

**Languages - Writing – Religion - Economy**



# Some Steps on the Way of Hittite Philology

First Examples of an Hittite Script Discovered in 1812

→ Hittite Hieroglyphs (Hama Stones)

First Discovery of Hittite Language in 1887

→ Arzawa Letters from the Armana Archive

Identification of Hittite as Indo-European in 1915



# Indo-European Languages in Anatolia

- Hittite belongs to the IE language family
- IE speakers appear in Anatolia *before* the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC
- Origin north of the Black Sea ?
- Hittite appears to supersede the non-IE Hattian language during the early part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC
- Is it justified / methodologically sound to equate the appearance of IE languages with the immigration of a “Proto-Hittite” population ?
- A minority of scholars believes that IE languages are native to Anatolia



## Languages attested in Second Millennium Anatolia

Nešili (“language of Neša”) IE = Hittite proper

Hattili (“language of Hatti”) non-IE native Anatolian language?

Luwian IE Western and Southern Anatolia

Palaic IE Northern Anatolia

Hurrian non-IE Eastern Anatolia Lake Van area

Indo-Aryan IE Eastern Anatolia Language of Mitanni

Assyrian Semitic international language of the Colony Period

Akkadian Semitic international language in the Hittite period



# Where Do The Texts Come From?

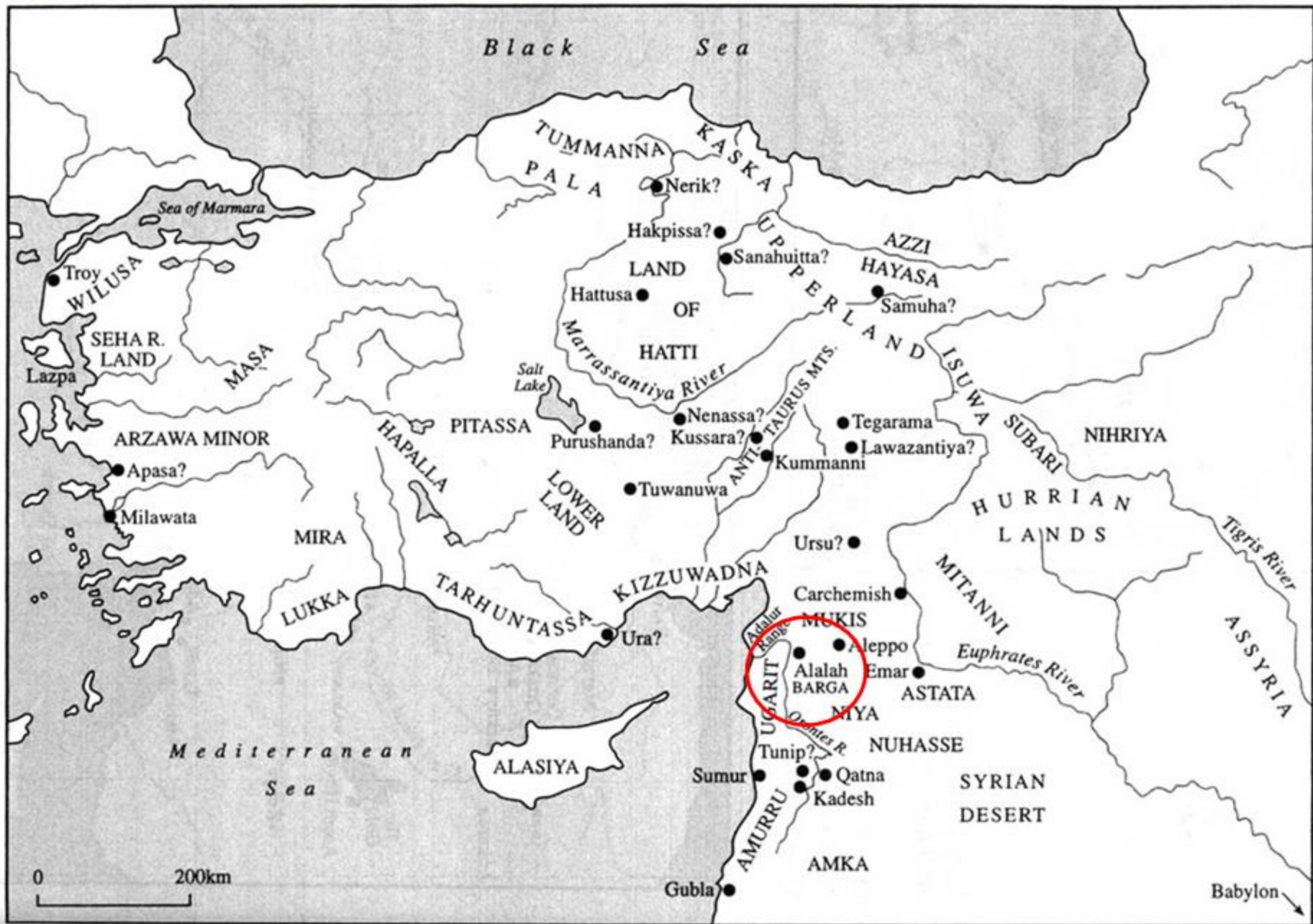
- Most text finds from the capital Hattuša
- Archives from the last phase of Hittite presence at the site
- Last years of the Empire missing
- Contained only texts of contemporary relevance
  - Most texts young, older texts decrease in numbers with increasing age



# The Development of Hittite Writing

- Old Assyrian system of writing was not continued into the Hittite Kingdom
- Adoption of Akkadian (Babylonian) variant of cuneiform
- Babylon was an exporter of scribes and the skill of writing
- Prevalent in Northern Syria
- Closest Parallel to Hittite Writing in Alalach VII







# The Emergence of Hittite Writing

- Sudden Transformation through contact with Northern Syria?
- First Use in dealings with Northern Syrian rulers (e.g. Tunip-Teššub of Tikunani)
- Probably by locally recruited scribes
- First writing in Anatolia in Akkadian, even for internal matters
- Very low intensity of writing; appears not to play an important administrative role



# The Emergence of Hittite Writing

- Writing in Hittite Language develops only very gradually
- During the reign of King Telipinu (around 1500 BC) changes in the use writing
- Appearance of writing for administrative and juridical purposes



# From Telipinu's Proclamation

“Further, whoever becomes king and seeks evil for (his) brother (and) sister, you [the Panku] (shall be) his family council and you must tell him forthright: ‘**Look at this record of bloodshed on the tablet:** In the past bloodshed had become frequent in Hattuša and the gods took revenge on the royal family’”.



# The Development of Hittite Writing

- From 1400 BC onwards, writing in Hittite becomes more frequent
- Establishment of palatial archives
- Full use of writing for administrative purposes
- Full establishment of a class of literate palace officials



# Hittite Religion

- Religion is a central element in Hittite life
- The whole animated and non-animated world is seen as being possessed by spirits (trees, rocks, springs...)
- Attachment of spirits/deities to specific places
- Syncretistic approach: “Land of a thousand gods...”
- No clear hierarchy / order in the super-natural world
- Originally not a religion constructed around a central authority
- Principal deities (Storm God of Hatti & Sun Goddess of Arinna) appear artificial / constructed... Borrowed concept?





**The Storm God Taru/Tarhun(t)a, principal deity of the Hittite pantheon**





**Central relief at Yazılıkaya Chamber A**



Alaca Höyük

The Storm God is Represented as a Bull  
Himself







The celestial bulls Huri and Seri  
They are represented as  
therianthropes on a relief at  
Yazılıkaya standing on the sign for  
“earth” and carrying the sky







Kultepe

Vase with Bull's Head

(Assyrian Colony Period)





The Storm God Taru/Tarhun(t)a, principal deity of the Hittite pantheon





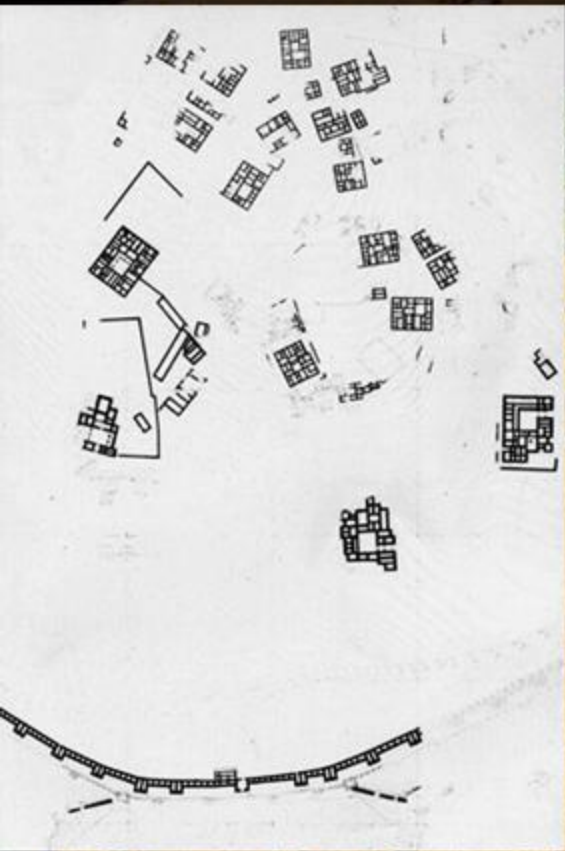
Hittite Representation  
of the  
Sun Goddess of Arinna





Hebat, on the central relief at Yazılıkaya





The Temple Quarter in the Upper City



## Liminal Locations in Hittite Religious Geography

- Mountain tops, being close to the sky (seen as an interface with the spirit world behind)
- Holes in the ground (whereby the earth surface is the interface), e.g. caves, but also dug holes.
- Graves (as holes in the ground which have been used as portals for a crossover already).
- Rock faces.
- Bodies of water, especially springs, where water can be “seen” as directly crossing the boundaries.
- The countryside in general, being – in the absence of (urban) civilisation – in a permanently liminal state.









































Kuşaklı-Sarissa, mountain-top sanctuary with spring

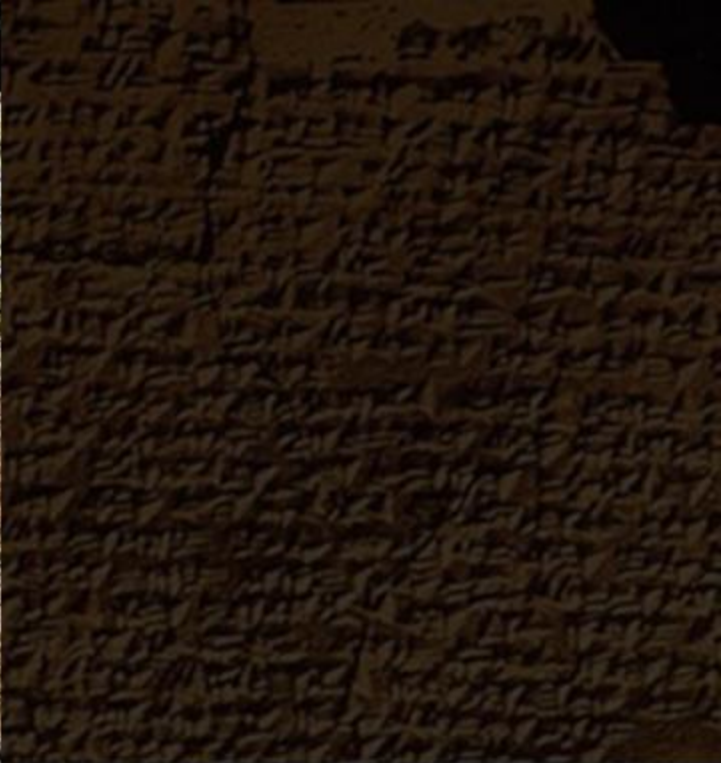




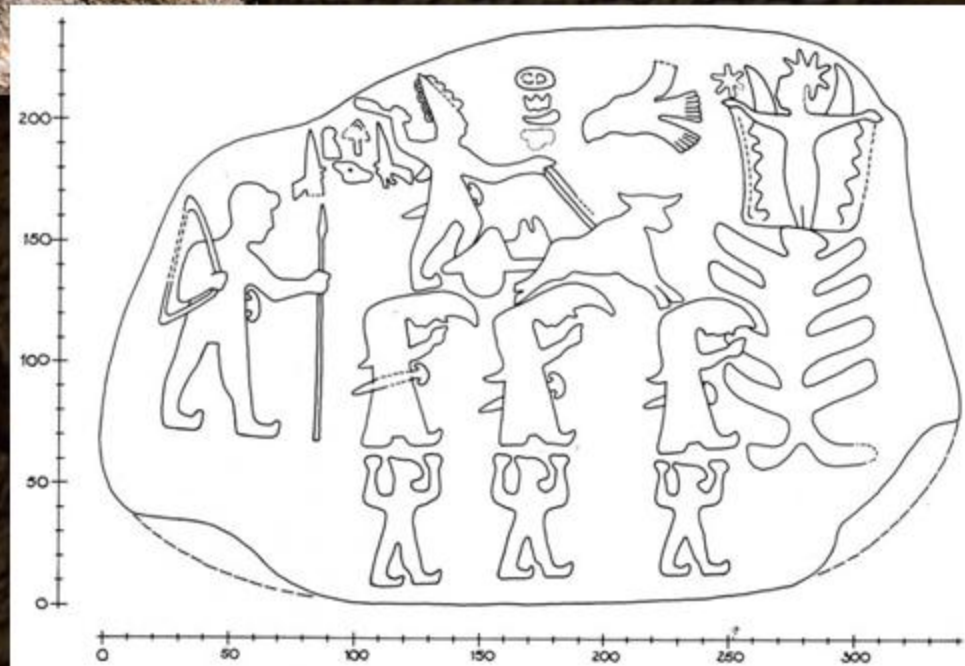








Rock Relief at Imamkulu



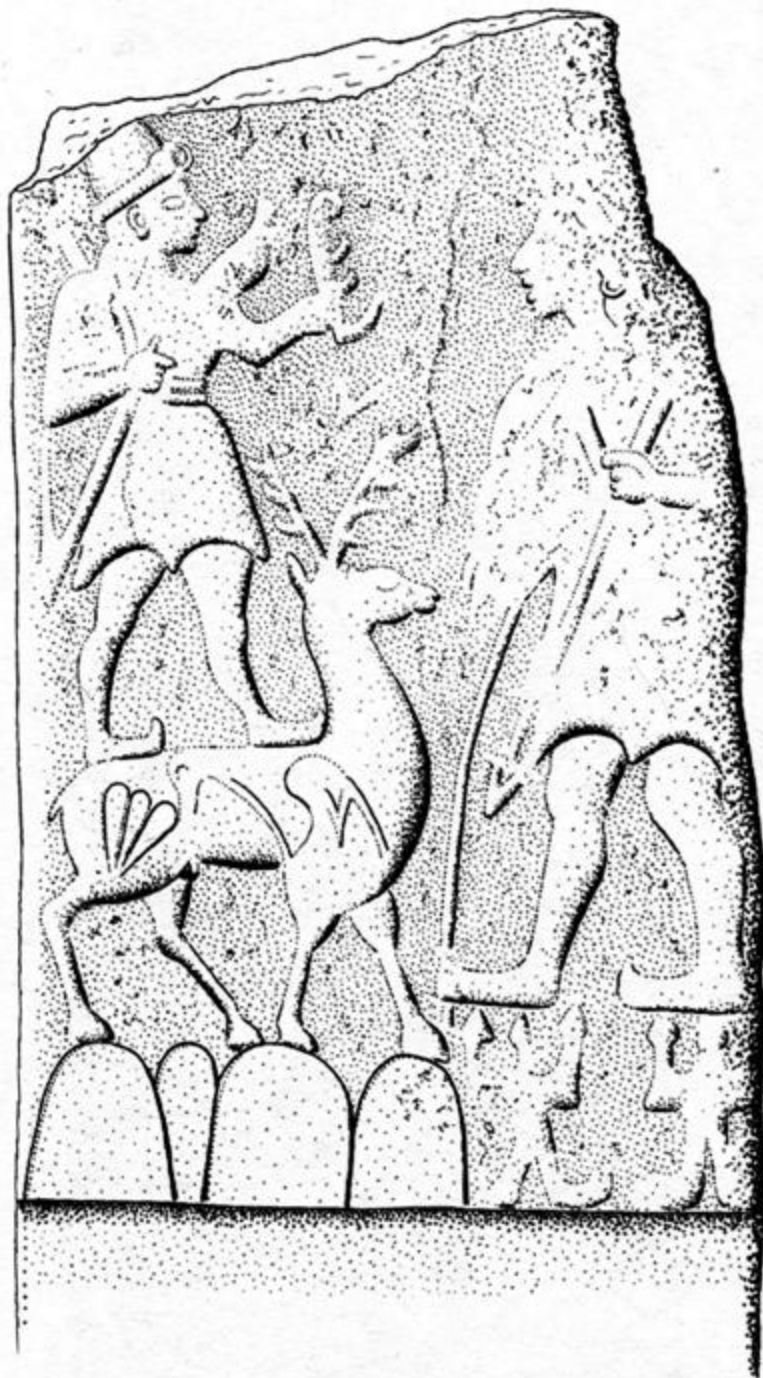


Spring Sanctuary at

Eflatun Pinar







## Stele of Kurunta, the Stag God

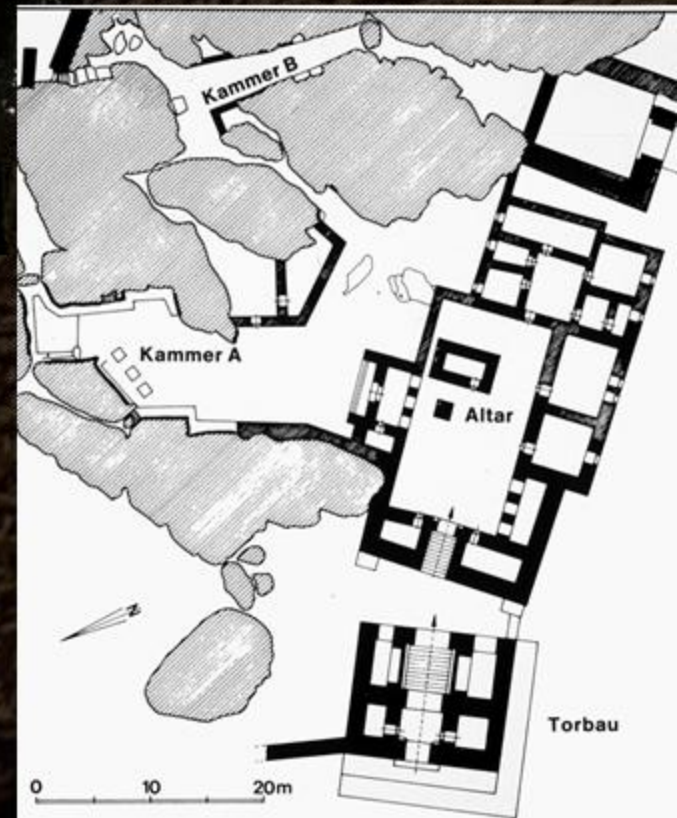
placed by the Hittite King at different locations in the countryside "marking the hunting territory"



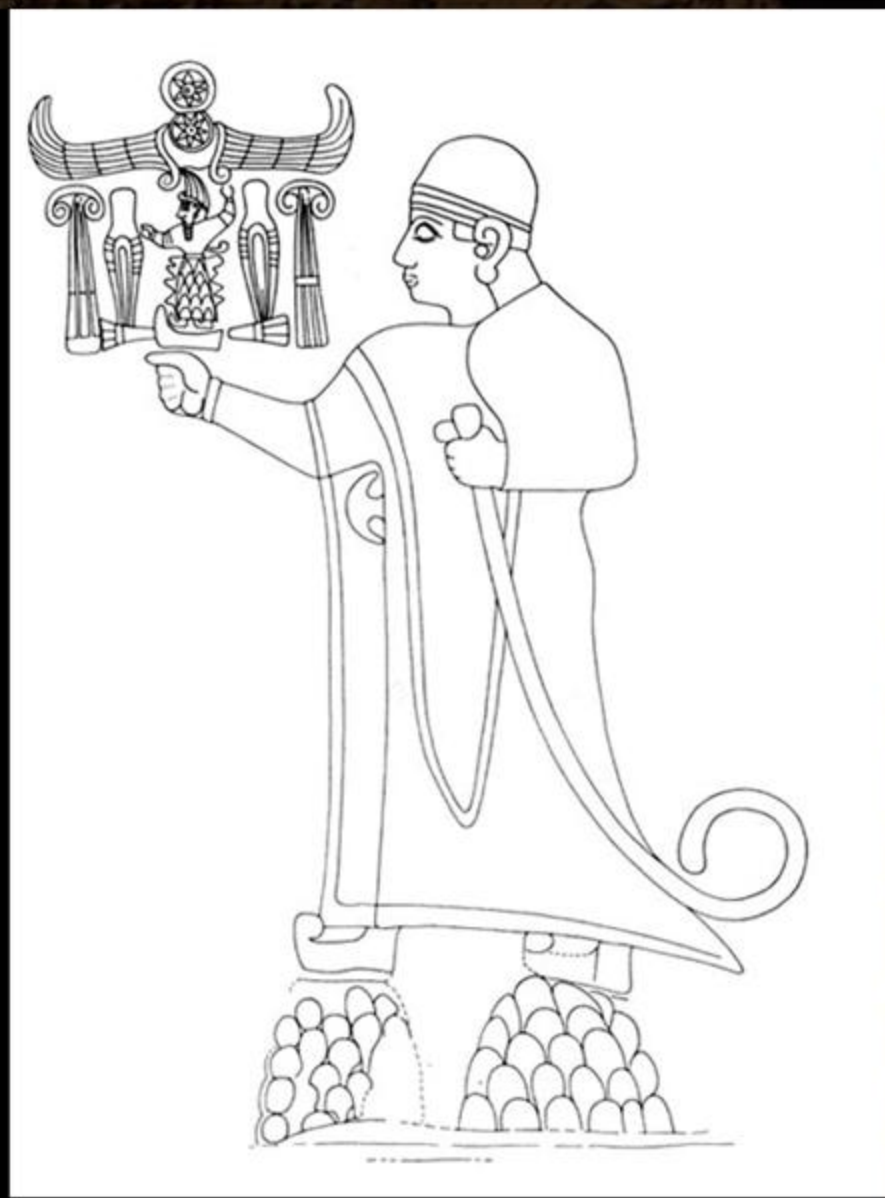


Hegur Monuments = Mausoleums of the  
Hittite Kings?









**Tuthaliya IV – Relief in the Rock Sanctuary at Yazılıkaya**













King Tuthaliya with his Protector Deity Šarruma



# Steps in the Use of Yazılıkaya

(1) Open Air Rock Sanctuary: Location of strongly pronounced liminality

(2) Transformation into a (closed) location for official state cult. Emphasis on the ideology and reproduction of the institution of kingship

- Religious buildings control access
- Hurrian re-interpretation of the pantheon
- Figurative reliefs depicting the Holy Marriage
- Annual Re-enactment

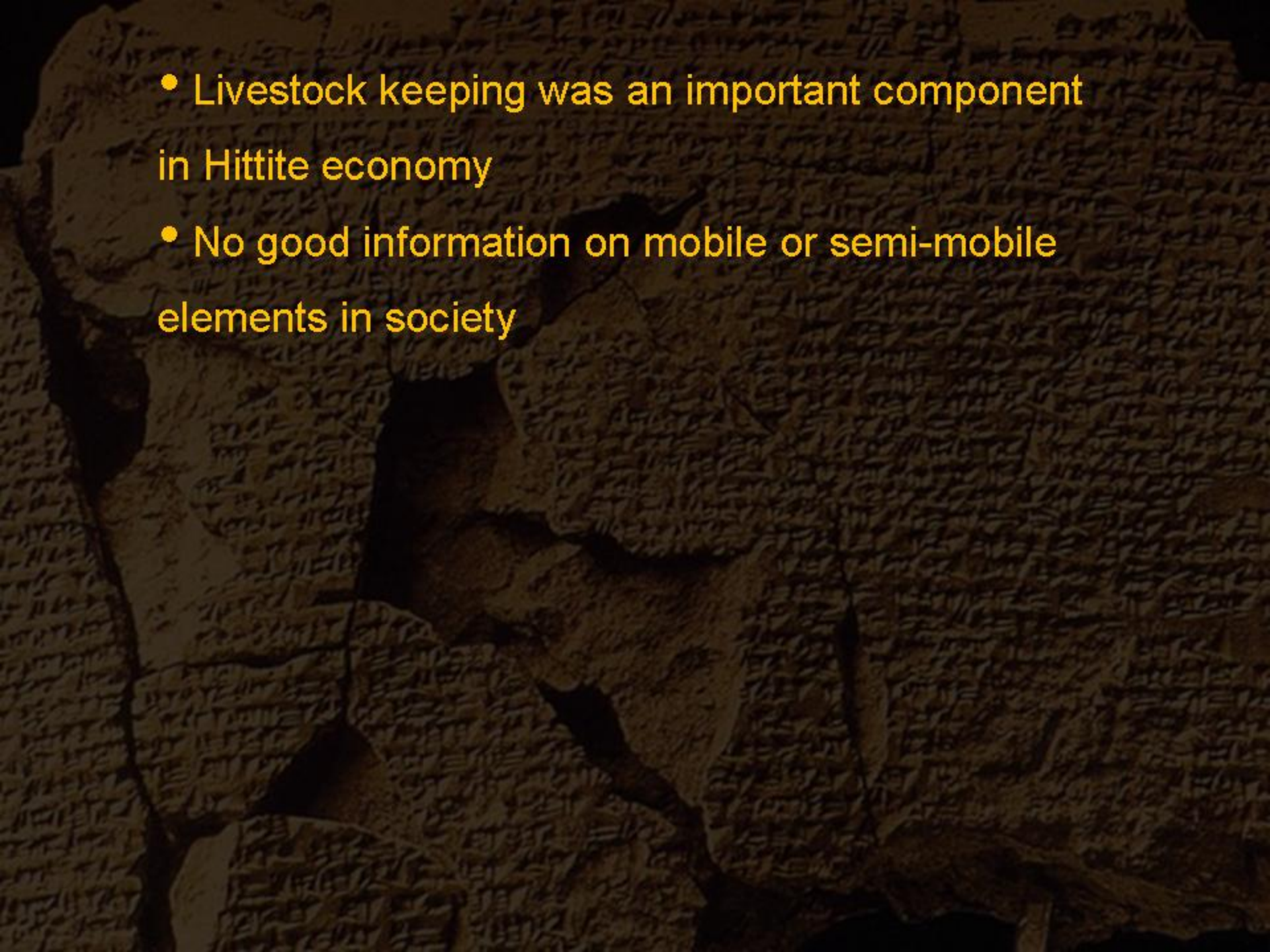
(3) Appropriation of the location for the ancestor cult of Tuthaliya IV. Emphasis on the divine nature of the deceased king (father) and therefore also of the living king. Claim of “absolute power”?



# Economy

- The economy of the Hittite State was based on agriculture
- Villages or country estates?
- No villages excavated
- There must have been considerable economic variation within the different geographies of the empire
- Hittite agriculture was NOT dependent on irrigation



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- The background of the slide is a dark, textured image of several ancient clay tablets. The tablets are covered in cuneiform script, which is a form of writing used in the ancient Near East. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the raised edges and the texture of the clay. The overall color palette is dark, with shades of brown, black, and grey.
- Livestock keeping was an important component in Hittite economy
  - No good information on mobile or semi-mobile elements in society



- Northern Anatolia was heavily forested (pollen cores from around Boğazköy and Kuşaklı)
- Geography consists of long and narrow plains
- Localised failure must have been common
- Restricts population size
- What were the constraints on village size and productivity?

### **How Did the Hittite King Deal With This Situation?**

- NAM.RA = Deportees from regions outside Hittite territory
- Were settled in great numbers within Northern Central Anatolia
- Appear also as work force in private households
- They are archaeologically not visible
- Must have merged quickly with surrounding populations

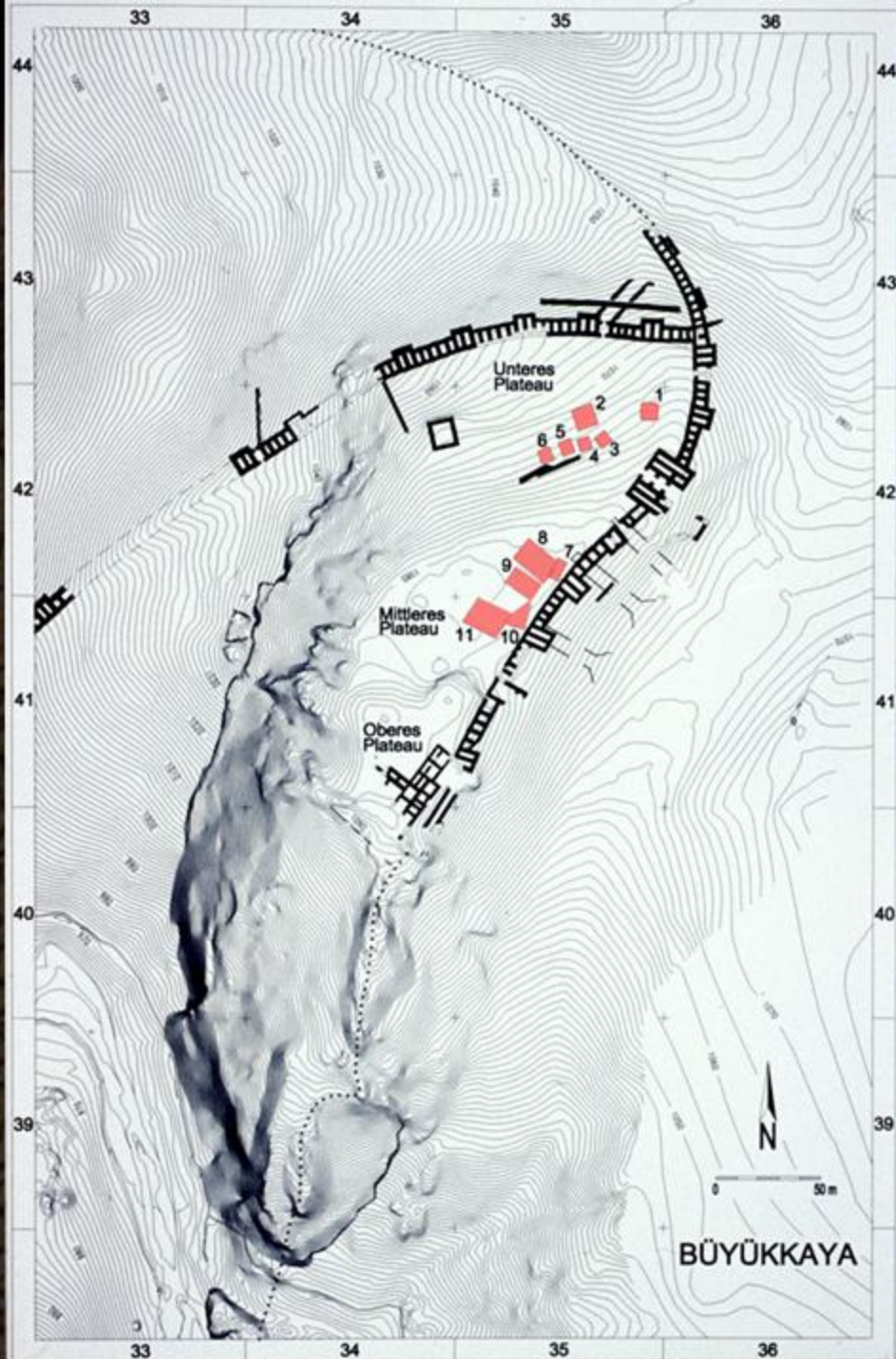




Boğazköy-Büyükkaya







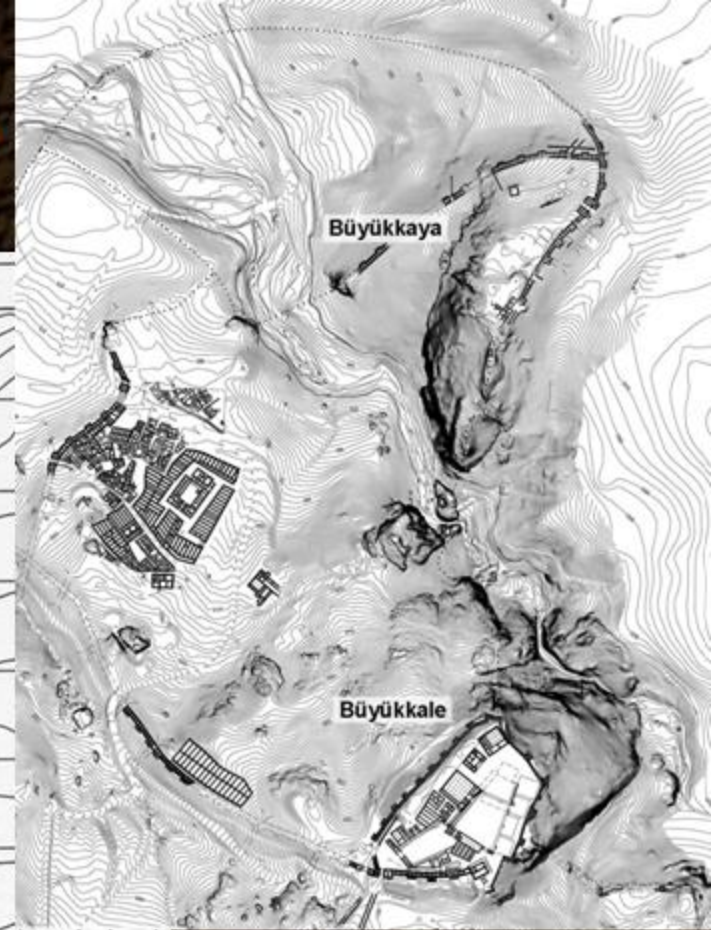
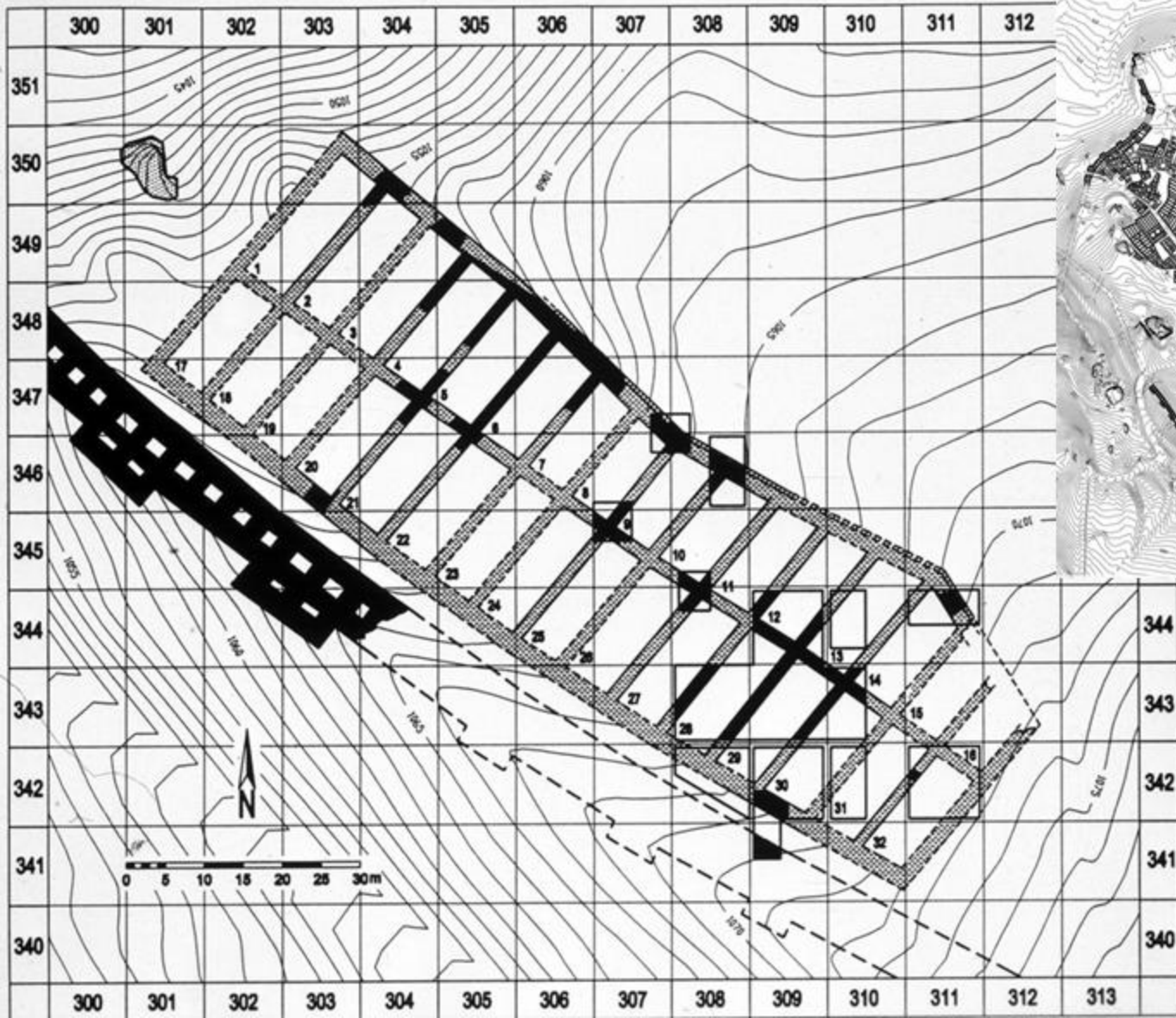
## Boğazköy-Büyükkaya

Subterranean Structures Indicated in Red

- Originally dated to the 13th century BC
- One 14C sample gives 16th century date
- 11+ silos present
- Largest 12 x 18 m
- At least 2 m deep
- Total capacity 1.800 – 2.400 tonnes of grain (minimum value)

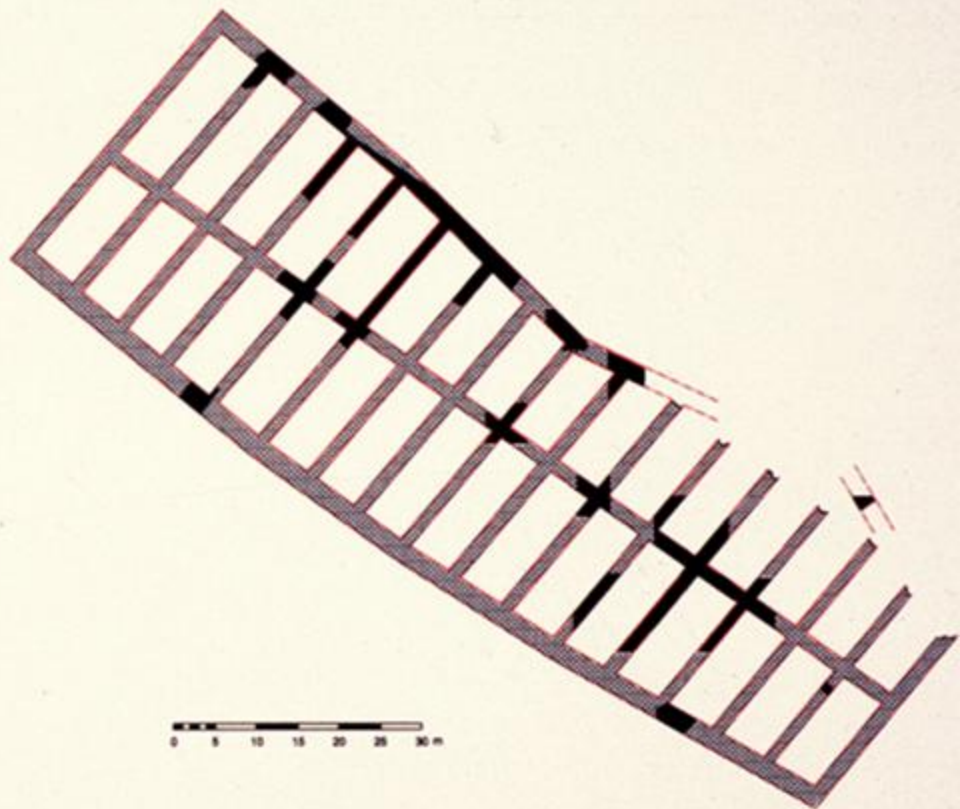
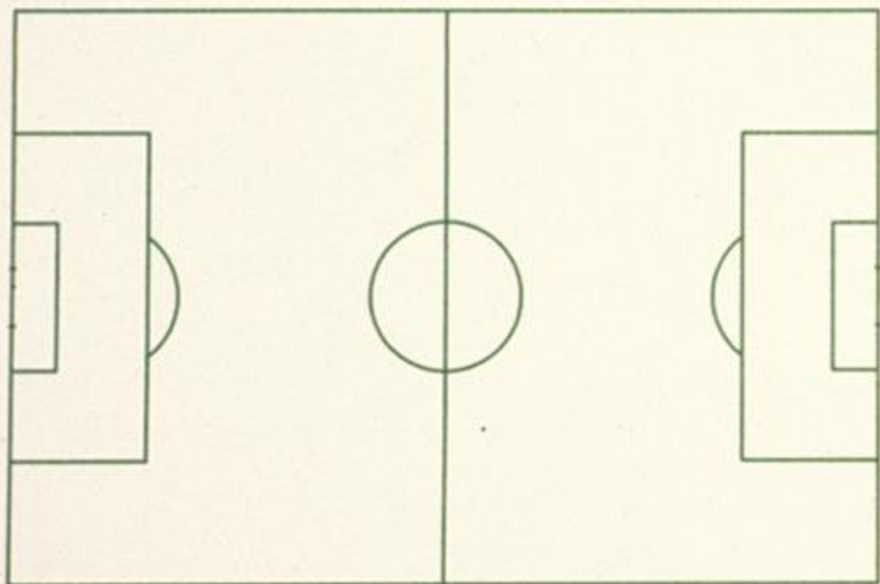


# The Silo behind the Postern Wall (16<sup>th</sup> century BC)





# The Grain Silo Behind the Postern Wall



- Partly Subterranean Building
- 32 Chambers in Double Row
- Length 118 m; Width 40 m

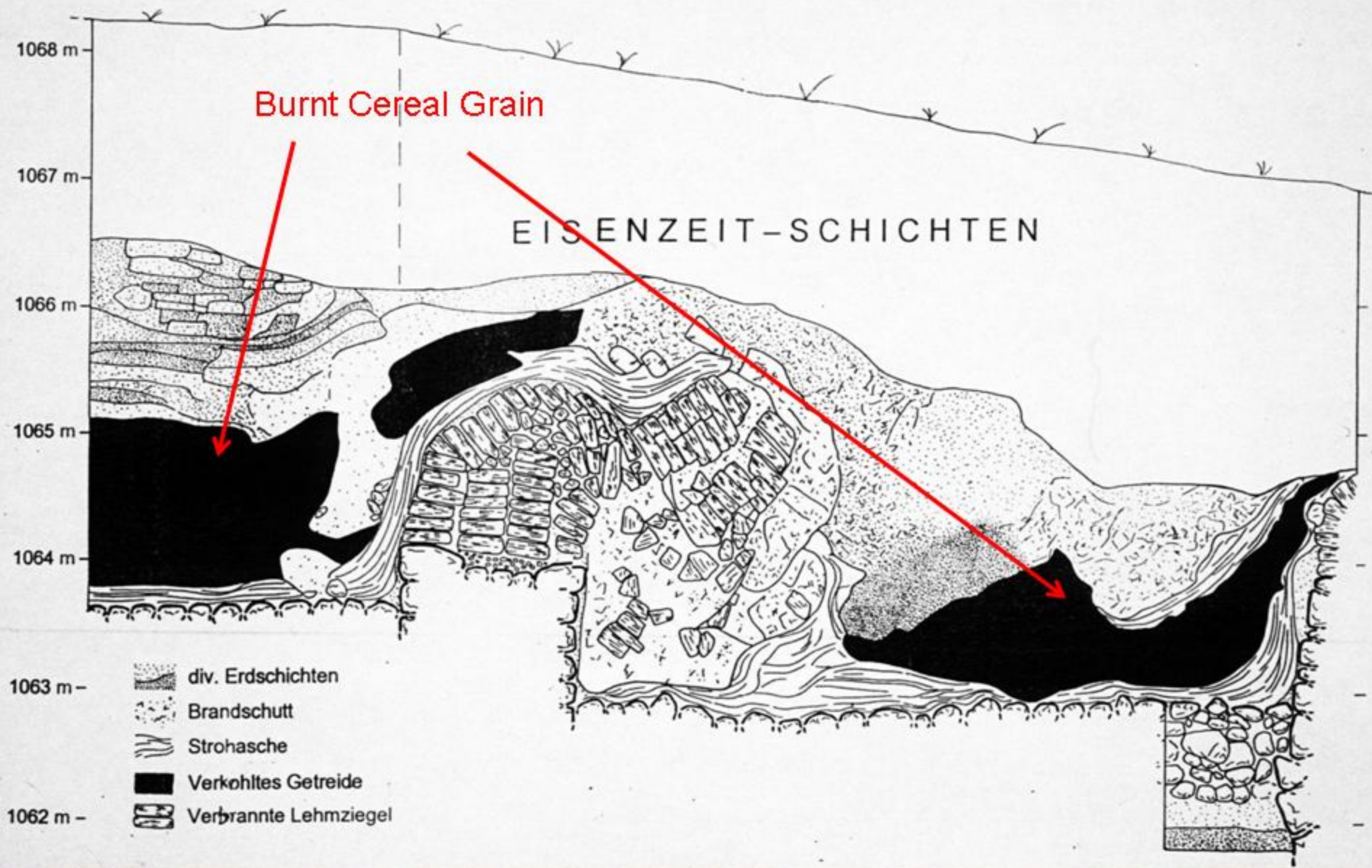














# The Grain Silo Behind the Postern Wall

## Some Technical Data

- Twelve chambers filled with charred grain
- Mostly barley, one chamber einkorn wheat
- Thickness of charred grain layer ca. 1,20 m
- Silo when full contained 7.000 to 9000 m<sup>2</sup>
- Equals 4.200 to 5.400 tonnes of grain
- Equals annual need of 20.000 to 30.000 people



# How Did the Hittite Silos Work?

Chamber Sealing (Clay)



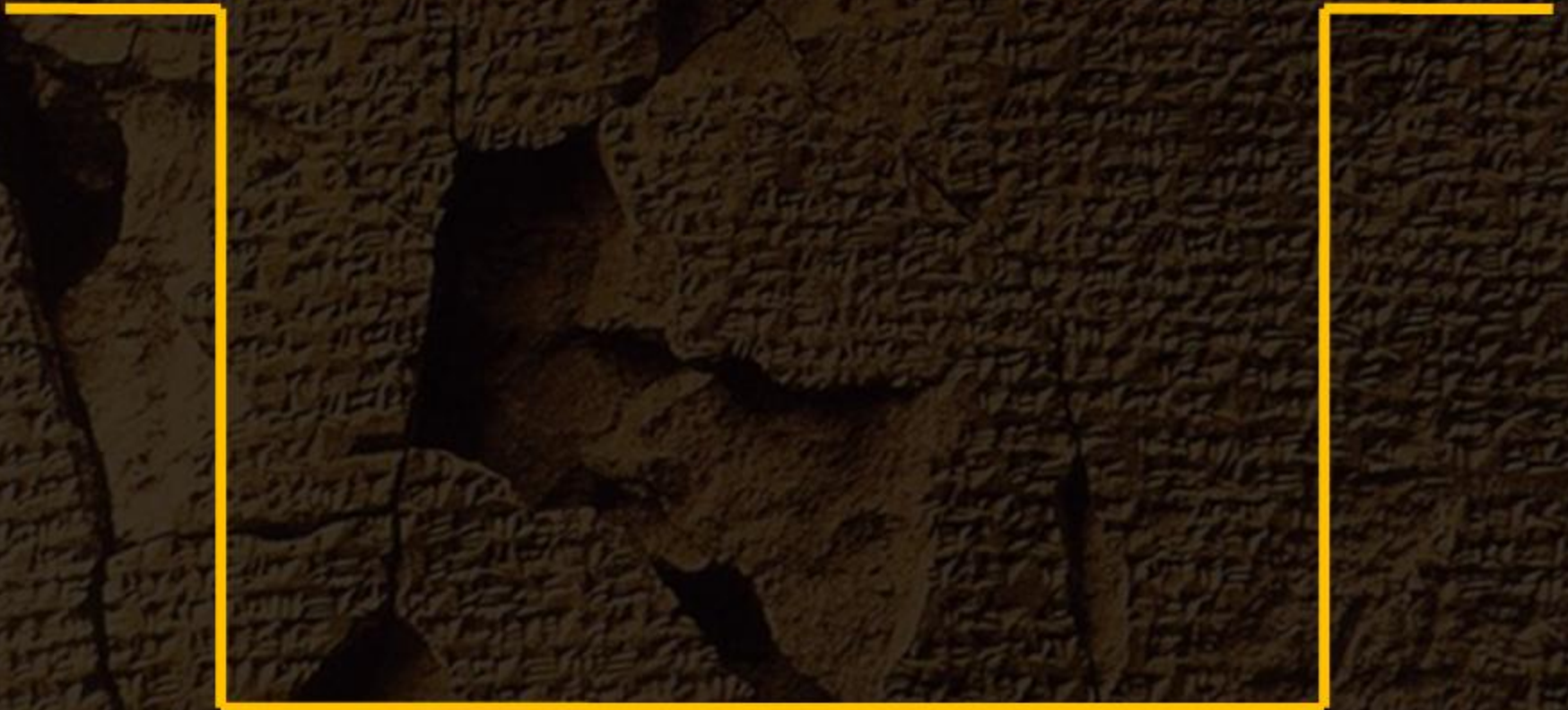
Grain Fill

Stone Paving

Straw Insulation



# How Did the Hittite Silos Work?





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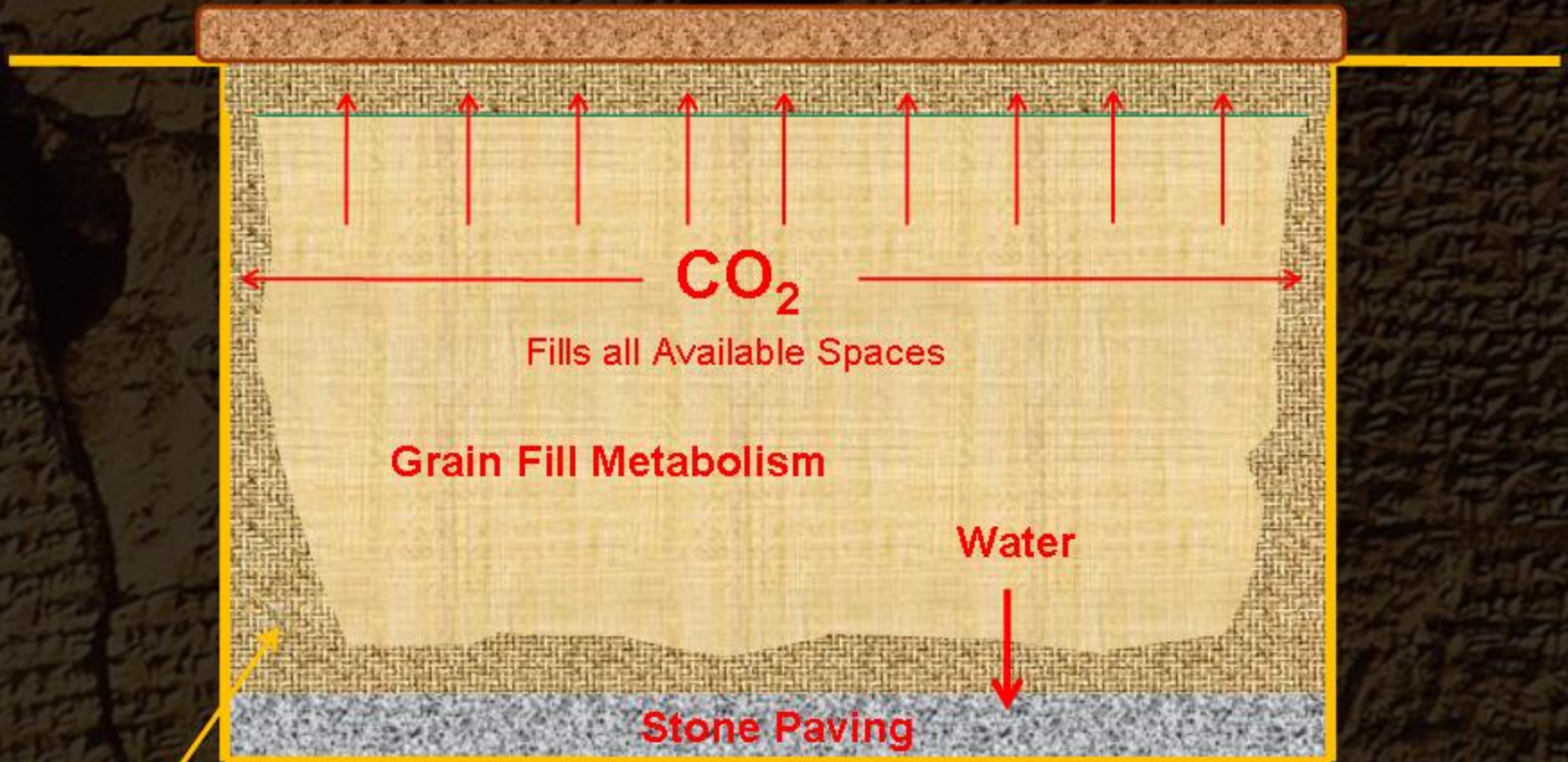
Stone Paving

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# How Did the Hittite Silos Work?

Chamber Sealing (Clay)



Grain Fill Metabolism

CO<sub>2</sub>

Fills all Available Spaces

Water

Stone Paving

Straw Insulation



# How Did the Hittite Silos Work?

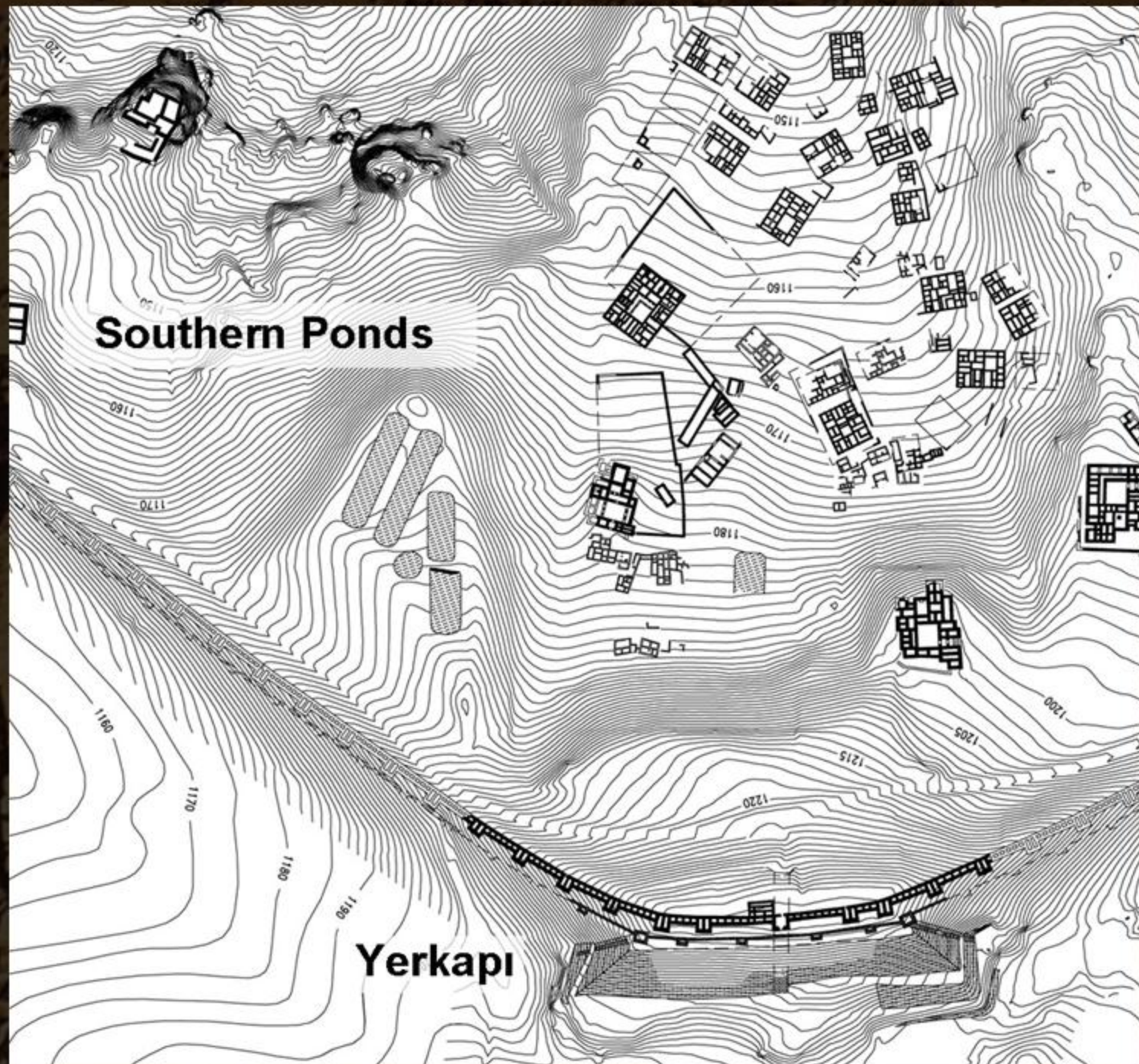


- Grain Goes Into Stasis
- Can Be Stored For Decades
- Once Opened The Balance Is Destroyed And the Contents Have To Be Emptied
- Such Silos Were Very Common At All Hittite Centres
- They Probably Represent A Buffer Mechanism Against Localised Shortages









**Southern Ponds**

**Yerkapi**



The Southern Ponds at  
Boğazköy-Hattuša





# The Southern Ponds

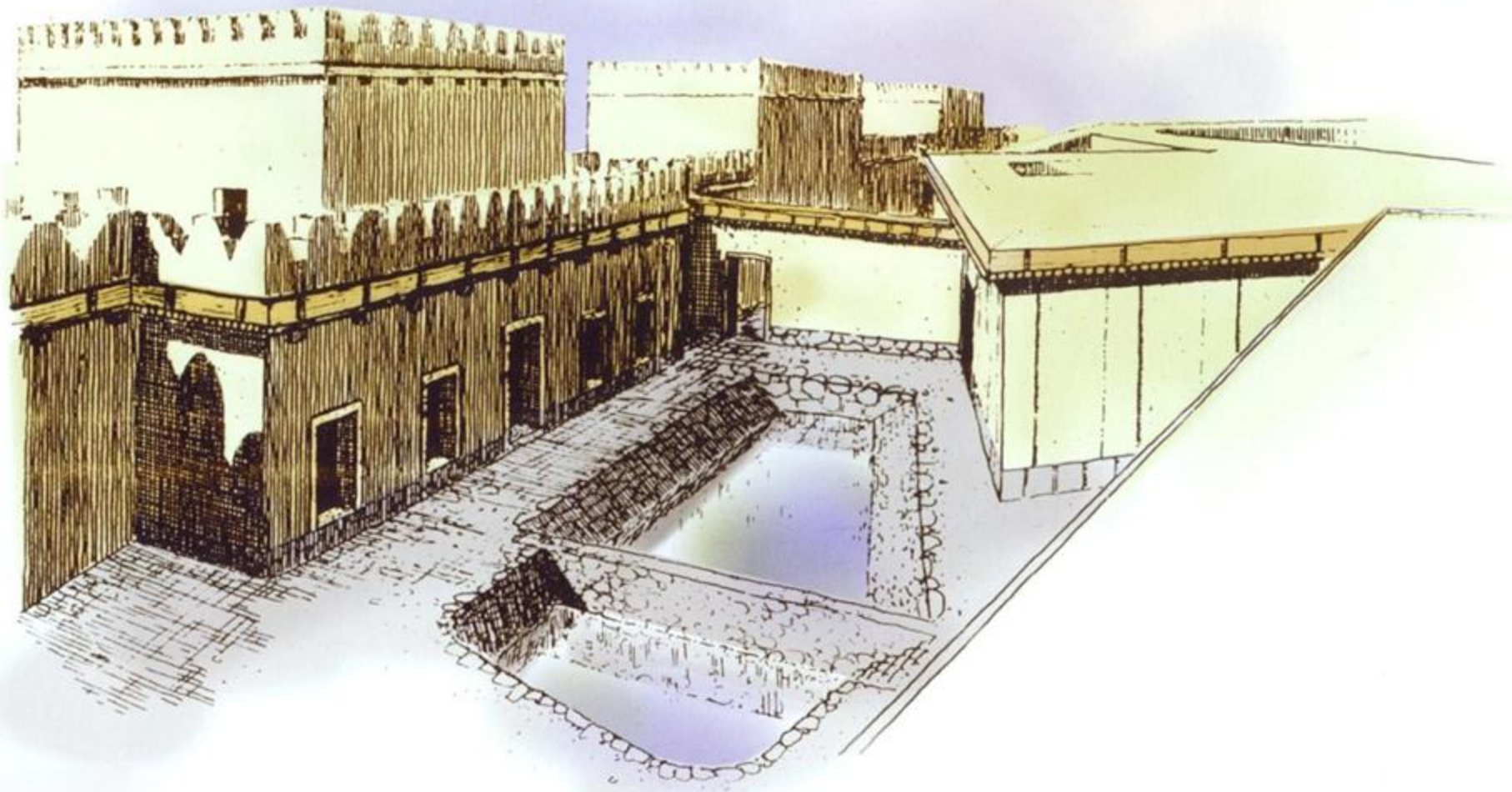


In use in the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC; depth of reservoirs ca. 8 m









**Ponds On Büyükkale**



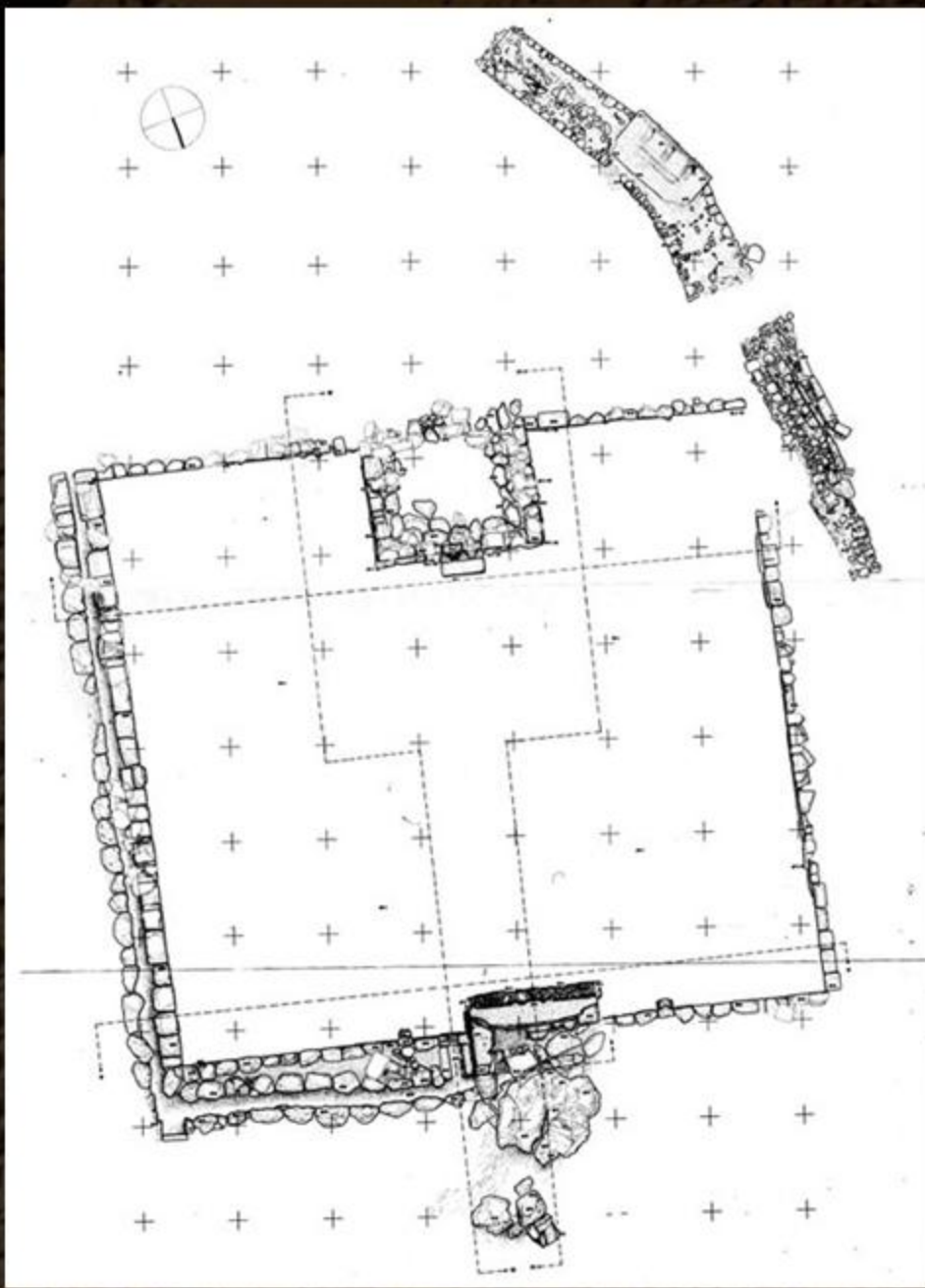


**Yalburt**

**Hittite Water  
Reservoir  
with  
Royal  
Inscription**







Water Reservoir and Monument  
at Eflatun Pınar (Beyşehir)

