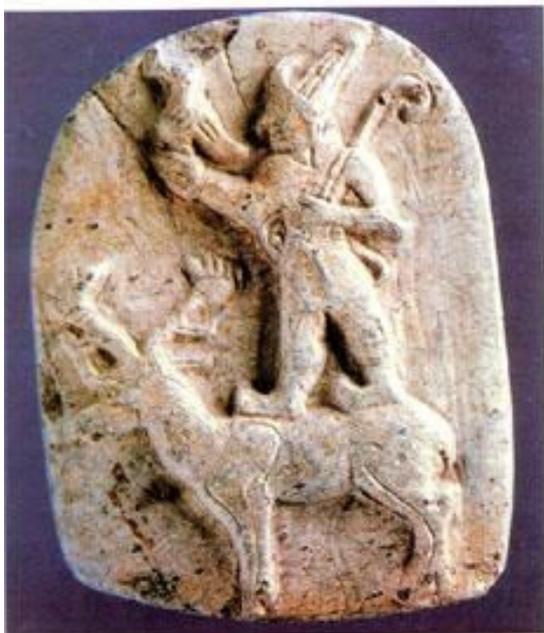


Hittite symbolism

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During the second millennium B.C. Anatolia has been the focal point of cultural transformation. During this period several city states were founded and different writing systems were used simultaneously. In Alacahöyük and in the central regions of Anatolia the Hittites raised several cities (see map at **12-The Anatolian expansion**). Many statues, wall relief, amulets, written tablets and seals have been found dated from this period. They are presently displayed in many different museums of the world. Hittite language is claimed to belong to the Indo-European language group. This is because Bedrich F. Hrozny, a Czech linguist who lived from 1879 to 1952, found two words in Hittite; **wadar** meaning “water” and **ezzan** meaning “to eat”, similar to German **wasser** and **essen**, that the language has been classified as the first Indo-European language. But in fact Hittite is an intermediate language in transition. We find several forms and features from both Altaic as well as Germanic languages. This characteristic will be explained in future chapters.

The wall relief below left is a synthetic message, comparable to a written text when properly interpreted. The pointed hat with curved horns and the trousers worn by the person on top of an elk are typical Scythian symbols mentioned by Herodotus (see Chapter 4, **The Asiatic Scythians**). He holds an eagle on his gloved right hand. Hunting with eagles and hawks is a tradition that is still being used by Asiatic people. He holds a curved staff in his left hand (a kalmush or lituus), an instrument used by shepherd for catching runaway sheep. The elk is the symbol representing the leader of Asiatic people. This symbolism has been mentioned



Hittite wall relief



Tarkondimos

and explained in detail in the previous chapters. His position on the elk is a sign of superiority and leadership. Therefore, the message embedded on this stele is **“I am the shepherd and the hunter leading the people”**.

Above right we see a seal whose original size is about half an orange. Archibald. H. Sayce (1846-1933) who worked on the decipherment of Hittite Hieroglyphs read these inscriptions as: **“Tar-rik-tim-me Sar-mat Er-me-e”**, which he interpreted as **Tarkondimos, King of the land of Erme** (1). This is how the seal became known as the Tarkondimos seal.

I am of the opinion that the inscription on the seal can be differently interpreted. **Herodotus of Halicarnassus** (484 BC – 425 BC) was the first historian who wrote a comprehensive account of antique Anatolian and surrounding cultures. He said that the Scythians, the Amazons and the Sarmatians spoke a common language (2). The Sarmatians occupied the regions above the Black Sea and in my opinion the second word of the seal **“Sar-mat”** stand for **Sarmat**, the people mentioned by Herodotus.

The first word **Tar-rik-tim-me** can be read as: **“Tur-ruk-tum ma”**, which can be transliterated as **“I was a Tur from the north but”**. The first root word is no other than the Asiatic **Tur** and the second root word **“ruk”** means **“from the north”** (see Chapter 4). **“Ruk”** can be read as **“uruk”**, which means **“the north settlement”**. There is a Sumerian city called Uruk which is situated at the north of Ur. The suffix **“-tum”** means **“I was”** and **“ma”** stands for **“but”** (**ama** being **“but”**) in Turkish.

The last word on the seal **“Er-me-e”** is a transposed form of **“Er-i-em”**, which means **“I am the man, the soldier”**. Therefore, the three words can now be understood as: **“I was a Tur from the north but I belong to the Sarmat”**. We see that this interpretation does not lead to Tarkondemos but rather to a meaningful sentence. But even if my interpretation is wrong, **Tarkan, Tur-Khan** or **Tarkon** is to be found in the first part of Tarkon-dimos (see Chapter 5, **Climatic Changes**).



Detail from a silver rhyton ca. 1400 BC.

A further clue for the Asiatic origin of the Hittite can be found in the picture above (3). This picture is part of a Hittite silver rhyton (a drinking vessel used only on special occasions). The rhyton shown below (dated from 14th century BC) is 18cm high and is exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. In the detail above we see a seated god holding a hawk on his left hand and a small cup on his right hand. The small cup is extended as a sign of celebration. We can assume that the seated figure is a god since the sitting position has always been considered as being superior to standing. The seated god is behind the person standing on the stag who is the Hittite king. The seated god looks in the same direction as the Hittite king as a sign of support and ownership. The other person pouring water to the feet of the stag is the visiting king. He lifts his left hand as a sign of salutation and goodwill.

He is pouring water to the ground, which has always been considered as a sign of wish for growth among Asiatic cultures.

There are two symbols between the head of the kings, which have been enlarged on the right hand side of the above picture. The top one can be interpreted as **UTCH** meaning “top, leader and also the number three” (see Chapter 10, **Etruscan inscriptions**). The sign under the utch can be interpreted as being a **Rho** (ρ) which is the archaic form of R. These two seals (characters) are root words originating from the Asiatic Proto-language. Together they can be interpreted as: “The kings” or “the ones at the top”, where the second sign stands for the plural suffix “-ar” in Etruscan and “-lar” in Turkish. There is a similar R sign on the top left part of picture above. The R sign stands under the name of the god. This may be an indication for respect, since respectful people have always been addressed in plural.



Hittite silver rhyton

References

- (1) **Decipherment**, Maurice Pope, Ref. 2 of Chapter 7, page 139.
- (2) **Histories Book IV**, Herodotus, The inhabitants of Scythia: Sauromatae, Budini, Thyssagetæ.
- (3) **The Hattian and Hittite Civilizations**, Ekrem Akurgal, Ref. 1 Chap. 12, page 161.