

**A NEW DECIPHERMENT
OF THE HITTITE
HIEROGLYPHICS**

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R. CAMPBELL THOMPSON

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A New Decipherment of the Hittite Hieroglyphics

By R. Campbell Thompson, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.

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I.—*A New Decipherment of the Hittite Hieroglyphs.* By R. CAMPBELL THOMPSON, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.
















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


§ 1. I HAVE ventured to lay before scholars a new system of decipherment of the Hittite hieroglyphic inscriptions, based on a study of those already published, and those which were found during the season of 1911, when I was employed by the Trustees of the British Museum on the excavations at Carchemish. The Trustees have most kindly given me permission to quote from these new texts of 1911 as far as is necessary to prove my system of decipherment and grammar, even to the names of the petty chiefs which occur in them, and they have asked only that I shall refrain from discussing the historical side of their inscriptions, so that their own priority of publication at a later date be not anticipated. I wish therefore to thank them for a concession which I fully appreciate.




The new texts of 1911 from Carchemish do not differ outwardly to any great extent from those already known and published, for no bilingual was found. But a large and almost complete slab came to light inscribed with six lines of about six hundred closely-written Hittite characters, which ultimately formed the base of my decipherment, and after several months' work on it I came to the conclusion that there were several kings' names concealed therein. Such results as I have embodied in this article differ almost entirely from previous systems of decipherment, and, omitting the obvious ideograms, I can agree only with a few of Professor Sayce's values¹ out of his whole syllabary.

¹ All credit is due to him for  and  determinative for place-names:  det. for 'god':    in his suggested value, the god Tesup (I cannot agree with 'Sandes');  s: his brilliant identification of the city-name spelt    with Tyana (*PSBA.*, xxv, 1903, 179), although I differ slightly from him in his ultimate values, reading *Tiān-a-na*:  'king', which Jensen held (*ZDMG.*, 48, 1894, p. 302) (which I prefer to translate

and with his translations hardly at all. But although I cannot often concur in his methods of decipherment, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to all

'lord':  'tree': perhaps   two numerals:  'bowl'. In  he first saw the idea of making a treaty (*PSBA.*, vii, 1882, 276), which he altered later to 'to love' (*PSBA.*, xxv, 1903, 156); I believe that his former suggestion was nearer the truth, as I think it refers to the making of blood brotherhood (§ 87). In the two forms of  he found the idea of 'great' or 'lord' (I believe it to be used as the plural of  'great', 'chief'); but unhappily his suggestion, made in 1882, that  meant 'killing' or 'conquering' he changed to the incorrect one of 'power', a view which Rylands (*PSBA.*, xxi, 1899, 210) also held.  may be, as he suggests, the ideogram for 'chief'. In , translated from the earliest period of decipherment as 'I (am)' or 'He says', Professor Sayce, I believe wrongly, ultimately (like Jensen and others) inclined to the former. He is nearly right, I believe, ultimately in calling  *sa, ni* (properly *mi, ni*), and correctly sees in it the mark of the first person singular of the verb, although his example (which I read *kat-mi* 'I', the cuneiform *katimi*, not a verb at all) is singularly unfortunate (*PSBA.*, xxiii, 1901, 95); he is nearly correct in  with *is* (I believe it is *as*); on what I believe are incorrect grounds he obtained correct values for  *nas* and  *ar*, and on unsatisfactory evidence ultimately called  *ar* (I believe it is *ir* with a 'tang'). (See his articles *PSBA.*, xxv, 1903; xxvii, 1905.)

Jensen, although we need not much concern ourselves with his system, rightly I think, recognized that  meant 'lord' (*Hittiter und Armenier*, sign-list), and he very nearly lighted on what I hold to be a most valuable clue in seeing that     contained the name of Hamath, and even went so far as to explain the latter two characters as 'king', from a comparison with other texts, the whole reading according to him 'King of Hamath'. But he failed entirely to give syllabic values to the name of Hamath, saying that its first character might in some cases be a plural ending, and in the translations in *Hittiter und Armenier* he relinquished the view that this group meant Hamath (*ZDMG.*, 48, pp. 301 ff.; see also Messerschmidt, *Bemerkungen zu den Hitt. Inschr.*, p. 15, who quotes him). Sayce also came close to seeing this, but his incorrect division of the signs in the inscription prevented him from identifying it, and I cannot agree in the least with his latest translations of the Hamath inscriptions (*PSBA.*, xxxiv, 1912, 217). Jensen was led astray, I think, entirely in seeing Sycennesis in the name which I read *A-ra-a-s* (§ 121).

A word must be said for Menant (*Éléments du Syllabaire hévén*, *Acad. des. Inser.*, xxxiv, 1892) who saw in  (which I believe to be *o*) a vowel *a* (p. 100); and Peiser saw in  the division mark, and in  the mark of an ideogram, according to Sayce, the plural (see, however, the sign-list at end of this article). Ball (*PSBA.*, x, 1888, p. 447) recognized in the proper name, which I believe to be Benhadad (§ 33, *note*), a royal name of which the first character was the god Dadi. W. H. Rylands (to whose energy much of the collection of Hittite material in the early days of the study is due) noted that 'on the shoulder of the [Mar'ash] lion at Constantinople is a human figure', which, unfortunately, he says formed no part of the inscription (*PSBA.*, ix, 1887, 375): nevertheless, it has been omitted in the copy

the work which he has done. During the last quarter of a century his labours have been indefatigable in securing new texts or accurate copies of the well-known inscriptions: if a new hieroglyphic or cuneiform text was discovered, he examined or published it whenever he could, and his lists of every possible

in Messerschmidt's *Corpus*. I do not think we need concern ourselves with the work of Conder or Gleye.

The greatest stumbling-blocks in the way of decipherment appear to have been the bilingual Boss of Tarkondemos, and two groups of hieroglyphs which occur several times in the Carchemish texts, in which has been recognized, I believe entirely erroneously, the name *Carchemish*, spelt variously (a suggestion due to M. Sisti, and consequently to several characters were assigned values due to the supposed variants. Personally, I believe the latter part of these groups to contain the words *Nineveh* and *Assyria*, and that none of the phrases has anything to do with Carchemish at all (see § 51).



After the Society of Antiquaries had offered me the courtesy of hearing this paper read on November 21, 1912, Dr. Rusch, a German scholar, saw a brief notice of the meeting in the *Orientalische Literaturzeitung* of the January following. As he had been working on a system of his own during the same time as myself, he not unnaturally wished to draw attention to such claims as he might have to any priority of decipherment; and to this end wrote to the President of this Society giving references to notices of his system, and sending to him a manuscript copy of his labours. I think that I can satisfy Dr. Rusch that our systems are so fundamentally different that one of us is wrong. His work is referred to in *Deutscher Reichsanzeiger*, 1911, No. 269; 1912, Nos. 38, 114; and by von Szaia in *Internationaler Archäologien-Kongress*, Okt., 1912. The following is the list of proper names which he has discovered in the hieroglyphs, according to the *Deutsch. Reichsanz.*, in a reference to a meeting of the Vorderas. Gesellschaft:—Lapa, Lupastius, Teschubis, Teschub-Tarchu, Teschupha, Teschuputias, Targurtisar, Arguristis, Motavvu, Hatti-Teschub, Arha, Arrapa, Kisch, Kuti, Kararkarti, Patesti, Sutech, Tarchus, Maarsi, Sigur, Huehu, Motar, Gurtis, Gurtus, Sepasuvu, Tarmispa, Teschup, Tarchi-Hattis, Ischar-Gurtis, Teschupgurtisicha, Archa, Haartichamis, Motargurtis, Aryatarpa, Hapaguri, Luku, Teschuparapas, Pasaas, Tarchumisipas, Teschupas, Tarchusapasus, Teschupueha, Teschuptis, Tarchuhattis, Argurmis, Gurtyas, Motaragurimis, Gurpas, Teteschup, Teschupgurtispas, Teschupieha, Teschupti-tarchurus, Arra, Hattisteschup, Teschuparra. From this list I think that it will be obvious that our two methods of decipherment have nothing in common, as only in one single word (the name of the god Tesup, long ago discovered) do we agree, and I hardly think it worth while to discuss his manuscript translations in which I cannot follow him. He goes so far as to adopt Professor Sayce's values for the signs for god, Tesup, 'land' (the double peak), *s*, the armed hand as *Krieg*, 'throne' (*Ehrenplatz*), and the ideographic value 'water', with the numeral nine, and the two (unused) numerals three and four, and in the second of the two numeral signs (quoted in § 1, *note*), he sees '1000': the sign of the two legs running was given the possible meaning of 'to run' by Menant (*Éléments*, 1892, p. 105); and he sees in a number of obvious ideograms their picture values, such as the sign of the head with the tongue protruding, the ideographic meaning 'speak', the foot (I deny the leg) 'to go', and the Tesup-sign the lightning or serpent, in which I gladly concede to him any priority as far as I am concerned.

As far as I can see, the values for the remainder of his signs, which are liberally compared to both Egyptian hieroglyphs and Assyrian cuneiform signs, are different from mine. He has relinquished the view (I believe an erroneous one) that the larger figure at Ivriz is a god, but his attempt to read the name as 'Hatti-Tesub' is impossible, for he includes the first word 'I am' as part of the name.

I have gone thus fully into Dr. Rusch's system because it is unpublished for the most part, and I wish to make it quite clear that we differ entirely.

In the following pages it will be found that the footnotes frequently give sign-values and transcriptions for convenience sake before the evidence of such equivalents in the main body of the article has been reached.



kind of geographical or personal names or of Hittite cuneiform words have been invaluable.






§ 2. The materials available for the study of decipherment were (1) the two well-known bilinguals, the 'Boss of Tarkondemos' and the seal of Indilimma, which have been as much a stumbling-block as an aid to students; (2) the Hittite cuneiform literature, consisting of the two Arzawa letters and the tablets from Asia Minor¹; (3) the hieroglyphic texts themselves. The two bilinguals had been thoroughly worked over by decipherers, and the only satisfactory values which were likely to be an aid were those given to  and . The Hittite cuneiform literature offers a far better starting-point. In this case, although the transliteration of the cuneiform signs is a comparatively easy matter, the translation is altogether another question: nevertheless one of the Arzawa letters has been made out with fair accuracy, and it is possible to recognize the same grammatical forms recurring in the transliteration of the few other tablets which have been published. As Professor Sayce has pointed out, particularly noticeable in these cuneiform texts, which are written about the fifteenth-fourteenth centuries B.C., is the undoubted adoption of Assyrian words, not only the Sumerian ideographs for 'king', 'son', 'city', &c., but simple words spelt out such as *pa-ni* 'before' (literally 'face'), *a-bi*, *ab-bi* 'father', *a-na* 'to', *i-na* 'in', and *ad-din* 'I gave' (§ 80).

§ 3. During the excavations of 1911 a stela was dug up which had been found in the excavations of thirty years before, and buried deeply so as to preserve it.² The sculpture on it represented a seated figure, and it was inscribed with Hittite hieroglyphics which had been first copied and published by Mr. St. Chad Boscawen, his copy being re-published by Messerschmidt in





¹ Abbreviations in this article: A i, A ii = the two Arzawa letters (see Knudtzon, *Die zwei Arzawa-Briefe: Die el-Amarna Tafeln*, 270 ff.). Al = Aleppo Tablet, Sayce, *PSB.L.*, xxix, 1907, 91; B = Belek, *Anatolia*, ii; C = Chantre, *Mission en Cappadoce*; D = Sayce, *JR.AS.*, 1908, 985; E = Sayce, 1907, 913; F = *ibid.*, the second tablet; G = Sayce, *JR.AS.*, 1909, 974; H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, tablets published *ibid.*, 963 ff.; Id. = Ideogram; Liv. = tablets published by Pinches, *Liverpool Annals*, vol. iii; M i, M ii, &c. = Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hittiticarum*; Rams. = Ramsay, *PSB.L.*, xxxi, 1909, 83 (an inscription on Kara Daglı); TA, Tel Ahmar = Inscription from Tel Ahmar, Hogarth, *Liverpool Annals*, ii, 165 (in many cases I have added emendations to his text from my hand-copy made from the actual stone while employed by the Trustees of the British Museum); Winckler = *Mitteil. d. Deutsch. Orient. Gesellschaft*, 1907, no. 35; Y = Sayce and Pinches, *The Tablet from Yuzgat* (*Royal Asiatic Society Monographs*, 1907); Z = some Hittite cuneiform tablets published by me in *PSB.L.*, xxxii, 1910, 191; *ZDMG.* = *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*.

² Not 'left there to be destroyed', as Professor Sayce describes it (*PSB.L.*, xxxii, 1905, 216).

may well be read either as (s)an or san(n): similarly if  and  both = gar we may well read the second as (g)gar or gar(r).

Now in the case of the group      the last sign but one marks it as a place-name: hence from our hypothetical values (allowing g for the foot-character) we get *Gar-g-?s* + 'place'?.² Clearly we have Gargamis here, the only sign wanting being the broken one.³

There are therefore the following values suggested:

 *san*⁴  *gar* or *kar*⁵  *n* or *s*  *g* (*k*)






§ 5. Take next a group in one of the new Carehmish texts (reading it in its obvious order):









        

This clearly is a place-name from the last character: the last but one is *s*, and the last but three is *g* or *k*: hence we get


?-?-*g*(*k*)-*s* + 'place'.

It is a reasonable hypothesis to see Gargamis again in this, and by reading *KAR-G(K)-MS* obtain the following hypothetical equations:

 = *k*(*g*)*n*,  = *r*,  = *mi*, with
 = *g*(*k*) from the preceding section, and  *s* as before.

§ 6. The sign  is one of the commonest in the hieroglyphic texts: and just as  and  are both found, so are the parallels  and . Hence we shall not be far wrong if we see in  the addition of a vowel to , which we know to be a consonant: and as we already have  = *a* (from *Tyama*, § 1, *note*), the possibilities for the vowel are *e*, *i*, *u* (from the Hittite cuneiform). Similarly

¹ Or transpose these last two characters.

² This must be restored  *m*.

³ With regard to *s* as distinct from *k*, the Hittite cuneiform in seven or eight hundred words shows barely a dozen certain cases of *s*: notably we find a word *sa-an*, A ii, 7. For the reason that so few cases occur I am for the present using only *s* in the hieroglyphs: for a discussion on this see § 90.

⁴ For a third indication of the value of this character cf. *Gara-ili*, i.e. 572, § 11.