

Austro-Italian Archaeological Investigations in the Region of Yozgat (Turkey)

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On the occasion of this Seminar on central-northern Anatolia in Hittite Period, we wish to present an overview of the activities we have effected in the last few years in the Yozgat region. These activities, planned and coordinated by Karl Strobel, the general director of the Tavium International Research Project, are the results of an Austro-Italian cooperation project, involving the Universities of Klagenfurt, Udine, Trieste and Verona.

Since 1997, the western part of the province of Yozgat with the ancient city of Tavium, the centre of the Delice Irmak Basin, is surveyed by K. Strobel and his team (fig. 1). In 2004, the Austro-Italian cooperation project became part of the Tavium International Research Project. The Italian partners are working within the research permission given by the Turkish authorities to K. Strobel. In the research area, are two major archaeological sites, Tavium, a big and important city from Early Bronze Age to Byzantine times, and Yassihüyük (see below).

Tavium (probably = *Tawiniya*) is located near the modern village of Büyüknefes around 20 km south of Hattuša. The border between the territories of the two Bronze Age kingdoms is the volcanic mountain range of the Zirzili Dağı. In Tavium, an impressive fortification of the later 3rd millennium is found, and the importance of the city of *Tawiniya* is attested in the texts from Karum Kaniš. In Hittite times, it was an important cult centre of the empire¹. Before Hattuša became the residence of the Hittite kings, Tavium was an important city which controlled major roads in the Delice Irmak area and a rich agricultural region. In the time of the Phrygian empire, there were three major settlements in the area, Tavium, the Iron-Age city in Hattuša, and the Iron Age settlement in Alaca Hüyük. Around 800 B.C., the Iron Age fortresses of Keykavus Kale and Çeska Kale with their huge glacis-walls were built. At the end of the 7th c. B.C., the city of Pteria was built on the Kerkenes Dağ east of Yozgat being the capital of the Phrygian empire after the

¹ K. Strobel – Chr. Gerber, “TAVIUM (Büyüknefes, Provinz Yozgat) – Ein regionales Zentrum Anatoliens. Bericht über den Stand der Forschung nach den ersten drei Kampagnen (1977-1999)”, *IM* 50 (2000), 215-265; K. Strobel – Chr. Gerber, “TAVIUM (Büyüknefes, Provinz Yozgat) – Bericht über die Kampagnen 2000-2002”, *IM* 53 (2003), 131-195; K. Strobel – Chr. Gerber, “TAVIUM (Büyüknefes, Provinz Yozgat) – Bericht über die Kampagnen 2003 -2005”, *IM* 57 (2007), 547-621; K. Strobel, “Tawiniya/Tavium and the Regional Hittite Road Network”, in: K. Strobel, ed., *New Perspectives on the Historical Geography and Topography of Anatolia in the II and I Millennium B.C.*, Firenze 2008, 281-302; Chr. Gerber, “Die Keramikgruppen von Tavium/Büyüknefes”, *Anatolia Antiqua* 11 (2003), 223-251; I. Weber-Hiden, “Keramik aus hellenistischer bis frühbyzantinischer Zeit aus Tavium”, *Anatolia Antiqua* 11 (2003), 253-322; K. Strobel, “Pteria und das Phrygerreich” in: *Eine ganz normale Inschrift und ähnliches. Festschrift Ekkehard Weber* (Wien 2005), 133-154. On the hypothesis of localize the Hittite city of Tawiniya at Büyüknefes see lastly S. de Martino, “The City of Tawiniya and the Meaning of the Word *paššu-* in Hittite Texts” in: R. Bombi, G. Cifoletti, F. Fusco, L. Innocente, V. Orioles, eds., *Studi Linguistici in onore di Roberto Gusmani* (Alessandria 2006), 537-547.

conquest of the parts west of the Halys by the Lydians. It was destroyed by Kroisos. In Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine times, Taouion/Tavium (also Tavia/Tabia) became the centre of the whole eastern part of Galatia which was organised by the Romans as the territory of the Polis of Tavium.

The goal of Tavium International Research Project is the archaeological investigation of the western part of the modern province of Yozgat through all periods². Thus, the survey area ends in the north on the border of the modern province of Çorum, but includes the territories immediately south and east of Hattuša. The systematic regional survey conducted by Karl Strobel and Chr. Gerber covers after the campaign of 2006 all parts of the region under research. The goal of the Italian partners is concentrated on the archaeological investigation of the north-eastern part, in its prehistoric, pre-Classical and Classical layout and the identification of one or more sites, where interdisciplinary research for the reconstruction of the archaeological and geo-morphological landscapes of Central Anatolia may be suitably carried out.

1. Within the overall project in the Yozgat region, the archaeological operations have been so far:

In the year 2004 the joint Austro-Italian team has performed a survey in some areas of the north-eastern part of the area under licence.

From 2005 onwards, the Italian team has begun a specific survey in the site of Yassihuyuk.

2006 K. Strobel and Chr. Gerber discovered the site of Cihanpaşa and began the research on that site.

2. Operation a.

The team was formed by the writers, by the two archaeologists of the expedition, Christoph Gerber (Heidelberg) and Marta Luciani (Wien), and by students from the Universities of Udine, Verona and Trieste.

The interest of this region, especially the area to the North of the modern city of Yozgat, is that it is localised at the exact spot where two main river systems and their tributaries meet. The first is the Kızılırmak-Delice İrmak river system, one of the main, if not the major one in the entire Anatolian peninsula. Sites at the very core of the Hittite land, such as Alaca Hüyük and Hattuša itself belong to it. The second river system, in the NE of our investigation area, is the Çorum Çayı. Significant Hittite sites are part of this hydrographical net, such as Alaca Hüyük, Eskiypar or even Ortaköy, ancient *Šapinuwa*.

With these premises in mind, we have decided to start by investigating the area where these two river systems convene.

As far as our field methodology is concerned, we carried out a low intensity reconnaissance survey during the first campaign. The first investigations meant exploring by car the sites mostly along the three main modern roads.

² See also the annual reports in: *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, especially K. Strobel – Chr. Gerber, "Das internationale Tavium-Projekt. Bericht über die Kampagne 2005", 24. *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı 2. Cilt* (Ankara 2007), 15-34.

All sites were positioned exactly with a portable GPS. They have been described according to a site sheet designed in order to document the most important features. The surface material, almost exclusively pottery sherds, was collected, where this was possible, on the basis of a total collection policy by 5 to 7 operators.

Along the northbound road to Alaca, we could identify a number of sites of different periods, numbers 1-17 on the map (fig. 2).

We mention here only the most interesting:

Nr. 2: Ağirek Tepe, which lies in the vicinity of Kiziltepe; it had already been surveyed by K. Strobel in the year 1997. This site is placed on the northern fringes of the upper valley dug by the Eriözü river. It is a site of medium height with pottery of the Chalcolithic Period.

Nr. 6: Çeşkekale; the archaeological remains of this site are placed at the top of a steep hill, approximately 1600 meters in height, from which an ample view of the valley of the Eriözü river may be obtained. It is characterized by a hug fortification, architectural structures dug into the rock face as well as staircases. The pottery material refers essentially to the Iron Age. The site was already surveyed and mapped by K. Strobel and Chr. Gerber³.

Nr. 10: Türkmensarlar Hüyük; It is a site strategically placed at the confluence of two streams, which proves to have been damaged by a clandestine excavation on the northern flank. Among the material abandoned by the plunders were a few sherds datable in part to the end of the third millennium B.C., and in part to the Hittite Age.

Nr 13: Yılanlı Tepe (in the vicinity of Evci village). This is a natural hill site, with terracing on which remains of buildings and pottery were visible. The gathered material comprises pottery of the third millennium BC, as for example an exemplar of the local Mercimek Tepe type, but especially sherds dated to the Hittite period.

3. Operation b.

3.1. One of the investigated survey is Yassihüyük, nr. 3 on the map. It has already visited and surveyed for the first time by K. Strobel and Chr. Gerber in the years 2001 and 2002⁴. On this site the Italian component has concentrated its investigations during the years 2005 and 2006.

This site seemed very promising for the exploration of second rank, smaller, possibly even rural sites in the hinterland of the Hittite capital, Hattuša, an aspect of Bronze Age settlement structure thus far partially neglected by research. Even more important, in the case of Yassihüyük, we have a settlement with a long spanning human occupation and therefore, we may hope to obtain data on long-lived settlement stratigraphy lacking elsewhere in Central Anatolia even on large sites.

Yassihüyük is an oval shaped hüyük, slightly over 2 hectares in size oriented NW-SE; the top, flat, part measures 217 m. x 143 m. The height of the ramparts which slope to the plain all around the site reaches ca. 8-10m at their steepest on the SE side of the mound.

³ Cf. Strobel – Gerber l.c. 2003.

⁴ Cf. Strobel – Gerber l.c. 2003.

The surface of Yassihüyük was divided in 5 different agricultural fields (cultivated with cereals or chickpeas), labelled with the numbers 29 to 33. The south-eastern fields (29 and 31, all in all ca. 1ha in size) had been ploughed to a depth of ca. 0.30m, approximately two months prior to our arrival in 2004. The other three fields, 30, 33 and 32 (summing up also to 1ha in extension) had not been ploughed recently and displayed harvested bundles of chickpeas laid to dry on the earth itself and thus somewhat obscuring the surface of the fields (fig. 3).

The survey of the year 2005 was planned to take place on the visible and practicable surface of the fields and was completed only on half of the area (field 32 and 31), so that parts of the site still remain to be investigated in the coming year.

The team benefited in 2005 from the expert archaeological conduction of Dr. M. Luciani; the shorter 2006 campaign was devoted to the study of the abundant ceramic materials from the previous year. In 2007 the role of field director on behalf of the Italian component will be taken up by Chr. Gerber, who has worked in the Yozgat area since 1996.

A high intensity surface survey was carried out at Yassihüyük in order to identify, localise and map the following aspects:

(1) The overall *micro-topography* of the archaeological site, in order to localise rests of possible underlying features and structures

(2) The *surface contexts*, i.e. those diverse earth deposits/matrixes that are brought to the surface by the action of the plough in order to differentiate among areas of the site.

(3) *Clusters* of archaeological material, which, notwithstanding the shift due to the action of the plough, should have a general correspondence with underlying deposits. These significant concentrations of archaeological material turned out to be made both of pottery but also of different stone masonry parts. Identified clusters in fields 31 and 32 are marked with letters from A to J (see fig. 3).

(4) A *geo-magnetic resistance* survey with a specifically designed protons magnetometer for the identification of anomalies pointing to buried structures was carried out on parts of the site by Dr. Christian Hübner of GGH Gbr Freiburg

If we superimpose the results of the geomagnetic analysis onto the plan of the mound, the anomalies that have emerged from this survey and that may be interpreted as stone structures assume particular significance: in the south-western perimeter of the mound, that may well correspond to a town wall with a fortified gate and in the central part of the site to a large and complex compound, possibly a public building. We have no information regarding the date of this building as yet (fig. 4).

If we now further superimpose our surface context map, we may observe a perfect correspondence between the area topographically higher and the localisation of the large building. The depressed areas, on the contrary, appear to match quite closely with gates in the town wall (fig. 5).

A glimpse at the distribution of our small finds shows no direct and clear-cut associations with the large building detected by the geomagnetic survey.

In general it may be said that finds from the Hittite period stem from the lower lying areas of the mound to the NW, while those of Iron Age come from the higher parts to the SE. The supposed lower city outside the Hüyük will be investigated in 2007.

3.2. A fragment of a Hittite cuneiform tablet and some Hittite period pottery, even if not found in the vicinity of the large building, could stem from this or from a similar complex.

A reading of the tablet YH 2005/1 has yielded the following results:

Obv.

- 1' [EZE]N₄ (?) ^Dx[
 2' ^{NU-TI-I}[(oder) ^mNu-ti-i[

 3' ^LEZEN₄ GAL ^{MUNUS}ŠU.GI
 4' ^{LU}UMMEDA []

 5' ^LEZEN₄ ^{GIŠ}SAG.KUL I UDU []
 6' []x-na-an-x[]x EN.S[ISKUR

 7' [EZE]N₄ ^DHu-wa-ar-pa-zi-pa[(-)
 8' (vacat)

 9' [EZEN₄] DI₁₂-ŠI ^{TUL}Ta-ta₁-ri-jn[a
 10' vacat

This small fragment of a Hittite tablet in New Script preserves part of a list of cult-festivals⁵.

Festivals mentioned here are:

festival of the "Chief of the old women" (GAL ^{MUNUS}ŠU.GI), l. 3'⁶;

festival of the lock, l. 5';

festival of god Huwarpazipa, l. 7';

springfestival, l. 9'.

The Chief of the old women is documented only rarely in Hittite texts; in some cases he takes part in festivals, which belong mostly to the Hattian tradition⁷. A "festival of the Chief of the old women" is not known in other Hittite tablets. In the same paragraph we find also the sumerogram ^{LU}UMMEDA⁸ "keeper", "caretaker"⁹; this cult attendant is

⁵ Sign EZEN₄ (= festival) is badly preserved all over the text, since the surface of the tablet is damaged in many parts; at a first look it seems to be written simply as EZEN₄, but some traces of the inscribed sign ŠE appear in lines 3' and 5'. On this tablet see now S. de Martino in Strobel – Gerber, *JM* 53 (2007), 606-607.

⁶ Reading "great festival of the old woman" seems to me less probable.

⁷ See F. Pecchioli Daddi, *Mestieri professioni e dignità nell'Anatolia ittita* (Roma 1984), 556.

⁸ See F. Pecchioli Daddi, op. cit., 469.

⁹ See Puhvel, *HED* 3, 204-205 s.v. *harwant-*.

present in some rituals, as it is witnessed for example by text KUB X 78 + KUB XX 25 II 6¹⁰.

The “lock” (hitt. *ḫattahu-*)¹¹ is a sacred *locus* and a recipient of offerings during rituals¹², but I do not know any attestation of a “festival of the lock”.

The god’s name mentioned in l. 7’ also represents a *hapax*¹³, although it is composed with the well known element *-z/ši/epa*, which forms several divine names¹⁴.

The “spring festival” EZEN₄ DI₁₂-ŠI is documented in other Hittite texts¹⁵. In our tablet it is connected to a geographical name, that is the name of a “spring”, a “pool of water”: *Tatarina*.¹⁶

This spring name appears in some texts of the *ḫišuwa* festival¹⁷, in the sixth and tenth tablets of this festival, where some rivers and springs receive offerings¹⁸. The spring *Tatarina* is documented also in KUB XLII 86, 9¹⁹ again as recipient of offerings, but probably on the occasion of an autumn festival (l. 10’: EZEN₄ *zenandaš*).

In conclusion, the cult horizon of this small fragment is composite. Festival of the old women (also because of the mention of the “Chief of the old women” and of the U¹UMMEDA) refers to Hattian and north-Anatolian tradition; on the contrary, the spring *Tatarina*, mentioned in the same paragraph of the EZEN₄ DI₁₂-ŠI, seems to belong to Hurro-Kizzuwatnean tradition.

4. Operation c.

The site of Cihanpaşa – Kaletepe is located 16 km east of the upper city of Hattuša. To the north of Cihanpaşa and Yassihüyük, two steep valleys, that of the Kirim Deresi and that of the Buduk Deresi, form something like a border from the west to the basin of Alaca (fig. 5).

East of the modern village of Cihanpaşa, between the Aktaş Tepe, Örtlek Tepe and Kaletepe is a well watered high plateau. Parts of the landscape are covered with wood. In the fields north of the Kaletepe (1385 m above sea) many sherds of chalkolithic and Bronze Age pottery were found. There must have been an important chalkolithic settlement. An old road coming directly from the west, from Derbent, and following the mountain ridge passes through the higher part of the village of Cihanpaşa to the east. The

¹⁰ See M. Popko, *Zippalanda, Ein Kultzentrum in hethitischen Kleinasien*, THeth 21 (Heidelberg 1994), 306-307.

¹¹ See Pulvel, *HED* 3, 257-260.

¹² See M. Popko, *Kultobjekte in der hethitischen Religion* (Warszawa 1976), 42-44.

¹³ It does not appear in the recent book by B.H.L. van Gessel, *Onomasticon of the Hittite Pantheon* (Leiden 1998).

¹⁴ See V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (Leiden 1994), 299 (with previous literature).

¹⁵ See J. Tischler, *HEG* III/10, 341.

¹⁶ See G. del Monte – J. Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der hethitischen Texte*, RGTC 6, Wiesbaden 1978, 553; G. del Monte, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der hethitischen Texte*, (Supplement) RGTC 6/2 (Wiesbaden 1992), 211.

¹⁷ KUB XXVII 47 I 6’; KUB XXVII 48 + V 23’; KBo XXXIII 196 + KBo XV 68 II 9’, see M.C. Trémouille, “CTH 628: une mise à jour”, *SMEA* 40 (1998), 263-270.

¹⁸ S. V. Haas, *GHR*, cit., 867.

¹⁹ S. M. Popko, *THeth* 21 cit., p. 318-321: here U¹U¹Tatarina is a mistake for T^UU¹Tatarina.

road passes south of the Örtlek Tepe and along the northern slope of the Kale Tepe and goes straight to the east to the valley of the Kırımözü Deresi north of the village of Türkmenşarilar, where two Bronze Age settlement were located. North and south of the Kurtlu Tepe (1306 m) the road climbs to the plateau of Yassihüyük and arrives there at the site of the ancient Hittite city.

The Kale Tepe is a double rocky massive of limestone (about 450 m from west to east and 120 m from north to south) with steep slopes. On the western part of this rocky massive, an impressive Hittite fortress was found during the last day of the campaign of 2006 on the 23th of August by Prof. Dr. Karl Strobel and Dr. Chr. Gerber. The site was not known before. Only the villagers know that there are “big stones” and they had used them for building the village in former times. During the first visit, sherds were collected from the fields north of the Kale Tepe and from the surface of the central part of the fortress. A first measurement was done by GPS and a sketch of site was drawn.

Along the northern side of the rocky massive one can follow the traces of a massive circuit wall whose outer face is based on rock-cut beddings and the inner face is built with well worked blocks (fig. 6). Most blocks of the outer face had crumbled down the slope. The wall was about 6 m wide. The complex consists of a central area of about 100/120 m west to east and 90/100 m north to south. On its western side follows a light slope where the complex of the upper fortress continues to the west for about 100 m. On the central plateau the massive walls of a building complex of 50 x 80 m can be seen (fig. 7). Its eastern side forms an impressive base-wall for a facade of mud brick now lost. The structure of the architecture and the building blocks are similar to the Great Temple or the complexes of the upper city of Hattuša. In front of this facade, a terrace with an eastern terrace wall is located. There follows the lower fortress which is extending about 120 m to the east. The remains of a gate consist of broken blocks and a doorstep of enormous dimensions.

To the south and to the west, the eroded slopes of the Kale Tepe descend to the valley of the Döne Deresi. The site of the fortress of Kaletepe overlooks the whole region to the east, south and west. It controlled the Hittite road, which can be followed also today in satellite pictures and leaves Hattusa through the King’s Gate, going first to the south and then from Derbent to the east. From Yassihüyük, the road is going further to the east into the basin of Alaca and the valley of the upper Alaca Çayı and to the south, passing along the Hittite site of Güllük Kale to the valley of the Eğriözü leading to Sorgun and the Kerkenes Dağ.

The whole architecture of the Kale Tepe is Hittite. The pottery, however, which was collected during the first visit, shows that the site was also occupied, at least in parts during the earlier Iron Age. Thus, we have here the same signs of continuity as in Yassihüyük, Güllük Kale or Yılanlı Tepe.

A further aspect of this newly discovered Hittite mountain-fortress with a central building complex of representative architecture, terraces and rock-cut architecture, the first example known until now, are the parallels to the later Urartian mountain fortresses.