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I. CİLT

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## THE KIRŞEHİR LETTER: A NEW HIEROGLYPHIC LUWIAN TEXT ON A LEAD STRIP<sup>1</sup>

*Rukiye AKDOĞAN\**

*J. David HAWKINS\*\**

A lead strip, inscribed with Luwian hieroglyphs and found at Yassihöyük-Kırşehir, was purchased and entered in the artefacts collection of the Anatolian Civilisations Museum on the 2nd January 2006.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Metin Yetik, who brought the lead strip in question, said that Mr. Yunus Er had found it. Because of the importance of the strip, it was necessary to see the place where it was found and we went with Mr. Metin Yetik and Yunus Er to the site on the 9th September 2006. Mr. Yunus Er indicated that he had found the strip in folded state in the centre of Yassihöyük near the road bend of the town Karahıdır, located on the Kaman-Kırşehir highway. We are very grateful to Mr. Metin Yetik and Yunus Er for having allowed the Museum to acquire such an important artefact. As of the year 2009, excavations have been carried out at Yassihöyük by the Middle Eastern Cultural Centre of Japan.

The Kırşehir lead strip is one of a small number of such documents known at present from the Neo-Hittite world of the early Iron Age. Including the said strip, the number of the strips discovered in Anatolia increased to five. Three lead strips and two fragments,

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\* Dr. Rukiye AKDOĞAN, Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi, Ankara.

\*\* Prof. J. David HAWKINS, 18 A Ridgmount Gardens, London WC 1 E 7AR.

1 This is the English version of the article on "Kırşehir-Yassihöyük'ten Ele Geçen Luvi Hiyeroglif Yazılı Kurşun Levha", which was published in the 2007-2008 Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi Yıllığı. A paper was read by the authors at the VII. International Congress of Hittitology, Çorum, 2008.

2 Our thanks go to Mr. Melih Arslan, Director, Mrs. Emel Yurttagül and Mrs. Nihal Tırpan, Assistant-Directors of the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, who granted the opportunity to publish this article. Also we are grateful to Mrs. Zehra Taşkıran and Mrs. Yasemin Çuhadar, who are responsible for the depot where the lead strip is kept, for facilitating our studies. Last but not least, we would like to thank Mr. Cengiz Özduygulu who carefully cleaned the strip and revealed many signs obscured by corrosion.

containing economic and administrative issues were found in Kayseri-Kululu in 1967 and purchased by the Museum of Kayseri. They have been transferred to the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations where the conditions of preservation and maintenance are better, as mentioned by Tahsin Özgüç. Earlier a lead strip rolled and inscribed on one side was found on Büyükkale at Boğazköy in 1937. Although the inscriptions and signs have not been preserved very well, this strip proves that the Hittites of the imperial period already wrote on lead.<sup>3</sup> Outside Anatolia, in the excavations carried out in Assur in 1905, 6 lead strips had been discovered.<sup>4</sup> So, the strip we have before us is the first such find in the last 40 years and only the twelfth of the lead strips now known. One other importance of this strip is that it represents the most north-westerly Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription of the Iron Age being some 60 km north-west of Karaburun and some 112 km west of Çalapverdi.

The new lead strip is in the shape of a long, oblong strip with a semicircular right end, left hand missing, and bears the hieroglyphic inscription on its recto and verso. In consequence of the unrolling by the finder some cracks and splits have occurred. On both sides of the strip, there are corroded areas.

The dimensions of the lead strip are:

Length: 18,5 cm.

Width: 2,8 cm.

Thickness: 1,5 mm.

Museum inventory number: 13-1-06

### Transliteration:

1. § 1 *á-sa<sub>5</sub>-za-a-wa/i* DOMINUS-[*ni-i*] *á-mi-i tu-wa/i-ti-ia* SERVUS-*ta<sub>4</sub>-ti-sa-wa/i*  
*tu-wa/i-sà* [*!*]*mu-wa/i-ta-li-i-sá* (LOQUI)*ha+ra/i-i-ti*
- § 2 *ha-IUDEX+ra/i-wa/i* DOMINUS-*ni-i-sá á-mi-sá tu-wa/i-ti-i-sá*
- § 3 (BONUS)*sa-na-wa/i-ha-wa/i+ra/i* PUGNUS.PUGNUS-*i*
- § 4 *'ka-tu-ni-sa-ha-wa/i* |REL-*i-i'* PES-*wa/i-ti*
- § 5 *ha-IUDEX+ra/i-ti-i'-wa/i-mu-u* \*272-*wa/i*[...]

3 Bittel 1938: 18; Özgüç 1971: 62 with fn. 95; the dimensions of this lead strip are as follows: length.: 8,3 cm., width.: 1,6 cm., thickness.: 0,3 cm., weight: 26,05 gr.; excavation number: 116/g.

4 Özgüç 1971: 61; Hawkins 2000: 533-555; Payne 2005: 109.

2. ...

§ 6 ... ...] \*69-*la/i/u-[w]a/i-wa/i*

§ 7 *á-pi-ha-wa/i tá-ti-na |tá-mi-na-' ARHA(-)sa-mi-na PUGNUS.PUGNUS-i*

§ 8 |*wa/i-tu-u wa/i-ti-ia*

§ 9 *a-wa/i tá-ti-i-' |REL wa/i-ti-ia-sa*

§ 10 |*wa/i-ta á-mu-u-ha |wa/i+ra/i-mi-i COR-tara/i-sa INFRA-ta |la-la-ha<sup>i</sup>*

§ 11 CRUS<sub>2</sub>-*nú-pa-wa/i-<sup>r</sup>ta<sup>r</sup> tá-ti-na |ha+ra/i-za<sup>2</sup>-i-' \*366<sup>2</sup>-na-na INFRA<sup>2</sup>  
CAPUT.LINGUA+x.CULTER(?)*-la-i-sà-sa**

3. § 12 *wa/i-mu-u za-ti u-sa-i tá-ti-na |wa/i-ti||-ia*

§ 13 |REL-*ti-ha-wa/i(-)za (LOQUI)ha+ra/i-i-sà(-a-ta)*

§ 14 (*a-ta*)-*wa/i-ta<sup>1</sup>sà-REL-sà-ni-sà tu-wa/i+ra/i*

§ 15 *á-mu-u-wa/i-' |NEG<sub>2</sub> nu-tara/i-wa/i*

§ 16 |*á-wa/i-ha-wa/i OMNIS-ma-sa-za-' |MAGNUS+RA/I-ia-a-la-za  
wa/i-li-ia-si*

§ 17 |*á-mi-ia-pa-wa/i NEG<sub>2</sub> <sup>r</sup>wa/i<sup>r</sup>-[li]-ia-si-i*

§ 18 |*wa/i-tu-u FEMINA-ti-ia+ra/i(-)na-na (INFANS)ni-m[u]-w[a/i-za ...*

4. ...

§ 19. ... ...]*pa-ti-sa-ha*

§ 20 CRUS<sub>2</sub>-*nú-pa-wa/i \*187(-)ka-pa+ra/i-na-<sup>r</sup>'<sup>r</sup> NEG<sub>2</sub>(-)*tà-na \*69(-)sà-  
tara/i-ti PUGNUS.PUGNUS-i-wa/i**

§ 21 *á-pi-wa/i-mu |wa/i-ti-ia-ta-'*

§ 22 |*wa/i-mu-u 1 \*257-sa \*257-za-' NEG<sub>2</sub> pi-ia-ta*

§ 23 |*wa/i-mi-i DEUS-ni-na i-zi-i-ha*

**Translation:**

1. § 1 Speak to my lord Tuwati, your servant Muwatali says:
  - § 2 My lord Tuwati (is) in life,
  - § 3 and live you well!
  - § 4 And when Katuni comes,
  - § 5 (to) me with life ... shield ... [ ...
2. ...
  - § 6 ... ] I will ... .
  - § 7 And PUGNUS.PUGNUS again the father ... ,
  - § 8 and WATIYA to him.
  - § 9 When you WATIYA-ed to the father,
  - § 10 I myself personally "took down" (him?) ...
  - § 11 But now the father (accusative) you ... LAISA-ed
3. § 12 to me here / this ... WATIYA the father.
  - § 13 And as you said (or : he kept saying):
  - § 14 "Sakwisani put (in?)",
  - § 15 I myself will not hasten.
  - § 16 Come, you praise everyone's URIYALANZA,
  - § 17 but mine you do not [praise(?)].
  - § 18 to him with the woman ... child[ ...
4. ...
  - § 19 ... ] I ...-ed.
  - § 20 But now I will PUGNUS.PUGNUS not ... KAPARA with \*69-SATARA.
  - § 21 To me he WATIYA-ed back,

§ 22 and (to) me he did not give one silver (shekel?) (of) silver

§ 23 and I “made” myself a god.

**Commentary:**

- § 1. *á-sa<sub>5</sub>-za-a-wa/i* (= *asaza+wa* connective): verb, *asaza-*, ending *-*, 2 singular imperative, “speak!”.

**DOMINUS-*ni-i*** (logogram, reading unknown, + *ni*): noun, ending *-i*, dative singular, “to the lord”.

*á-mi-i* (= *ami*): 1 singular possessive adjective, ending *-i*, dative singular, “to my ...”.

*Tuwatiya*, personal name, ending *-iya* dative singular.

**SERVUS-*tu<sub>4</sub>-ti-sa-wa/i*** (logogram, reading uncertain, +*ta(n)tis+wa* connective): noun, ending *-s*, nominative singular common gender, “servant”.

*tu-wa/i-sà* (= *tuwis*): 2 singular possessive adjective, ending *-s* nominative singular common gender “your”.

*Muwatalis*, personal name, nominative singular.

(LOQUI) *ha+ra/i-i-ti* (= (logogram) *hariti*): verb *hari-* ending *-ti*, 3 singular present, “(he) says”.

- § 2. *ha-IUDEX+ra/i-wa/i* (= *hatari+wa* connective): probably noun, ending *-i*, dative singular, “in life”.

**DOMINUS-*ni-i-sá*** (logogram+*nis*): noun, ending *-s* nominative singular common, “lord”.

*á-mi-sá* (= *amis*): see § 1, ending *-s*, nominative singular common gender “my”.

*Tuwatis*, see § 1, ending *-s*, nominative singular.

- § 3. (BONUS) *sa-na-wa/i-ha-wa/i+ra/i* (= (logogram) *sanawa+ha+wa* connectives, +*ri* < *tí*, reflexive pronoun, 2 singular): adverb, “well”.

**PUGNUS.PUGNUS-*i*** (logogram reading unknown): verb, ending *-i*, probably 2 singular imperative, meaning uncertain.

- § 4. *<sup>1</sup>ka-tu-ni-sa-ha-wa/i* (= *katunis* + *ha* + *wa* connectives): *katunis*, ending -s, nominative singular; perhaps a personal name if the small stroke represents the personal determinative <sup>1</sup>(cf. §14); otherwise common noun, perhaps from stem relating to “hostility”.

**REL-i** (= *kwi*): relative conjunction, “when”.

**PES-wa/i-ti** (= *awiti*): verb, ending -ti, 3 singular present, “(he) comes”.

- § 5. *ha-IUDEX+ra-i-ti'-wa/i-mu-u* (= *hatarati*+*wa* connective + *mu* 1 singular pronoun): noun, ending -ati, ablative (singular), “with life”.

**\*272-wa/i-[...]** (logogram+break): logogram elsewhere determines “shield”, see KARATEPE, § X 49.

- § 6. **\*69-la/i/u-...-wa/i** (logogram + incomplete word): probably verb, ending -wi, 1 singular present, “I will \*69”.

- § 7. *á-pi-ha-wa/i* (= *api*+*ha*+*wa* connectives): adverb, “back, again”.

*tá-ti-na* (= *tatin*): noun, ending -n, accusative singular common gender, “father”.

*tá-mi-na* (= *tamin*?): uncertain, possibly participle from verb *ta-*, + *mi-*, ending -n, accusative singular common gender, “?”.

**ARHA(-)sa-mi-na** (= *arha samin* or *arhasamin*): uncertain, possibly participle from verb *arha sa-* or *arhasa-*, + *mi-*, ending -n accusative singular common gender, “?”.

**PUGNUS.PUGNUS-i**: as above, § 3.

- § 8. *wa/i-tu-u* (= *watu*): *wa* connective + *tu*, pronoun, 3 singular dative, “to him”.

*wa/i-ti-ia* (= *watiya-*): unknown verb, (also §§ 9, 12, 21), ending -, 2 singular imperative, “?”.

- § 9. *a-wa/i* (= *awa*): *a* + *wa* connectives.

*tá-ti-i* (= *tati*): noun, ending -i, dative singular “to the father”.

**REL** (= *kwi*): relative pronoun / conjunction, ending not written, uncertain.

*wa/i-ti-ia-sa* (= *watiyas(a)*): unknown verb, see § 3, ending -s(a), 2 singular preterite(?), “you WATIYA-ed”.

§ 10. *wa/i-ta* (= *wata*): *wa* connective + *ta* place particle.

*á-mu-u-ha* (= *amu+ha* copula): pronoun, 1 singular nominative, “I”.

*wa/i+ra/i-mi-i* (= *war(a)mi?*): unknown, perhaps dative singular.

**COR-tara/i-sa** (= *atris*): noun, ending -s, nominative singular common gender, “self”.

**INFRA-ta** (= *kata*): preverb, “down”.

*la-la-ha<sup>i</sup>* (= *lalaha<sup>i</sup>* **space filler**): verb, ending -ha, 1 singular preterite, “I took”.

§ 11. **CRUS<sub>2</sub>-nú-pa-wa/i-<sup>i</sup>ta<sup>i</sup>** (= *nanun + pa + wa* connectives, +*ta*, place particle): adverb, “(but) now”.

*tá-ti-na* (= *tatin*): as in § 7.

*ha+ra/i-za<sup>2</sup>-i-<sup>i</sup>*: uncertain reading, unknown word.

**\*366<sup>2</sup>-na-na**: uncertain reading perhaps = **\*366<sup>2</sup>-na-na** (KARKAMIŞ A 2+3, § 24), postposition (?).

**INFRA<sup>2</sup>**: uncertain reading.

**CAPUT.LINGUA+x.CULTER(?)*-la-i-sà-sa***: R. Akdoğan’s first drawing showed a pair of lines with downward curving ends projecting from the rear of the LINGUA. Not recognising the sign, we supposed that this was in fact the two lines below the second “i”, making it “ia”. Now however, a sign in the form originally drawn has appeared on a stele fragment in the Haluk Perk museum, confirming that it is indeed a sign which we can only read LINGUA+x; also suggesting the reading CULTER(?) for the first “i”. Thus instead of (CAPUT)*la-i-la-ia-sà-sa* we read as above, taking this as a still unknown verb ending in -s(a)(?), 2nd singular preterite. For further discussion see the forthcoming publication of the stele fragment by Dr. İlknur Taş in Anatolian Studies.

§ 12. *wa/i-mu<sup>2</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>*: *wa* connective + *mu*(?), pronoun, 1 singular, accusative/dative, “(to) me”.

*za-ti* (= *zati*): demonstrative pronoun, dative singular, “to this ...”, or adverb, “here”.

*u-sa-i*: uncertain form, perhaps for *u-si-i*, dative singular, *zati usi*, “in this year”.

*tá-ti-na* (= *tatin*): as above, § 7.

*wa/i-ti||-ia* (runs over lines 2-3, = *watiya*): as above §8.

- § 13. **REL-*ti-ha-wa/i*** (= *kwati+ha+wa* connectives): relative conjunction, “if, as”.  
**(LOQUI)*ha+ra/i-i-sà(-)*** (word/clause division uncertain, = *haris(a)?*): verb, ending *-s(a)*, 2 singular preterite, “you said”; or read *ha+ra/i-i-sa-a-ta* (= *harisata(?)*): verb+*-sa-* iterative, ending *-ta*, 3 singular preterite, “he kept saying”.  
**za:** demonstrative pronoun, accusative singular neuter, “this”.
- § 14. ***a-ta-wa/i-ta*** (if *a-ta* belongs here, not at ending of preceding word,): *anta+wa* connective, +*ta* place particle.  
**'sà-REL-sà-ni-sà** (= *sakwisanis*): perhaps personal name (if personal determinative is present); otherwise common noun, ending *-s*, nominative singular common gender, meaning unknown.  
***tu-wa/i+ra/i*** (= *tuwara*): verb, ending *-ra<-ta*, 3 singular preterite, “he put”.
- § 15. ***á-mu-u-wa/i*** (= *amu+wa* connective): pronoun, see above § 10.  
**NEG<sub>2</sub>** (= *na*): the negative, “not”.  
***nu-tara/i-wa/i*** (= *nuntariwi*): verb, ending *-wi*, 1 singular present, “I will hasten”.
- § 16. ***á-wa/i-ha-wa/i*** (= *awi+ha-wa* connectives): probably verb, ending *-*, 2 singular imperative, “come!”.  
**OMNIS-*ma-sa-za-'*** (= *tanimasa(n)za*, reading *-sa-za* instead of more obvious order *-za-sa*): *tanimi-*, “all”, + *asi-*, genitival adjective ending, + *a(n)za*, nominative/accusative singular neuter, “(that) of everyone”.  
**MAGNUS+*ra/i-ia-a-la-za*** (= *uriyala(n)za*): noun, meaning uncertain, apparently *uriya-*, “great”, + *ali-* derivational suffix+*a(n)za*, ending, nominative/accusative singular neuter.  
***wa/i-li-ia-si*** (= *waliyasi*): verb, ending *-si*, 2 singular present, “you praise”.
- § 17. ***á-mi-ia-pa-wa/i*** (*amiya+pa+wa* connectives): apparently genitival adjective in *-iya-* formed from *amu*, “I/me”, probable accusative plural neuter, “(those) of me, mine”.  
**NEG<sub>2</sub>**: as in § 15.  
**wa/i-[-li]-ia-si-i**: probable restoration by comparison with preceding clause.

- § 18. *wa/i-tu-u* (= *watu*): *wa* connective + *tu*, pronoun, 2 singular accusative/dative or 3 singular dative, “(to) you” or “to him”.  
**FEMINA-ti-ia+ra/i** (= *wanatiyari*): noun, ablative (singular) ending *-ari* < *-ati* “by/from the woman”.  
*na-na*: uncertain, personal name without ending?  
**(INFANS) ni-m[u]-w[a/i]- ...** (= **(logogram) nim[u]w[iza...]**): noun, broken off, “child”.
- § 19. ...*pa-ti-sa-ha*: incomplete(?), verb, ending *-ha*, 1 singular preterite, unknown.
- § 20. **CRUS<sub>2</sub>-nú-pa-wa/i**: as for § 11.  
**\*187(-)ka-pa-ra/i-na-<sup>r</sup>** (= **(logogram) kaparin(?)**): noun, ending *-n*, accusative singular common gender, unknown.  
**NEG<sub>2</sub>(-)tâ-na**: negative+uncertain reading, unclear.  
**\*69(-)sâ-tara/i-ti**: uncertain, logogram+incomplete(?) writing, ending *-ati*, ablative (?), unknown.  
**PUGNUS.PUGNUS-i-wa/i**: verb, unknown reading, uncertain meaning, as above, § 3, ending *-wi*, 1 singular present.
- § 21. **â-pi-wa/i-mu** (= *api+wa* connective+*mu* pronoun): adverb, “back, behind”, as for § 7.  
*wa/i-ti-ia-ta-'* (= *watiyata*): verb unknown, as for § 8, ending *-ta*, 3 singular (plural) preterite, “he (they) WATIYA'-ed”.
- § 22. *wa/i-mu-u* (= *wamu*): *wa* connective+pronoun, 1 singular (accusative) dative, “(to) me”.  
**1 \*257-sa \*257-za**: logogram \*257, reading unknown, should represent “silver(?)”. “silver (of) silver” is not obviously meaningful, but a guess from context suggests “one shekel (of) silver”.  
**NEG<sub>2</sub> (= na)**: negative.  
*pi-ia-ta* (= *piyata*): verb, ending *-ta*, 3 singular (plural) preterite, “he (they) gave”.
- § 23. *wa/i-mi-i* (= *wami*): *wa* connective+pronoun 1 singular reflexive, “myself”.  
**DEUS-ni-na** (= *masanin*): noun, accusative singular common gender, ending *-n*, “god”.

*i-zi-i-ha (over-wa/i) (= iziha)*: verb, ending *-ha*, 1 singular preterite (over *-wa/i*, 1 singular present), “I made” (over “make”). Writing, grammar, vocabulary clear; meaning unclear.

### **Content:**

With the loss of an unknown quantity of text from the left end of the strip, the context runs: line 1, greetings [lacuna]; lines 2+3, obscure [lacuna]; line 4, obscure, end. The obscurity arises partly from uncertainty about readings where the surface is damaged by corrosion, but more particularly from our ignorance of crucial elements of vocabulary.

Line 1 (§§ 1-3). The greetings, which show unequivocally that the text is a letter, are immediately recognizable as closely similar in formulation to those of the ASSUR letters, particularly the double greeting of ASSUR letter d, and indeed they serve usefully to elucidate the grammar of the latter texts. §§ 4-5, breaking off in the middle of the second clause, begin the first part of the letter’s message, but unfortunately are not sufficiently clear to give an intelligible context.

Line 2 (§§ 6-12). This passage seems to concern a “father” (*tati-*) mentioned in §§ 7, 9, 11, 12, but our ignorance of vocabulary, particularly the verbs PUGNUS.PUGNUS (§ 7), *watiya-* (§§ 8, 9, 12) and *laisa-* (§ 11) renders the sense obscure.

Line 3 (§§ 13-18). Relatively less obscure. §§ 16-17, if correctly read, seem to be a complaint.

Line 4 (§§ 20-21). Obscure, reappearance of PUGNUS.PUGNUS and *watiya-*. §§ 22-23, though clear, are somewhat cryptic.

### **Style, date and historical context:**

The text is written in exactly the linear incised “cursive” form used for the other lead strips from ASSUR and KULULU, from which we may infer that this represents a standard form of handwriting normally used on more everyday materials, wood or leather, rather than lead. It was also used on the later 8th century B.C. stone inscriptions from Kululu and its environs, the KULULU stelae and SULTANHAN, from which J.D. Hawkins has referred to it as the “Kululu style”. The dating of these inscriptions is by association with the names of the rulers Tuwati and Wasusarma, the latter being identified

with the Wassurme deposed by Tiglath-pileser III, c. 730 B.C. Such a date is likely for the present document too, and indeed it is quite possible that the “lord Tuwati” addressed in the letter was indeed the ruler of that name. His “servant Muwatali” may not have been particularly subordinate but could have been a high official: the tone of the letter, so far as it is understood does not seem to be specially subservient but rather querulous.

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Fig. 1: The Kırşehir Letter obverse

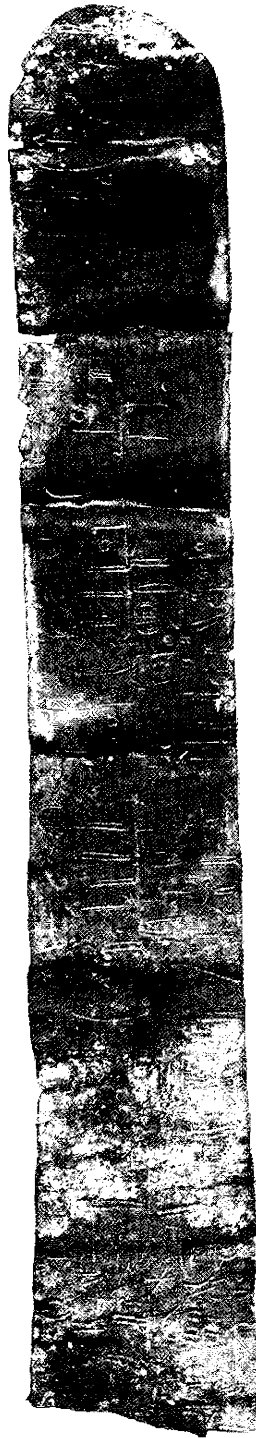


Fig. 2: The Kırşehir Letter reverse

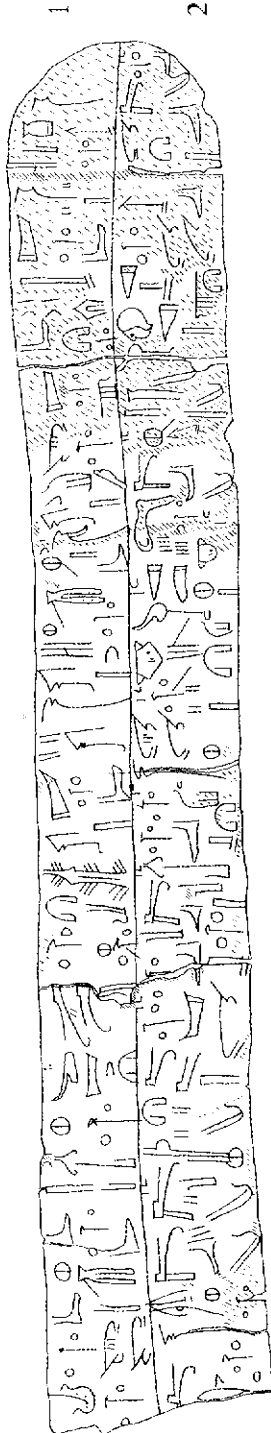


Fig. 3: The Kirşehir Letter observe

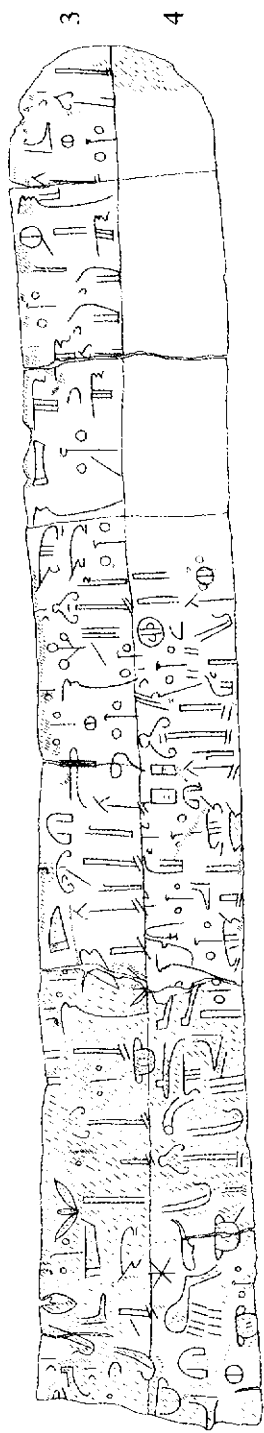


Fig. 4: The Kirşehir Letter reserve



Fig. 5: Lead strip found on Büyükkale at Boğazköy in 1937



Fig. 6: Lead strip found on Büyükkale at Boğazköy in 1937



Fig. 7: Lead strip found on Büyükkale at Boğazköy in 1937