Mouton 2012, 60; against these I see little room for ambiguity in the reading of this sentence. I take the verb *i(a)-zi/a* as 1st singular preterite *i(zi)(ya)=ha/*, ‘I made’, missing the verbal ending in accordance with a writing style heavily influenced by semantographic writing. Further, I see this sentence as clearly separate from the preceding sentences, and would argue that the inscription is a building inscription (cf. already Hawkins 1995, 44) which culminates in this sentence, following a lengthy historical introduction.

⁵⁰ Cf. Gordon 1967; Erbil/Mouton 2012.

⁵¹ First collected by Gordon 1967, 71–74; cf. most recently Erbil/Mouton 2012, 59 (with lit.).

⁵² Harmansah 2015, 382.

⁵³ Hawkins 1995, 45.

The hieroglyphic inscription within chamber 2 would have been visible only in close proximity, i.e. only to those granted access to this cultic place. It is therefore questionable whether communication of its content would have played a significant role over and above its function as, on the one hand, an adequate means of royal representation and, on the other, of marking or possibly even constituting a sacred space.

3 Conclusion

The Bronze Age monuments inscribed with Anatolian hieroglyphs, discussed above, show how hieroglyphic inscriptions or relief figures with hieroglyphic epigraphs could be embedded into the natural landscape at places of cultic relevance or activity, frequently coinciding with places of geological interest, such as rocks, rivers, and underground water courses. Further, it may not be accidental that libation localities seem to have been orientated towards a view of a (sacred) mountain. Most of the monuments considered above show a connection to the presence, and often also cultic use of water;⁵⁴ further, many are linked to either the remembrance of dead ancestors or underworld entrance points. All monuments show complex visibility-invisibility levels as regards both monument and inscription (adapted to the respective habitats and cultic function), for instance restricting the visibility of either by making use of the natural environment, or through limiting access. Additionally, boundaries are of importance, both physical boundaries which shape and define the monument, and the boundaries which are to be transcended through the cultic act. In a similar manner to movement along the visibility-invisibility continuum, a movement from establishing to transcending boundaries or vice versa might be one means of containing the otherwise unbounded nature of the cultic act or experience. It has been suggested that inscriptions or reliefs with epigraphs served functions beyond the communication of their respective content, such as manifesting a claim of ownership, or conferring the presence of a royal personage *in absentia*, or acting as markers of sacred space. In case of the latter, one might be justified in claiming that hieroglyphic writing with or without glyptic representation had a part in constituting sacred spaces.

⁵⁴ On water cults, with mention of further hieroglyphic monuments, cf. Erbil/Mouton 2012.

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