

# The Discovery of an Anatolian Empire

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## Bir Anadolu İmparatorluğunun Keşfi

A Colloquium to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the  
Decipherment of the Hittite Language  
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## Before Hittitology - The First Identifications of the Hittites in England

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The discovery of the people we now refer to as the Hittites in Britain, around the same time as they were independently identified in France, is rooted in the Christian academic worldview of England in the late nineteenth century. It would be unfair to say that the only motivation behind the discovery of the Hittites was the desire to prove that the Hebrew Bible was an authoritative historical text due to its sacred and divine nature. However, this facet of the circumstances cannot be ignored. Nor can one turn a blind eye to the context in which the missionary evangelism of some of the main figures associated with putting the Hittites securely on the map served the interests of British foreign policy at the height of the British Empire during the late nineteenth century, in what turned out to be the long run-up to the First World War (Cf. Alaura 2006: 17). Nevertheless, the stories of these pioneering amateurs and scholars are not just those of imperialist lackeys and religious fanatics. They were clearly also motivated by a love of knowledge for its own sake, and shared the desire to clarify world history with their coevals over much of the world, whatever nationality they may have been born into or religion they may have professed. The mistakes they made in trying to establish a coherent historical narrative can still be instructive to academics today on questions of methodology, as well as reminding us that academic research always has a political and social context. While there are many figures who participated in this process in England we shall concentrate here on only two: The Reverends William Wright and Archibald Henry Sayce.

Throughout the 19th century interest in the ancient history of the Middle East had been growing in England along with the expansion of British economic interests into this region, in direct or indirect conflict with the declining Ottoman Empire and its allies. Excavations in Iraq at Nineveh, Khorsabad and Nimrud were revealing the monuments of the Assyrian Empire and its extensive documentation in the Akkadian language and the cuneiform script, much of which had immediately been shipped back to the museums of the great imperial powers. Cuneiform was officially counted as deciphered from 1857 and the discipline of Assyriology was born. The translation by George Smith of cuneiform tablets held in the British Museum from the library of Assyrian king Assurbanipal that narrated a version of a flood myth with striking similarities to that found in the Hebrew Bible caused great public excitement (For the story of the birth of Assyriology see for example: Daniels 1996; Cathcart 2011 <[http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlj/2011/cdlj2011\\_001.html](http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlj/2011/cdlj2011_001.html)>).

The debate concerning the implications of such discoveries for the status of Biblical narrative was carried on at many levels in educated society, not just in universities and museums. In particular a thread of research sometimes referred to as Higher Criticism, associated with scholars such as Julius Wellhausen, had argued that the Bible was composed at different times with different narrative voices and that its final form was pasted together from different strands of tradition over hundreds of years, notably after the Babylonian exile of the Jews when they would have come into contact with story-elements such as the flood-myth. The debate is still vehemently prosecuted today, although it has largely retreated to the university campus. At the time Higher Criticism was a direct affront to



those who believed in the divine authority of the Bible. Militant Christians felt duty-bound to respond.

Among these were two Christian scholars, one amateur, one professional academic, who were instrumental in the discovery of the Hittites. Credit for discovering the Hittites frequently goes to the Reverend Archibald Sayce (1845-1933), the first Professor of Assyriology at the University of Oxford. However, prior to his announcement in 1876 that the Hittites referred to in the Bible were an identifiable historical reality to be associated with the culture that produced inscriptions found at Hama, a protestant missionary originally from northern Ireland called William Wright (1837-1899) had also independently argued that these monuments of northern Syria must have belonged to this lost civilization. Wright had decided to become a missionary after hearing a lecture at Queens College Belfast by the Calvinist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a Dutch immigrant who was known for his orthodox interpretation of the Bible and his opposition to Biblical Criticism. After studying theology in Geneva Wright started ten years of missionary activities based in Damascus from 1865 to 1875, where his mission was allegedly to convert Jews to Christianity (Owen-Jones 2010).

While he was there he was involved with such people as Sir Richard Burton, who besides his scholarship and many translations of Arabic classics was famous for exploits such as joining a pilgrimage to Mecca in disguise (See for example Godsall 2008). This was the high period of British Orientalism, and as a British scholar/missionary in Syria Wright had contact with the British consul at Damascus and ease of access to high officials of the Ottoman administration. On his return from Syria Wright took over the role of chief editor at the British and Foreign Bible Society, an organization largely devoted to making sure the Bible was translated into as many languages as possible and distributed over all the domains of the British Empire.

In 1812 Jakob Burkhardt had seen inscriptions in a hieroglyphic script unlike Egyptian in Hama in Syria on the middle Orontes River. Several attempts had been made by British travellers to gain access to these and make copies of them to take back to England, but these had apparently all been thwarted by the hostility of local people, with the exception of a painted version of one of them, published by Richard Burton and Charles Tyrwhitt-Drake, which there was some reason to suspect was inaccurate (Burton-Tyrwhitt-Drake 1872: 333-60). Wright immediately thought that these must be products of the people referred to in the Bible as the Hittites, in Assyrian Annals as the land of Hatti and in Egyptian Annals as *Hth*. He saw this as a possible opportunity to demonstrate against the critics that the Bible narratives corresponded to reality. He was also worried that the inscriptions would be destroyed by the locals to prevent them from falling into the hands of foreigners.<sup>1</sup>

Together with the British consul-general, W. Kirby Green, he managed to join the entourage of Subhi Pasha, the newly instated governor of Syria, on a visit to Hama. Subhi Pasha had been a progressive force in the modernization of Ottoman education and was a collector of antiquities himself (Somel 2001: 46ff.). Wright and Kirby Green managed to convince the governor that the inscriptions should be secured as they would reveal the existence of a mighty Empire in the area, which was referred to in the Bible but about which classical sources were silent. Subhi Pasha was intrigued and had the four stones removed to the *saray* in Hama, where Wright was allowed to clean them and make plaster casts. These plaster casts were then sent to the British Museum and to the Palestine Exploration

1 For the account see Wright 1886: 1-12. This is the first monograph length treatment of the Hittites. Wright's religious motivations are made clear in the prefaces to the first and second editions of the book, but do not appear in his initial 1874 publication (see below).



Fund, while the stones themselves went to Istanbul, where they can be seen today.<sup>2</sup> Among other colorful details Wright tells us of a meteor shower on the night the inscriptions were removed and how the governor convinced the local people of Hama that this was a good omen. How much of this is embellishment for a Victorian market hungry for exotica is unclear.

Wright's grounds for asserting that the Hama stones were "Hittite remains", which he did in an article published in 1874, cannot be credited as anything more than lucky guesswork, and were, as it turned out much later, wrong on many levels (Wright 1874: 90). According to Wright, the Bible referred to the Hittites, as did the Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions, and they must have been a sizeable power in the region according to these sources, therefore they must have left some written remains. The Hama stones were written in an as yet undeciphered script and unidentified language, in approximately the region the Biblical Hittites may have lived in, therefore they must have belonged to the Hittites. Wright tells us in his book that his identification of the Hittites was met with scornful hilarity by the reading public. He particularly mentions the rejection of his ideas by the soldier and scholar Captain Claude Conder who was surveying for the Palestine Exploration Fund at the time.

Independently from Wright, the professional academic Archibald Sayce had also come to the conclusion that the "Hamathite" hieroglyphic script should be Hittite. Sayce's argument is couched in scholarly terms, and his approach to the whole issue of Biblical criticism showed a rounded approach in his multiple other works, although he finally came down firmly in the camp of its opponents.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Wright and Sayce collaborated on Wright's 1884 book *The Empire of the Hittites*. However, Sayce never lets the argument concerning the veracity of the Bible intrude directly onto the discussion of the Hittite question. We would hope to find a more secure grounding for the identification of the Hittites in Sayce's famous 1876 publication than in Wright's earlier contribution, but this is unfortunately almost entirely lacking (Sayce 1876). Sayce guessed that the language behind the inscriptions was not inflectional (and therefore not Semitic), as inflectional languages allegedly did not form hieroglyphic writing systems. He also guessed that the language of the Hittites must have been non-inflectional on the basis of personal and place-names in Egyptian and Assyrian sources and thought that it was also not Semitic. He was wrong about both the Hittite language and the language of the Hama inscriptions being non-inflectional, but right about them being not Semitic. At this stage he placed the realm of the Hittites in the region of northern Syria, just as Wright had done.

Much had changed by 1880, when Sayce read two groundbreaking papers to the Society for Biblical Archaeology (Sayce 1882a; 1882b). Already in 1875 the Reverend Edwin John Davies had noted similarities between the inscriptions on the monument at Ivriz and those on the Hama-stones (Davies 1876). In 1879 Sayce had visited Turkey, in particular the Karabel inscription on the Karabel pass between the Gediz and Kükükmenderes valleys, of which he had made a squeeze and drawing. The drawing he publishes is almost unrecognizable to modern scholarship, and its inaccuracy hindered the decipherment of the inscription and the related "Tarkondemos" seal significantly (Sayce 1882b: 267. An overview of the publication of the Hieroglyphic inscriptions is given at Hawkins 2000: 6-13). Nevertheless, Sayce was able to recognize certain common elements between the hieroglyphs and sculptural style

2 Rather contemptuously Wright describes the stones' being "consigned to the limbo of Constantinople Museum". This possibly refers to the fact that the attempts to set up a museum in Istanbul had been ongoing for a number of years previously. They were not ultimately successful until 1891 (Wright 1874: 90).

3 Sayce 1894. Note the less than objective tone referring to the "Rainbow Bible" in the preface to the 7th edition (1910, p. xiv).



on this monument and the reliefs of Gavur Kalesi in central western Anatolia as well as those of Yazılıkaya near Boğazköy, which had until then been published in various formats of differing reliability. The hieroglyphs in turn were comparable not only with the Hama inscriptions, but also with three fragmentary pieces that had been brought back to the British Museum from Henderson's excavations at Karkamish and the inscription on the İvriz monument near Ereğli, as noted by Davies.

Again, many of Sayce's drawings are unrecognizable, but in the first of his contributions of that year (July 1880) he was able to identify the hieroglyphic sign for GOD, nowadays conventionally transliterated as DEUS, on the basis of its repeated occurrence at Yazılıkaya above divine names. However, he confused it with a separate sign, nowadays known to be the phonetic sign *ba*, a confusion which still occurs in careless examples of modern scholarship. Furthermore, he was able to say with some confidence that all these monuments belonged to a common culture, which he thought was likely to be Hittite, with a center in Cappadocia radiating out to cover Boğazköy in the north, Gavur Kalesi and Karabel in the west and down to Karkamish, Hama and Kadesh in the south. The chronological extent of this Hittite power, as largely evident from Egyptian, Biblical and Assyrian sources, would be from the 15th century BC down to the absorption of Karkamish into the Assyrian Empire by Sargon II in 717 BC.

Here we should compare Wright and Sayce's results with those of modern scholarship. The language of the inscriptions turned out not to be Hittite at all, which the scholarly world became sufficiently acquainted with after the first excavations at Boğazköy and the decipherment of the cuneiform texts found there by B. Hrozný in 1915-17. It was in fact Luwian, a related language which survived the collapse of the Hittite Empire at the beginning of the 12th century BC. The script itself was referred to as Hittite Hieroglyphs by Sayce, but is nowadays called Luwian or Anatolian Hieroglyphs. Nevertheless, the use of the Luwian language and this hieroglyphic script was closely associated with the spread of Hittite power, being found on monuments and sealings all over Turkey and northern Syria, and continued in use long after the Hittite Empire was gone. Indeed Sayce had already seen that the Hama-stones were likely to be much later than some of the other monuments, due to their more cursive style. The assumption that the majority of the populace was actually speaking this language in northern Syria, due to alleged population movements from central Anatolia seems rather unlikely, the style and language of the Iron Age inscriptions being more likely a persistent local idiom of power used by people speaking various languages. Sayce was alive to this issue and defended himself against the accusation that he thought the whole of Asia Minor and northern Syria to have been united in one language. Admittedly this is due to the fact that he was motivated by the desire to fit all the various "peoples" referred to in the textual sources from Egypt, the Bible and Assyria into specific geographical areas with their own languages that would have been contemporary with the Hittites.

Sayce's next major paper of 1880, read to the SBA in November of that year, concerned the further decipherment of the script. In the meantime Sayce had managed to locate a cast of the so-called Tarkondemos seal, sent to him by M. Lenormant, along with an electrotype copy made by the British Museum, which he could compare with the original 1863 publication of that object by Mordtmann in the Leipzig journal *Münzstudien* (Mordtmann 1863). The seal (referred to as a "boss" in Sayce's earlier publications, but as a "seal" in his later ones) had disappeared, but later re-surfaced and is now in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore. After confirming that Mordtmann's publication was largely correct and that the object was not likely to be a forgery, Sayce tried to exploit the possibilities offered by the digraphic cuneiform and hieroglyphic text on the seal (Fig. 1). These efforts brought the decipherment forward in the case of three signs (KING, LAND, phonetic *mi*, Sayce



me), but hindered it significantly in the case of all the others, owing to a too literal one-to-one interpretation of the relationship between cuneiform and hieroglyphic. It is one of the more extraordinary parts of the story of the decipherment of this script that the correct analysis of cuneiform-hieroglyphic relationship on this seal was not achieved until 1998, when J.D. Hawkins and A. Morpurgo-Davies re-visited the issue and Hawkins further identified the name of the owner of the seal with the author of the Karabel inscription (Hawkins – Morpurgo-Davies 1998: 243-260; Hawkins 1998: 1-31).



Fig. 1: The Tarkondemos Seal, TSBA 7 (1882)

Sayce	Cuneiform:	<sup>1</sup> tar-rik-tim-me	lugal	kur	er-me-e
	Hieroglyphic:	Tarku-timme	KING	LAND	er-me
		Tarrik			
Hawkins	Cuneiform	<sup>1</sup> tar-kaš-ša-na'-wa	lugal	kur	uru <sup>1</sup> me-ra'
	Hieroglyphic:	TARKASNA-wa/i	REX	REGIO	mi+ra/i-a

Hawkins and Morpurgo-Davies demonstrated that the main sign of the king's name was a logogram showing the form of a donkey or mule's head (transliterated as ASINUS<sub>2A</sub> in the modern system) and having the likely phonetic reading *tarkasna*- "mule". The land of Mira is a country well attested in Hittite texts located precisely in the region of the Karabel inscription, in which it is also referred to. Sayce, following Mordtmann, had assumed that the king's name would have to be read Tarkondemos, referring to the Tarkondimotid dynasty of Cilicia known from the time of Augustus: 1200 years too late, and some 900 km away. The place name *Erme* was supposed to be equivalent to Greek Arimoi, also in the Cilician region.

Sayce managed to recognize the signs for KING, LAND and the phonetic sign *me* (today *mi*) by comparison with the cuneiform and was able to extend this to other instances in the hieroglyphic inscriptions known at the time, notably from Karkamish and the Hama-stones, although with initially misleading results. Nevertheless, these three signs were the first major breakthrough in the decipherment. However, Sayce's conviction that the Cypriot script was derived from the Hittite hieroglyphic script severely hampered decipherment. He changed his mind about this several times, but his eventual decision in favor of a relationship between the two profoundly influenced his decipherment attempts. His list of sign-values published in 1884 in the chapter he contributed to Wright's book *The Empire of the Hittites* (2nd edition 1886) shows the effects of this quite clearly. (Fig. 2, 3) Particularly the signs transliterated by him as *kus* and *ku* or *ka*, which are among the most frequently used signs in the script, were disastrous for his further decipherment attempts.

It was not until 1973 that the correct identity of these two phonetic signs was established (*zi* and *za*), a development which substantially helped to identify the language of the inscriptions as Luwian, where this consonant *-z-* (pronounced *-ts-*) is very frequent (Hawkins – Morpurgo-Davies – Neumann 1973). These values were demonstrated by

establishing cuneiform-hieroglyphic digraphs and positional analysis of the distribution of the signs in the rest of the corpus of inscriptions. While Sayce was sometimes aware that this is the best method for decipherment, his methodologically unsound conviction that Cypriot sign-values could be imposed on the texts on the basis of fleeting external similarity essentially led him to fabricate an underlying language for the inscriptions which he then sought to validate by reference to the most disparate external sources such as names of divinities, persons, kings and places preserved in predominantly classical records.

Furthermore, in his second 1880 paper Sayce also recognized that the language behind the inscriptions must be an inflectional one, which had some further positive consequences for the decipherment. Initially Sayce had decided that one particular sign should represent the nominative singular, and as a result of his comparison of "Vannic" (i.e. Urartian) inscriptions with the hieroglyphic script he decided that this should be —s. This turned out to be correct, although not for the reasons Sayce had originally adduced, because Urartian has nothing to do with Hittite or Luwian. On the basis of the hieroglyphic bowl inscription allegedly from Babylon kept in the British Museum that Rylands had published in 1885, Sayce was further able to propose that the accusative singular ended in —n and that the sign nowadays transliterated as *na* must have contained a nasal consonant on the analogy of surrounding languages (Rylands 1885; Sayce 1922). Again this is correct, but not in the case of the particular example of the *-na* in the bowl inscription in question, which appears to indicate a neuter plural (Hawkins 2000: 395).
































	Determinative prefix of divinity.		Determinative prefix of an individual; probably also means "name" or "person."		Determinative of parentage or race; <i>ku</i> , <i>kus</i> .		Ideograph of "king."		Ideograph of "country." These two characters assume a variety of forms.		Determinative affix of plurality.		Determinative of supremacy.		<i>e</i> , <i>i</i> .		<i>u</i> , <i>o</i> .		<i>dimes</i> , <i>dime</i> , <i>di</i> .		<i>tu</i> , <i>to</i> .		<i>kus</i> .		<i>ku</i> .		<i>khat</i> , <i>khattu</i> .		<i>me</i> , <i>ve</i> .		<i>se</i> .		<i>si</i> .		<i>es</i> ; nominative suffix.		<i>ues</i> , <i>us</i> .		<i>er</i> ; perhaps dative suffix.		<i>tar</i> .		<i>sis</i> .		<i>sar</i> .		? <i>sarus</i> , <i>sar</i> .		? <i>sarme</i> .		<i>tarku</i> , <i>tarkus</i> .		<i>Sandu</i> (the god Sandon).		? <i>kue</i> , <i>mesi</i> .		"seal," "inscription."		"to speak."		"behold," "the sun-god."		<i>kue</i> , "worshipping."
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Fig. 2: Sayce's syllabary in Wright "Hittite Empire" (2nd edition), p. 177



























HITTITE.	CYPRIOTE.
  <i>i, e</i>	 <i>yi</i>
 <i>ka, ku</i>	 <i>ka</i>
  <i>te, to</i>	   <i>to</i>
 <i>me, mo</i>	  <i>mo</i>
 <i>se</i>	  <i>se</i>
 <i>si</i>	 <i>si</i>
  <i>ti, di</i>	 <i>ti, di</i>
 <i>u</i>	  <i>o</i>

Fig. 3: Sayce's comparison of "Hittite" Hieroglyphs with the Cypriot script, Wright "Hittite Empire" 2nd ed. p. 178

decipherment attempt stemming from the British Museum (Campbell Thompson 1913). One might wonder what lay behind this silence.

It emerges that Sayce was also initially not nationally territorial when it came to scholarship, attempting without avail to motivate the German excavator of Troy Heinrich Schliemann to excavate at Boğazköy in 1882/3 (Alaura 2006: 25-26). Sayce's motivation to contact Schliemann seems partially to have been a result of disappointment with the British methods of digging at Karkamish from 1878-1881. This is a refreshing perspective if one remembers the overall context of waves of escalation and hardening of frontlines that characterized Anglo-German political relations at the time. The attitude to Anglo-German scholastic co-operation is quite different the second time Sayce engaged in an attempt to secure an excavation permit for Boğazköy along with the archaeologist John Garstang in 1905. At this point he seems to have regarded the German colleagues as clear rivals.<sup>4</sup>

Sayce was also involved in the earliest publications of scattered cuneiform texts from Boğazköy, that had either been picked up or bought by travellers, missionaries and others. His attempts at decipherment understandably drew on what he knew, so he tended to see rather more loan-words from Akkadian in the texts than are actually there. In 1907 at least he appears to be interpreting the form *da-a-an-zi* ("they take") as second person singular *dan=si* (translated as "may thou set") which clearly indicates that he is thinking of Indo-European comparanda, even though he has the wrong person of the verb (Sayce 1907). However, he did not carry the comparison through to its logical conclusion, nor was he at all explicit about it.

Sayce had already proposed in 1889 that the language of the Arzawa letters found at El-Amarna, was Hittite, which was in fact the case (Sayce 1889). His 1916 edition of these two cuneiform tablets is interesting for being published around the same time as Hrozny's decipherment of cuneiform Hittite (Sayce 1916). Sayce had profited from a previous study of lexical lists which contained apparent Akkadian and Sumerian equivalences of Hittite words (Sayce 1914). This turned out to be a double-edged sword, as Sayce proceeded here

His 1922 publication summarizing the progress of the decipherment of the Hittite Hieroglyphic texts demonstrates the extent to which Sayce was able to correct himself as well as the international collaborative extent of his efforts. Sayce was clearly in communication with international academic eminences such as Peiser and E. Meyer as well as less well known amateurs and enthusiasts such as M. Six. The details of this process might be elucidated through further consideration of his correspondence in the manner of recent work by Silvia Alaura (Alaura 2015: 21-34). No mention, however, is given to a large-scale

4 Alaura 2006: 86-91, where the thesis is proposed that the British attempt to secure the excavation of Boğazköy fell foul of internal political power-struggles within the Ottoman administration, besides, according to Sayce's own account, being a victim of disinterest on the part of the British Foreign Office.



rather similarly to his approach to the Tarkondemos seal in expecting exact one-to-one correspondences, which led to avoidable errors and confusions. Thus he was able to profit from the vocabularies in the identification of the verb *iya*- “to do”, which recurs in the Arzawa letters. His translation of the phrase *ki-i te-et* as “thus says” is almost correct (= “he said this”), but his commentary makes clear that he thinks the verb “says” is *ki* (in fact = “this”!) given that he cites forms such as *punus-kiurwar* “to ask questions” from the vocabularies for the purpose of comparison. The form *punuskiwar* does indeed mean “to ask questions”, but the verb is *punus*- “to ask”, with the imperfective suffix *-ske-* turned into a verbal noun in *-war*. Again he seems to be aware of the Indo-European relations of the language when translating the pronouns “me” and “you”, even if he continues to use erroneous identifications of the verbal forms: *udanzi* (= “they bring”), translated as “you give”.

Can we say that Sayce was almost at the point of decipherment of the cuneiform material in 1916? Had he been able to make a more systematic study of a larger number of tablets excavated at Boğazköy, it is quite possible that he might have been able to make a great deal more progress, of course. On the other hand his approach to the cuneiform material betrays a degree of fanciful wildness and naivety that one also sees to an extent in his treatment of the hieroglyphic evidence, although this is too easy to judge in hindsight. It is remarkable how often Sayce developed the correct analysis for entirely the wrong reasons.

Once the decipherment of Hittite cuneiform revealed the Hittite language, Sayce must have noted that this was completely different from the “Hittite” language that he had fabricated from his “decipherment” of the hieroglyphic inscriptions. He then started to say that the language of the hieroglyphs must be a different one to that of the cuneiform inscriptions. He now called the language written in hieroglyphs “Kaskian” or “Moscho-Hittite” (For example: Sayce 1927). This attempt to attach an ethnic identity known from texts to a script and alleged language followed a very similar logical procedure to his and Wright’s initial identification of the Hittites with the Hama inscriptions. Unlike this achievement, Sayce’s identification of the language of the hieroglyphs as “Kaskian” has now been consigned to the dustbin of discarded academic wrong turnings. And yet Sayce was once again partially right, for all the wrong reasons. The language of the hieroglyphic inscriptions was different to Hittite, but not because it resembled his imagined language. It turned out to be a language, Luwian, that was similar to Hittite something like Spanish is to Italian. Many of the steps in the decipherment in the period that came directly after Sayce in the 1930s resulted from careful comparison of Hittite words written in cuneiform with hieroglyphic writings, even if the language of the hieroglyphic inscriptions was not definitively recognized as being Luwian until 1973.

Both Wright and Sayce were much concerned with the localization of peoples and nations mentioned in Biblical, Egyptian, Assyrian and classical texts, as was the fashion in much scholarship of the time. This had a racial manifestation in some cases, pre-figuring developments in scholarship and politics during the early 20th century (Alaura 2015). This tendency is to be found occasionally in Sayce’s work as in that of most other scholars of the time. Sayce’s attempts at decipherment were frequently based on what he had to hand, scattered references to individuals, peoples and deities whom he thought might have been relevant in the area of the inscriptions. With the availability of large amounts of texts, the focus of Hittite studies changed completely. However, the shadow of the way in which Hittitology was conducted at its very beginning still looms large over modern Hittite studies. The desire to put on the map or find manifested in concrete terms what is only otherwise attested as words in texts has possibly had a negative affect on the way the study of the material culture of the Hittites has developed. When we are only looking for what we expect to see after reading and interpreting the texts, it can become difficult to assess



the material evidence objectively. It is as if we want the data on the ground to “prove the texts right”, whatever texts those may be. This often says more about ourselves than it does about the ancient world.

One final example of Sayce’s imaginative, associative method should be presented, which is of interest beyond the sphere of language. The figure of the warrior god on the King’s Gate at Hattusa, carrying an axe and dagger with the usual short kilt and horned helmet, was interpreted by Sayce to be the figure of a woman, as far as he was concerned obviously an Amazon as known from Greek mythology (Sayce 1910: 25-26, plate V). This judgment was made on the basis of a drawing sent to him by a Miss Dodd of the American College for Girls at Constantinople, a project founded by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Fig. 4). This must be Isabel F. Dodd (1857-1943), who was at the time (1910) Professor of Archaeology and Biblical Literature at the College, among other administrative functions, as well as being a well-known campaigner for women’s education in Turkey. It would not be right to criticize the accuracy of the drawing from today’s perspective, but one wonders who this portrait was based on, beyond its inspiration by the figure in the King’s Gate.

Dodd wrote to Sayce, as quoted by him in the same article: “It is unmistakably a woman, and all the native people around called it ‘a woman’. It is a queen, perhaps; certainly a woman-warrior — an Amazon. All the workmanship is so delicate and fine that it is most interesting; the nails on the hands and feet, the chain armor and the decoration of the short skirt and weapons are all exquisitely finished, as are also the features - the eye in profile and the ornaments on the cap”. The chain armor turned out to be chest hair, in the style used for drawing a lion’s mane. As such the drawing and accompanying correspondence serve as an eloquent illustration of the limitations in the source material available to Sayce, who was approaching the discovery of the Hittites from thousands of miles away. For him this was further evidence for his Hittite theories, as he tells us he had long since proposed that the Amazons were in fact Hittites.

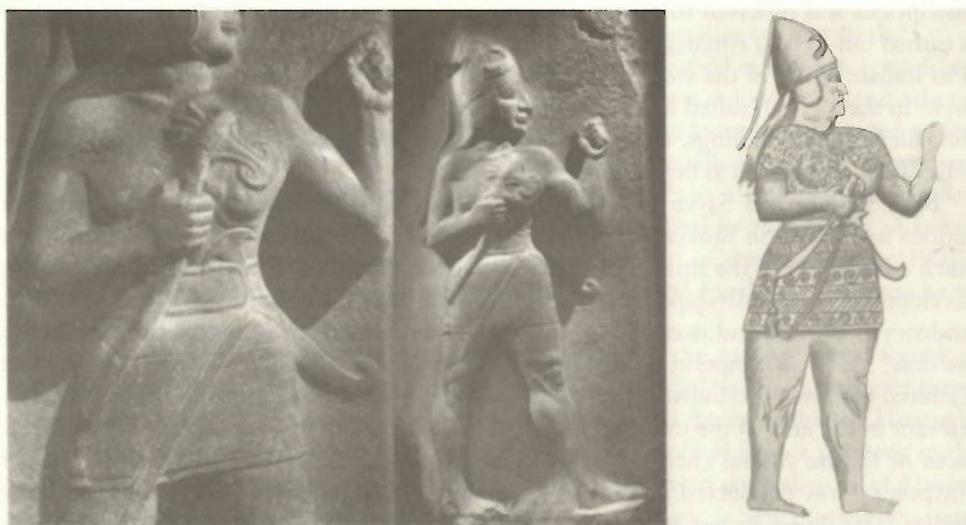


Fig. 4: Isabel F. Dodd’s drawing of the Figure at the King’s Gate, *PSBA* 1910, plate V, compared with photographs from K. Bittel *Die Hethiter. Die Kunst Anatoliens vom Ende des 3.-en bis zum Anfang des 1-en Jahrtausends vor Chr.* (Universum der Kunst), Munich 1976.



Hittitology in Britain remained in Oxford during the period following Sayce, where it was represented by O.R. Gurney. During the 1960s and 70s the focus of British Hittite studies moved to London, where J.D. Hawkins held a post at the School of Oriental and African Studies. As a result of a reading group initiated by L.R. Palmer in Oxford, and attended by Gurney, Hawkins and A. Morpurgo-Davies, significant progress was made in the decipherment of the Hittite Hieroglyphs, the language of which turned out to be Luwian. The publication of the "New Readings" by Hawkins and Morpurgo-Davies together with G. Neumann in 1973 put this beyond all doubt (Hawkins – Morpurgo-Davies – Neumann 1973). The decipherment of the script continues, but many of the problems that plagued Sayce and his contemporaries have now been resolved. The ongoing publication of J.D. Hawkins' *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions* since 2000 has put research on a new footing, and contributed to enabling many new interpretations and readings.

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