

MIRA: EVIDENCE FOR CONTINUITY IN WESTERN ANATOLIA
DURING THE TRANSITION FROM THE LATE BRONZE TO EARLY
IRON AGE

(*Supplementum Epigraphicum Mediterraneum* 28)

Fred C. Woudhuizen

It is a well-established fact that the offspring of the Hittite royal family seated in the former provinces of Karkamis and Tarḫuntassa continued to rule in these regions after the fall of the Hittite empire (*ca.* 1180 BC) until well into the Early Iron Age. What's even more, probably based on their lineage, these descendants of the Hittite royal family in both the given former provinces grabbed the opportunity and raised their status to that of great king – a privilege formerly reserved for the ruler of the capital Ḫattusa. Thus we are confronted with great king Aritesup, no doubt of Karkamis, who is referred to in a Luwian hieroglyphic inscription from Karahöyük-Elbistan set up by a local dignitary, and great king Ḫartapus commemorating himself in Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions from Kızıldağ and Karadağ in the Konya region, formerly part of the province of Tarḫuntassa (Woudhuizen 2005, 111-2).

The question to be addressed here is whether such a form of continuity as observed in the southeast can also be detected in the west of Anatolia, or whether this part of the former Hittite empire had been disrupted in like manner by the catastrophe of *ca.* 1180 BC, set in motion by the Sea Peoples and further aggravated by invasions from the Balkans, as the Hittite heartland (Woudhuizen 2006a, 116).

Now, a first indication of some form of continuity in the west is provided by the fact that the Lycians, who took part in the initial stage of the resurrections of the Sea Peoples, continued to live in their original habitat – be it presumably outside the frame of a wider politico-military constellation – and that the Lycian language as recorded for inscriptions from mainly the 5th and 4th century BC developed – provided some dialectal peculiarities – without a break from the Late Bronze Age Luwian mother tongue.

But even further to the north, in the former Hittite province of Mira, which even appears to have reached the preeminent status of a great kingdom in the final stage of the Bronze Age (Woudhuizen 2005, 111), some form of continuity may be observed. At least this appears to be indicated by a steatite seal or semi-bulla with signs from the repertory of Luwian hieroglyphic as well as



Fig. 1. Steatite seal or semi-bulla from Perati, Attica (from Cline 1994, Pl. 9, Fig. 30).

that of Linear A or B or Cypro-Minoan as discovered in a Late Helladic IIIB/C transitional context at Perati in Attica (Cline 1994, Pl. 9, Fig. 30) (Fig. 1). In the center of the obverse of this seal or semi-bulla, namely, we come across the combination of L 391 *mi* with L 383 *+r(a/i)*, which in sum reads *mi+ra*. This legend strikingly recalls the form in which the country name *Mira* occurs in seals or sealings of its penultimate ruler known to us from Hittite or Late Bronze Age Luwian hieroglyphic sources, Tarkuwas (= shorthand variant of *Tarkuntimuwas or classical Tarkondemos)¹, a rock inscription of this same ruler (presenting in addition his ancestry) at Karabel (Hawkins 1998, 7, Fig. 5) and the rock inscription of Latmos near Miletos also dating from the final stage of the Late Bronze Age (Peschlow-Bindokat/Herbordt 2001, 368) (Fig. 2) – although it must be admitted that, if the comparison applies, it appears here in a simplified variant, without the phonetic complement L 450 *à* (also absent in the Latmos inscription²!) and the determinative L 228 *UTNA* “land”. However, the latter observation ties in with the fact that the linear signs in the center of the obverse of the seal or semi-bulla and along its edges of both obverse and reverse appear, in the words of Eric Cline, to be meaningless imitations by an illiterate craftsman³. All in all, then, it seems that we are indeed

¹ Woudhuizen 2005, 101; 108-10; for the identification of *320 as a variant of *165 *wá*, see section 1 of *Some More on Cretan Hieroglyphic Seals* elsewhere in this volume (= Woudhuizen 2004-5). For the numbering of the Luwian hieroglyphic signs, see Laroche 1960.

² As rightly remarked by Herbordt in Peschlow-Bindokat/Herbordt 2001, 368, this simplified rendering of *Mira* is also attested for the composite personal name of the official Miramuwas as recorded for a seal from the Nişantepe-archive, see Herbordt 2005, 156, Cat. no. 240.

³ Cline 1994, 162, commentary to Catalogue no. 235. It is interesting to note in this connection that, given the evidence of the rock inscription of Karabel C1, Late Bronze Age dignitaries of *Mira* were not unfamiliar with the linear script, as the title *tupala*- “scribe” appears here in a cartouche-like frame in abbreviated form *tu-pa* written with decidedly

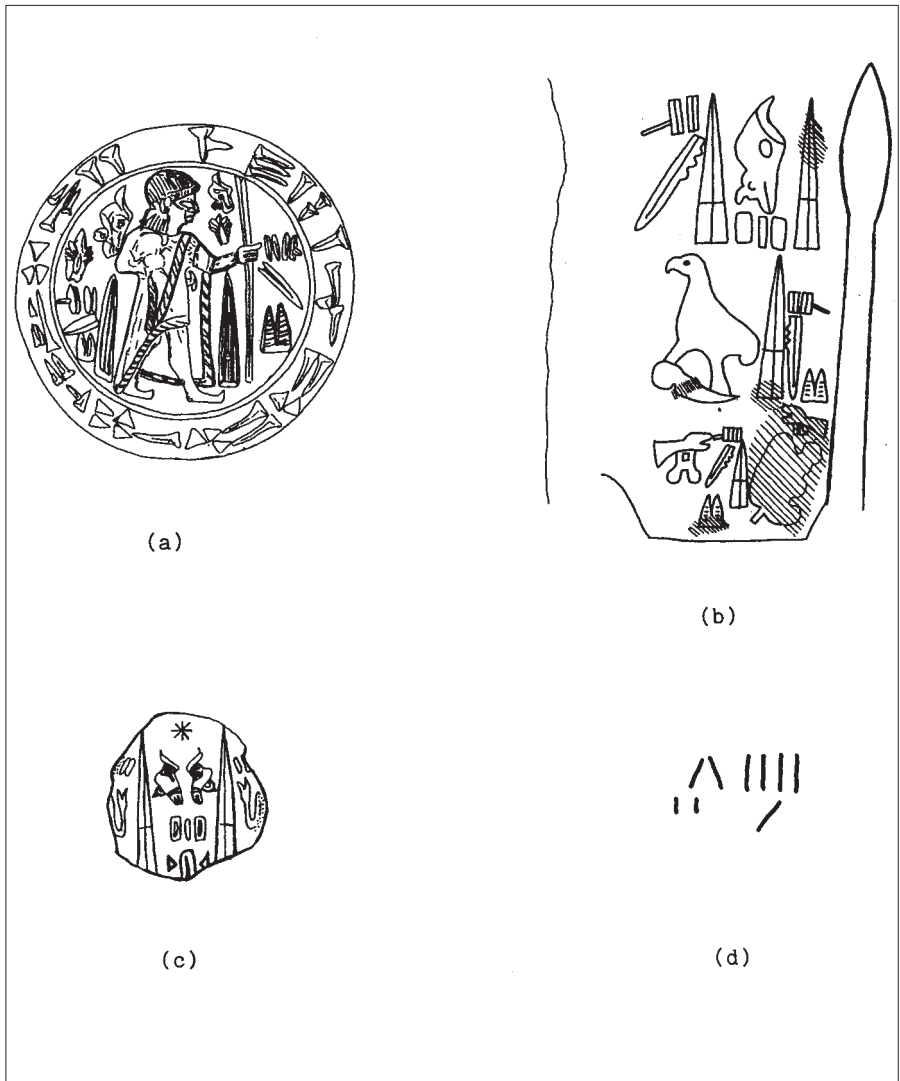


Fig. 2. Various writings of the country name Mira in Luwian hieroglyphic. (a) Tarkondemos seal (from Nowicki 1982, 232, Abb. 1), (b) Karabel A (from Hawkins 1998, 7, Fig. 5b), (c) sealing from Boğazköy (from Güterbock 1975, 51, no. 7), (d) Latmos (after Peschlow-Bindokat/Herbordt 2001, 369, Abb. 4).

confronted with a mention of the kingdom of Mira stemming from the period of the resurrections of the Sea Peoples, and hence with evidence for continu-

ity of this realm after the end of the Bronze Age into the earliest stage of the Iron Age⁴.

The conclusion that the kingdom of Mira somehow survived the onslaught of the Sea Peoples coincides with the fact that the Lydian language as primarily documented for the Classical period, provided some dialectal developments, developed without a break from the ancestral Luwian as spoken, no doubt, by the inhabitants of the region in the Late Bronze Age (Woudhuizen 2005, 119-47), if we realize that Luwiya is an old indication of the province later addressed to as Arzawa or Mira and that this region falls within the range of the distribution of Late Bronze Age Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions (Melchert 2003, 142-3 [= Woudhuizen 2004b, 174-5]). There is no need, therefore, to assume an invasion of proto-Lydians from the north (the area of Daskyleion and Propontic Mysia) at the turn of the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age as Robert Beekes wants to have it⁵. Actually, it appears that discontinuity in Asia Minor from the time of the onslaught of the Sea Peoples *ca.* 1180 BC onwards was a *predominantly local* phenomenon, affecting the Troad (introduction of Buckel Keramik with Balkan affinities), the Hittite heartland (destruction of the Hittite capital Boğazköy/Ḫattusa and other sites within the Halys bow) and coastal regions in Cilicia (introduction of the house of Mopsos with his Akhaian following in the plain of Adana) and North Syria (destruction of Ras Shamra/Ugarit, some influx of Hittite and Luwian refugees from the Anatolian heartland, arrival of European urnfielders in Hamath), but for the rest leaving the existing situation basically (that is to say: without the politico-military superstructure of the former empire, the fall of which lead to politico-cultural fragmentation) in tact (note that on the basis of the testimony of Homer, *Iliad* III, 184-7 even some groups of the Phrygians were already living along the Sangarios as early as about one generation before the Trojan war, the latter presumably to be dated *ca.* 1280 BC [cf. Woudhuizen 2006a, 27; 62])!

⁴ The given mentions of *Mira* need to be distinguished from Karkamis A6, § 4 *mi-zī+r(a)*^{UMINA} “Egypt” (cf. Semitic *Misraim*) in the face of bigraphic evidence for the personal name *Mizrimuwas* as presented by Herbordt 2005, 81 f., 156-8 (Cat. nos. 242-9), the sign L 377 *ī, zī*, as I argued at length in Woudhuizen 2004a, 167-70, Woudhuizen 2004b, 8-11 and Woudhuizen 2006b, appendix 2, being subject to polyphony. Accordingly, the country name under discussion can not be shown to have been in use up till the late 9th or early 8th century BC, as I wrongly suggested in Woudhuizen 2004b, 76).

⁵ Beekes 2002, 205-17. It is true that the region of Troy temporarily resorted under the suzerainty of the kingdom of Mira in the final stage of the Late Bronze Age (see Woudhuizen 2005, 117-8), but this should be distinguished from later Lydian influence radiating to the northwest corner of Asia Minor, *viz.* during the reign of the tyrant Gyges (687-649 BC), who named the site of Daskyleion after his father Daskylos. At any rate, if we may base ourselves on Homer, the Troad and its hinterland – apart from some minor Luwian enclaves (Woudhuizen 2006a, 93) – likely constituted a mainly Thracio-Phrygian speech-zone already during the Late Bronze Age (Woudhuizen 1993; cf. Woudhuizen 2006a, 108, esp. note 520), which nullifies Beekes’ scenario altogether.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beekes, R.S.P. 2002: The Prehistory of the Lydians, the Origin of the Etruscans, Troy and Aeneas, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 59, 3/4 mei-augustus, 205-239.
- Cline, E.H. 1994: *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea, International trade and the Late Bronze Age Aegean* (BAR International Series 591), Oxford.
- Güterbock, H.G. 1975: Hieroglyphensiegel aus dem Tempelbezirk, *Boğazköy V, Funde aus den Grabungen 1970 und 1971*, Berlin, 47-75.
- Hawkins, J.D. 1998: Tarkasnawa King of Mira, 'Tarkondemos', Boğazköy sealings and Karabel, *Anatolian Studies* 48, 1-31.
- Herbordt, S. 2005: Die Prinzen- und Beamtensiegel der hethitischen Grossreichszeit auf Tonbulln aus dem Nişantepe-Archiv in Hattusa, *Boğazköy/Hattuša, Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen XIX*, Mainz am Rhein.
- Laroche, E. 1960: *Les hiéroglyphes hittites, Première partie: l'écriture*, Paris.
- Melchert, H.C. 2003: Language, in: Melchert, H.C. (ed.), *The Luwians* (Handbook of Oriental Studies 68), Leiden/Boston.
- Nowicki, H. 1982: Zum Herrschernamen auf dem sogenannten "Tarkondemos"-Siegel, in: Tischler, J. (Hrsg.), *Serta Indogermanica, Festschrift für Günter Neumann zum 60. Geburtstag*, Innsbruck, 227-232.
- Peschlow-Bindokat, A./S. Herbordt 2001: Eine hethitische Grossprinzen-inschrift aus dem Latmos, *Archäologischer Anzeiger 2001*, Heft 3, 363-378.
- Woudhuizen, F.C. 1992: *The Language of the Sea Peoples* (Publications of the Henri Frankfort Foundation 12), Amsterdam.
- Woudhuizen, F.C. 1993: Historical Backgrounds to the Old Phrygian-Greek Linguistic Relationship, in: Fol, A. (ed.), *Atti del IV° Congresso Internazionale di Tracologia, Palma de Mallorca 24-28 March 1992*, Roma, 377-394.
- Woudhuizen, F.C. 2004a: *Luwian Hieroglyphic Monumental Rock and Stone Inscriptions from the Hittite Empire Period* (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Sonderheft 116), Innsbruck.
- Woudhuizen, F.C. 2004b: *Selected Luwian Hieroglyphic Texts* (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Sonderheft 120), Innsbruck.
- Woudhuizen, F.C. 2004-5: Some More on Cretan Hieroglyphic Seals, *Talanta, Proceedings of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society* 36-37, 171-186.
- Woudhuizen, F.C. 2005: *Selected Luwian Hieroglyphic Texts 2* (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Sonderheft 124), Innsbruck.
- Woudhuizen, F.C. 2006a: *The Ethnicity of the Sea Peoples* (dissertation), sine loco.
- Woudhuizen, F.C. 2006b: *The Earliest Cretan Scripts* (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Sonderheft 125), Innsbruck.

Fred C. Woudhuizen
Het Hoekstuk 69
NL-1852 KX Heiloo
The Netherlands
woudhuizen@yahoo.com