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Kızıldağ, Karadağ, and Sacred Peak Sites in Central Anatolia During the Late Bronze and Iron Ages

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Mountain peaks and rocky outcrops have long been recognized to have been crucial components of the religious beliefs of people in Anatolia during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Archaeologically, however, sanctuaries that are associated with these features are much less understood. This article considers what is known about Anatolian peak sites textually and archaeologically for the second and first millennia BCE. While Late Bronze Age textual accounts of rituals and built features on peaks are abundant, archaeological data is comparatively scarce. The converse is true during the Iron Age, from which there are several archaeologically attested kinds of monuments associated with rocky outcrops and peaks, including stelae and step monuments, but a limited textual record. Assessing the evidence for continuity and innovation in peak-site usage across the two periods sheds new light on the Bronze to Iron Age transition, contributing additional nuance to what is increasingly recognized to have been a highly variable and localized phenomenon. In particular, the Iron Age peak sanctuaries of Kızıldağ and Karadağ and the associated settlement of Türkmen-Karahöyük serve as a useful case study for the ways in which Late Bronze Age precedents were consciously adapted into new forms in the Iron Age.

INTRODUCTION

The central Anatolian plateau has long been a major focus of Bronze Age archaeological research, especially during the time of the Hittite kingdom (ca. 1650–1180 BCE).² The subsequent Early and Middle Iron Ages in this region, roughly 1200–600 BCE, however, have been comparatively understudied in nearly all respects. The transition between these two periods is the well-studied Late Bronze Age collapse, of which the end of the Hittite Empire is only the Anatolian manifestation of sociopolitical transformations that took place across the eastern Mediterranean. These transformations are now recognized to have been multicausal and chronologically variable.³ One factor impeding our ability to evaluate changes in social organization in these periods in Anatolia, including which aspects of life continued along well-established patterns and which experienced significant changes, is the nature

¹We are grateful to a number of individuals and institutions for their help with this article. A preliminary version was presented at the conference "Phrygia Between the East and the West" in Pavia, Italy, organized by Lorenzo d'Alfonso, Annarita Bonfanti, Nathan Lovejoy, Alessio Mantovan, and Ryan Schnell. We are indebted to several colleagues who read the manuscript closely and provided helpful suggestions, including Michele Cammarosano, Mirko Novák, Geoffrey Summers, and Mark Weeden. Survey at the site of Türkmen-Karahöyük takes place under the permit of the Konya Regional Archaeological Survey Project (KRASP), for which permission is kindly granted by Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Funding for KRASP is generously provided by the British Institute at Ankara, the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, and the Loeb Classical Library Foundation. Figures are by Michele Massa except as noted.

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²Most recently, Glatz 2020; de Martino 2022.

³Cline 2014; Knapp and Manning 2016.

of historical disciplinary priorities. In stark contrast with the rich archaeological record from the Hittite period, not more than a handful of Iron Age sites on the plateau have received significant excavation. Archaeological surveys have typically employed only extensive methodologies, which, combined with ceramic sequences being restricted to just a few sites in the northern plateau, has hindered our ability to comprehend settlement pattern dynamics through time.4 Our understanding of Iron Age social processes is further hampered by a dramatic reduction in the quantity of textual records across the Bronze Age-Iron Age transition, from the thousands of records preserved in Hittite tablets to a small number of mostly monumental inscriptions.5 The resulting picture of the Iron Age period is thus one that is difficult to characterize, both in terms of comparisons with what preceded it, and with respect to political complexity and other principles of social organization.

One aspect of Iron Age archaeology on the Anatolian plateau that is ready for a more sustained investigation is the sacred peak sites that appear in several different forms and that represent a transformation of related practices attested textually and archaeologically in the preceding Late Bronze Age. For the purpose of the present study, we adopt a broad definition of peak site: namely, a high place with good visibility of the surrounding landscape at which religious rituals took place. In some cases, such peaks will command stunning vistas and in others less so, depending on local topography. It follows that certain religious sites will perforce be located on the slopes or at the base of their associated peaks for several reasons, including to increase accessibility. Although typologizing is not the focus of this study, we do consider two broad categories of peak sites, one with elaborate structures that were likely accompanied by complex cultic apparatus ("peak sanctuaries") and the other with only a single built monument and more isolated in the landscape ("peak shrines").

This article offers an analysis of two of the most enigmatic peak sites from the Iron Age plateau, the mountains of Karadağ and Kızıldağ in today's Konya

This case is bolstered by a review of what is known about central Anatolian peak sites during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Little synthetic study of sacred peak sites in the Iron Age has taken place, especially research combining the information available in both the archaeological and textual records.6 Instead, researchers are faced with a large amount of scattered data that can be challenging to assemble into an interpretive whole. In this article, we characterize the formal appearance and characteristics of Iron Age peak sites vis-à-vis their Late Bronze Age predecessors, distinguishing both their types and the various cultural traditions that inspired them. This review indicates that the sacred landscape incorporating Türkmen-Karahöyük, Karadağ, and Kızıldağ was not exceptional, but rather tapped into centuries-old beliefs and practices associated with sacred peaks in central Anatolia since at least the early second millennium BCE.

These findings have implications for our understanding of the Bronze and Iron Ages in central Anatolia beyond their immediate significance to religious history in the region. The transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age in Anatolia has been receiving a great deal of attention recently, especially as researchers increasingly come to acknowledge the highly localized trajectories that characterized different parts of Anatolia. Given the continuity in cult attested in the

Plain (fig. 1), both of which bear inscriptions by a "Great King Hartapu," until recently one of ancient Anatolia's most opaque political figures. Based on the currently available archaeological data, as well as comparison with Late Bronze and Iron Age sites elsewhere on the Anatolian plateau, we argue that these two peak sanctuaries comprised part of a hitherto unrecognized sacred landscape that was associated with the nearby site of Türkmen-Karahöyük. Recent discoveries at Türkmen-Karahöyük, when viewed in conjunction with Karadağ and Kızıldağ, may finally explain why Hartapu chose these mountains as venues for inscriptions and engravings: they provided him with an ideal setting for a sacred landscape that integrated an urban settlement with associated peak sanctuaries, in longstanding Anatolian tradition.

⁴Altaweel and Squitieri 2018, 103.

⁵A small number of nonelite texts have been found incised on small strips of lead at the sites of Kululu and Assur (see Hawkins 2000, 503–13; 533–55), as well as Zincirli (Herrmann et al. 2016, 68 n. 82), though the latter are not yet published.

⁶Cf. Hutter 2021, 296–99. Not addressed in this article are the historical origins of peak sites in Anatolia or their relationship with similar phenomena in adjacent regions, such as the well-known sanctuaries dotting the mountains of Crete (Jones 1999; Kyriakidis 2005; Kotsonas 2017).

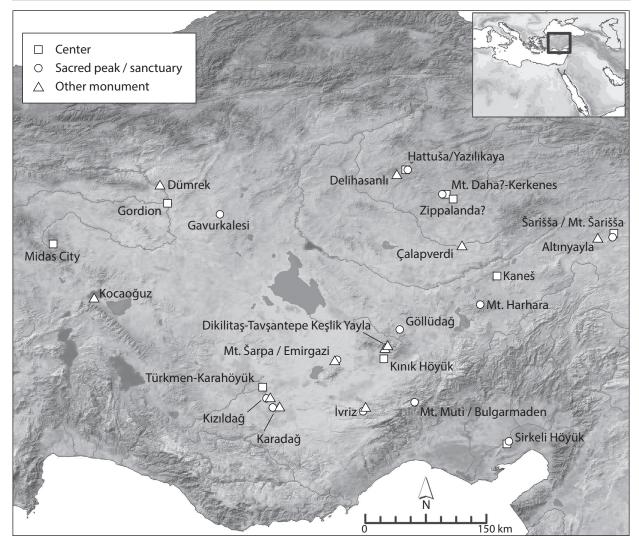


FIG. 1. Map of central Anatolia showing sites discussed in the text.

south-central plateau, it would seem that this part of Anatolia shows greater continuity in cultural practices into the Iron Age than is typically assumed by prevailing narratives, which see a complete break after the fall of the Hittite Empire. Close analytical case studies in regional contexts like this one are likely the most productive way to understand the changes that occurred across the Bronze and Iron Ages.

THE PEAK SANCTUARIES OF KIZILDAĞ AND KARADAĞ

The sites of Kızıldağ and Karadağ, located on the southeastern edge of the Konya Plain, have been well

known to Anatolian scholars for over a century, thanks especially to the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions found there, yet they have received remarkably little devoted archaeological attention. The same is true for the rich alluvial landscape surrounding these mountains, where vehicular surveys of the mid 20th century have only been sporadically complemented by more systematic modern survey. Recent work at the nearby site of Türkmen-Karahöyük as part of the Konya Regional Archaeological Survey Project (KRASP), however, has cast the remains found on these two peaks in a new light, leading to dramatic reinterpretations of

⁷Summers 2017.

⁸Mellaart 1955; 1958; 1963; French 1970; Baird 1999; Bahar and Koçak 2004.

⁹Massa et al. 2019; 2020; 2021.

their historical context and, we argue here, their cultural context. The sudden realization from recent discoveries that Türkmen-Karahöyük must have been the major political center in the region, ruled by the same individual—"Great King Hartapu"—whose reliefs and inscriptions appear on Kızıldağ and Karadağ, ¹⁰ leads logically to the conclusion that the three sites existed together in a shared sacred landscape.

Kızıldağ and Karadağ have long played significant roles in the imagination of Anatolian scholars. A certain mystique has been associated with the sites since they were discovered by Gertrude Bell and William Ramsay in the early 20th century,11 due primarily to the presence of inscriptions authored by Great King Hartapu, whose name appears nowhere else in ancient Near Eastern records from the Bronze or Iron Age, and the stunning settings of his monuments, which are featured high on top of these two peaks overlooking the Konya Plain. The larger of the two is the extinct volcano of Karadağ, upon whose highest peak, named Mahalıç, are two brief inscriptions by Hartapu (fig. 2). KARADAĞ 2 simply records his name and title, but the lengthier KARADAĞ 1 describes Hartapu making a dedication to "the celestial Storm God, the divine Great Mountain" presumably referring to Karadağ itself.¹² The site, located within the precinct of a military base, and thus no longer accessible today, was excavated by Bell and Ramsay, who found the inscriptions in a rock-cut passage beneath a Byzantine church. All that remained from the pre-Medieval structure was that passageway with the inscriptions carved into the sides and a pair of rock-cut steps (see fig. 2b).13 The content of the inscription suggests strongly that the original function of this location during Hartapu's lifetime was similarly religious in nature—in other words, that Mahalıç functioned as a peak sanctuary where Hartapu performed religious rites. In fact, the slopes of Karadağ as well as the low-lying peaks surrounding it are covered with ruins, some of which may belong to the Bronze and Iron Ages and which were surveyed by Ramsay and Bell a century ago and more recently by the Taşeli-Karaman Archaeological Project. 14 These include a number of freestanding buildings described as "forts" but whose actual function may more likely have been religious, 16 an Iron Age settlement at Değle on Karadağ's northern slope, 17 circular pools, and rockcut thrones. Without systematic study, it is impossible to clarify their functions or dates, but cumulatively these remains are suggestive of a substantial record of investment in the sacred built environment of Karadağ, some of which may be a result of Hartapu's efforts.

If Karadağ's cultic function seems reasonably clear, Kızıldağ is more ambiguous. We argue that a similar purpose lay behind the site of Kızıldağ and that it, too, was likely a peak sanctuary during the time of Hartapu's reign. A large hill predominantly of reddish trachyte (hence the name "crimson mountain" in Turkish), Kızıldağ is roughly 13 km from Karadağ to the south and the same distance from Türkmen-Karahöyük to the north (fig. 3). Several survey campaigns have identified multiple features across the hilltop: the well-known carving of Hartapu, associated with the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions KIZILDAĞ 1, 2, and 3 on the so-called "throne monument," a large rocky outcrop in the shape of a throne protruding from the side of the hill (fig. 4);¹⁸ KIZILDAĞ 4, an inscription adjacent to a step monument on the south side of the peak; and the now lost KIZILDAĞ 5, a fragmentary text bearing the name of Hartapu's father, Mursili. All of these monuments surround two rings of Cyclopean fortification walls that encircle the hilltop. 19 Despite the fortification walls, which lead naturally to a defensive interpretation, we propose that one of the site's primary functions must have been as a peak sanctuary used by Hartapu from his nearby city at Türkmen-Karahöyük. For instance,

¹⁰ Goedegebuure et al. 2020; Osborne et al. 2020; Massa and Osborne 2022; Goedegebuure forthcoming.

¹¹ Ramsay and Bell 1909.

¹² Hawkins 2000, 438. Note that all capital letters are conventionally used for naming Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions.

¹³Ramsay and Bell 1909, 256.

¹⁴Ramsay and Bell 1909; Şerifoğlu and Küçükbezci 2019;

Şerifoğlu 2020.

¹⁵Ramsay and Bell 1909, 279–96.

¹⁶ Survey and analysis of fortified hilltops at the edges of the Konya Plain have revealed that they are mostly close to major trunk routes, presumably in order to control traffic (Massa et al. 2020; Beighton 2021). Isolated watchtowers on higher peaks have been attested, as well as large, fortified refuges, but the sheer number of large structures present on virtually all major peaks of the Karadağ complex suggests a nonmilitary function.

¹⁷Şerifoğlu 2020, 455.

¹⁸ Also present on the throne monument are five pairs of footprints and a Late Hellenistic or Early Roman Greek inscription; see Rojas and Sergueenkova 2014, 144–47, for description and interpretation.

¹⁹ Güterbock 1947; Alp 1974; Bittel 1986; Karauğuz et al. 2002, pls. XV–XVII.



FIG. 2. Karadağ and its inscription: a, Karadağ's caldera and the Mahalıç peak, marked by arrow (KRASP archive); b, stair-like rock-cut structure excavated by G. Bell (image GB/3/1/7/1/91, Bell (Gertrude) Archive, Newcastle University Library); c, KARADAĞ 1 inscription (modified from Hawkins 2000, pl. 241.6).



FIG. 3. Google Earth image of Türkmen-Karahöyük, Kızıldağ, and Karadağ, facing east, with exaggerated elevations; labels added (© Google Maps, accessed 9 May 2022, modified; map data: Google, Maxar Technologies).

KIZILDAĞ 4, which narrates Hartapu's thanksgiving for defeating Muska and other unnamed territories,²⁰ is part of a step monument (fig. 5) that had cultic

salience in west-central Anatolian landscape monument tradition (see below). Similarly, at ground level directly in front of the KIZILDAĞ 4 monument, a cupmark has been cut into the stone, a feature that has long been understood to be associated with cultic practices

 $^{^{\}rm 20}$ Goedegebuure et al. 2020; Hawkins and Weeden 2021.







FIG. 4. The "throne monument" at Kızıldağ: *a*, panorama looking north, with arrow marking Türkmen-Karahöyük (KRASP archives); *b*, viewed from the south (courtesy T. Bilgin); *c*, reconstruction of the original disposition of Hartapu's engraving and inscriptions on the monument (Massa and Osborne 2022, fig. 2).

such as libation offerings.²¹ But more evocatively, the setting of KIZILDAĞ 1–3 on the throne monument outcrop overlooking the vastness of the Konya Plain is a breathtaking and emotionally stirring locale that can only have been chosen with its affective properties in mind (see fig. 4a, b).

Key to understanding Kızıldağ and Karadağ is the newly recognized significance of the site of Türkmen-Karahöyük, located 13 km north of Kızıldağ.²² In 2019, an intensive survey of the site, which had recently been identified as the most significant Bronze and Iron Age site in the archaeologically rich Konya Plain,²³ was begun (fig. 6). Results suggested that during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, the settlement expanded off the 30 ha, 35 m high tell and into a ring of satellite mounds that may have doubled the site's size.²⁴ That same season marked the discovery of the inscription now known as TÜRKMEN-KARAHÖYÜK 1, authored by

²⁴Osborne et al. 2020. The 2022 fieldwork season, including large-scale geophysical and geoarchaeological coring, reduced the original claim of an extensive lower town between the central mound and the satellite mounds; results are presently being prepared for publication by P.M. Creamer et al.



FIG. 5. The step monument at Kızıldağ and the associated KIZILDAĞ 4 Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription to the right, with Karadağ in the background.

²¹ Ussishkin 1975; Karauğuz et al. 2002, pl. XIX.2.

²² Until its dessication in the 1990s because of overexploitation of the underlying groundwater table, the space between Türkmen-Karahöyük and Kızıldağ was occupied by a seasonal body of water known as Hotamış marshes. Without geoarchaeological research targeting the specific question, it is impossible to know whether the lake was also present in the Bronze and Iron Ages.

²³ Massa et al. 2019.



FIG. 6. The mound of Türkmen-Karahöyük, looking southwest, in February 2020. Note the height of the modern mosque to the south of the site.

Great King Hartapu, in which he again claims to defeat Muska as well as a coalition of 13 other kings.²⁵ This inscription, combined with the site's size, suggests that Türkmen-Karahöyük was almost certainly Hartapu's capital city, ancient name unknown, and presumably the political center of a regional kingdom in the Konya Plain whose name is also still unknown.²⁶

Paleographically, TÜRKMEN-KARAHÖYÜK 1 can be dated to the ninth or eighth century BCE.²⁷ Based on this, we have suggested that all inscriptions authored by Hartapu on Kızıldağ and Karadağ should also date to the ninth or eighth century BCE, supported by both TÜRKMEN-KARAHÖYÜK 1 and KIZILDAĞ 4 mentioning Hartapu's defeat of Muska.28 This is a dramatic revision to what had been an emerging consensus that the Kızıldağ and Karadağ inscriptions must have been written somewhere around 1200 BCE, followed centuries later by the carving of the seated king.²⁹ Reactions in the Anatolian philological community were swift and varied, with multiple alternative reconstructions already published, mostly centering on whether all or only some of Hartapu's inscriptions were composed in the ninth-eighth centuries and whether the corpus of inscriptions authored by Hartapu was composed by one or two individuals

We therefore argue that Hartapu used Kızıldağ and Karadağ as related peak sanctuaries for the performance of state-sponsored religious activities, such as festivals and other rituals, that likely involved ritual processions between the three venues as at other Anatolian sacred sites (see below), tying the three sites into a cohesive sacred landscape (fig. 8). Such processions would necessarily have involved emotional transitions for participants that accompanied the change in topography from the settlement at plain level, to the elevated views of Kızıldağ, to the celestial station of Karadağ, as

of that name.³⁰ Although many individual points from these studies have been productive, for now we maintain the position that all of the inscriptions by Hartapu were authored by a single individual of that name in the late ninth or eighth century BCE.³¹ Furthermore, besides all being sites that were significant to Hartapu, as evidenced by contemporary inscriptions authored by him, it is important to stress that Türkmen-Karahöyük is plainly visible to an individual standing on the throne monument at Kızıldağ (see fig. 4a), just as Kızıldağ and Karadağ are both plainly visible from Türkmen-Karahöyük (fig. 7); the three sites, in other words, are all intervisible.

²⁵Goedegebuure et al. 2020; Goedegebuure forthcoming.

²⁶ Hawkins and Weeden (2021, 394) tentatively identify Türkmen-Karahöyük as the city of Parzuta mentioned in the TOPADA inscription.

 $^{^{\}rm 27}$ Goedegebuure et al. 2020, 40; and forthcoming ; Hawkins and Weeden 2021.

²⁸ Goedegebuure et al. 2020, 40–41; and forthcoming.

²⁹ Hawkins 2000, 439; d'Alfonso 2014, 229; Rojas and Sergueenkova 2014, 146; Summers 2017, 260.

³⁰ Oreshko 2020; Peker 2020; Adiego 2021; d'Alfonso 2021; Hawkins and Weeden 2021; Schürr forthcoming.

³¹ Massa and Osborne 2022. The lines of argumentation are both numerous and complicated and cannot be reiterated here, but the evidence for dating the entirety of the corpus of Hartapu inscriptions to a single individual in the eighth century includes archaeological, contextual, historical, art historical, and philological lines of reasoning. Readers are directed to Massa and Osborne 2022 and references therein for a full treatment of the debates surrounding the dating of Hartapu and his monuments.



FIG. 7. Kızıldağ, marked by right arrow, and Karadağ's Mahalıç peak, marked by left arrow, viewed from Türkmen-Karahöyük.

participants were brought closer to the divine at each stage (see fig. 3). This reconstruction would be bolstered by excavations at Kızıldağ, where the unexposed remains within the visible fortification walls probably offer the best opportunity to confirm the sacred nature of the site already indicated by the throne monument and the step monument and associated cup-marks of KIZILDAĞ 4. But an overview of the archaeological and textual evidence for sacred peak sites in central Anatolia during both the Late Bronze and Iron Ages also lends strong support for this interpretation.

SACRED PEAK SITES IN LATE BRONZE AND IRON AGE RELIGION

The Kızıldağ-Karadağ-Türkmen-Karahöyük nexus is more easily understood when viewed in the context of other central Anatolian religious sites dating to the second and early first millennia BCE. Hittite religious beliefs and practices were dynamic through time but nevertheless can be recognized, among other things, for two characteristics that distinguish them from their Near Eastern contemporaries.³² The first was a highly syncretistic attitude toward deities and regional practices of worship that allowed the Hittites to recognize divine figures and other aspects of religion from far-flung regions in Anatolia and accept them into their own system of beliefs. As a result, local Storm Gods, for example, are related to mountaintops and associated settlements across Anatolia throughout



FIG. 8. Regional map showing Türkmen-Karahöyük, Kızıldağ, and Karadağ. Note that it is unclear whether the Hotamış marshes between Türkmen-Karahöyük and Kızıldağ were present in antiquity; H = Höyük.

the second millennium. The second was the Hittites' naturalistic belief system, according to which multifarious landscape features like springs, caves, rivers, and

³² Haas 1994; Popko 1995; Taracha 2009.

mountaintops could assume great mythological and ritual importance.³³ As others have argued, these natural features and the monuments built and inscriptions placed on them were extremely significant as places of memory and identity for both local communities and elites, with landscape features having real affective capacities for those who engaged with them.³⁴

Hittite cult inventories preserve long lists of deities associated with such topographic features,³⁵ and these lists include the sacred mountains themselves that could be summoned for ritualistic purposes and are often named individually (e.g., Mount Šarišša, KBo 21.67+ [CTH 591] iii 19′–27′).³⁶ But besides being religiously significant and invoked in rituals, mountaintops were where the wide array of local Storm Gods, always male, resided, although the female throne-goddess Ḥalmašuit also lived in the mountains.³⁷ As a result, mountaintops were important for Hittite religious beliefs both as active participants in the Hittite pantheon on the one hand and as providing the dwelling place or other infrastructural support for divine figures on the other.

One outcome of these beliefs associated with mountains was that rituals took place on or near mountains themselves, practices that required shrines and other built features. In some cases, these installations are known archaeologically (see below), in others our evidence lies in the historical record alone (table 1). One of the best-known mountains in Hittite mythology is Mount Daha, likely (though not certainly) to be identified as the modern Kerkenes Dağ in north-central Anatolia (see fig. 1). Mountains are named in a host of Hittite religious texts, including Mount Šarpa (EMİRGAZİ); Mount Axe (EMİRGAZİ); Mount Huwatnuwanta; Mount Zaliyanu (*CTH* 321); and Mount Puškurunuwa, on whose slopes the king would make offerings to deities, including the mountain

itself, during the well-known Festival of the Crocus (AN.TAḤ.ŠUM, CTH 618); Mount Tapala; Mount Šarišša (CTH 591); Mount Arnuwanda (CTH 591); and Mount Tudḥaliya (CTH 591). The names Arnuwanda and Tudḥaliya were also used for Hittite kings. These last three mountains named in the calendrical festival CTH 591 were invoked during ceremonies in Ḥattuša, the Hittite capital, ³⁹ but festivals taking place on or near sacred peak sites are ubiquitous in Hittite texts. ⁴⁰ That such beliefs derived from long-standing Anatolian traditions is indicated by the presence of Mounts Daha and Šarpa already in the Old Assyrian tablets from Kültepe, the Middle Bronze Age trading post of Kaneš. ⁴¹

Hittite texts also indicate that peak sanctuaries were often associated with important settlements. For instance, religious activity in Zippalanda, possibly the site of Uşaklı Höyük, ⁴² revolved around the Storm God of Mount Daha, including worship that took place at a tent erected near a stele on the mountain itself during the course of a festival mentioned in the texts (*CTH* 635). ⁴³ Other well-documented settlement-sanctuary pairs include Nerik and Mount Haharwa, Šapinuwa and Mount Šakaddunuwa, Šarišša and Mount Šarišša / Lake Šuppitaššu, and Arinna and Mounts Hulla / Mezulla. ⁴⁴

Hittite terminology also provides some indications of the associations peak sites held as venues for religious worship. The word NA4 hekur was used to denote a rocky outcrop or mountain peak, which often assumed divine attributes and could itself become a sanctuary with built features. As van den Hout pointed out, however, NA4 hekur only rarely appears as a general

³³ This phenomenon was not limited to the Hittite world, of course, although it is evidenced more strongly there than among their neighbors.

³⁴ Harmanşah 2015; Sørensen and Lumsden 2016.

³⁵ Cammarosano 2018, 72.

³⁶Beckman 2013, 155–57; Hutter 2021, 221–26. For Hittite texts, see esp. *Catalogue des Textes Hittites* (*CTH*), a comprehensive typology of Hittite texts with roughly 835 categories to which all known Hittite texts can be assigned, and the online resource *Hethitologie Portal Mainz*, www.hethport.uni -wuerzburg.de.

³⁷ Taracha 2009, 55–56.

³⁸ Gurney 1995, 71.

³⁹E.g., "Hey, Mount Šarišša, get up! Hasten back to His Mighty Majesty and the Mighty Queen (Tawananna), the watchmen (of the land of Ḥatti), for the fattened oxen and rams! Let it come about that they are strong and protected! Let good news always find them, His Mighty Majesty and the Queen, on the throne of iron! Let it happen that only joy is present!" (*KBo* 21.67+ [*CTH* 91] iii 19′–27′; Klinger 1996, 320–21, also cited in Beckman 2013, 155).

⁴⁰ Cammarosano 2018.

⁴¹ Taracha 2009, 27. To our knowledge, however, this is the earliest evidence, textual or archaeological, for mountain-related rituals in Anatolia. There does not seem to be any archaeological evidence for peak sanctuaries of the kind described here until the Late Bronze Age.

⁴² Gurney 1995, 70; Pecchioli et al. 2014, 672.

⁴³ Popko 1994, 209-13; Beckman 2013, 154.

⁴⁴ Bahar 2018.

⁴⁵Imparati 1977, 57–58.

TABLE 1. Divine mountains in central Anatolia mentioned in Late Bronze Age and Iron Age inscriptions and texts.

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Divine Mountain	Suggested Location: Modern Toponym	Period	Text and Content	References
Mt. Šarpa	Mt. Arısama	LBA	EMİRGAZİ: dedication of sanctuary	Hawkins 1995, 86–102; Maner et al. 2021, 374
Mt. Axe	Mt. Karacadağ?	LBA	EMİRGAZİ/KARAÖREN 2 (context unknown)	Hawkins 1995, 86–102; Maner et al. 2021, 374
Mt. Huwatnuwanta	Mt. Aladağ	LBA	CTH 381: list of gods	Erbil and Mouton 2018, 91
Mt. Daha/Taha	Mt. Kerkenes	LBA	CTH 635: rituals conducted on its top	Beckman 2013, 154
Mt. Zaliyanu	Mt. Akdağ	LBA	CTH 321.A: list of gods	KBo 3.7 (CTH 321.A) ii 21–24; Beckman 2013, 154; Corti 2017, 224
Mt. Puškurunuwa	between Ḥattuša and Zippalanda	LBA	CTH 618: offerings to the mountain	KUB 25.18 (CTH 618) ii 1–11; Beckman 2013, 154
Mt. Šarišša	Mt. Karatonus	LBA	CTH 591: invocation during ceremonies in Ḥattuša	<i>KBo</i> 21.67+ (<i>CTH</i> 591) iii 1'–27; Beckman 2013, 155–57
Mt. Arnuwanda		LBA	CTH 591: invocation during ceremonies in Ḥattuša	<i>KBo</i> 21.67+ (<i>CTH</i> 591) iii 1'–27; Beckman 2013, 155
Mt. Tudḫaliya		LBA	CTH 591: invocation during ceremonies in Ḥattuša	<i>KBo</i> 21.67+ (<i>CTH</i> 591) iii 1'–27; Beckman 2013, 155
Mt. Harhara	Mt. Erciyes	MIA	HİSARCIK 1, 2: gazelle offering to the mountain	Hawkins 2000, 483–84, 496–97
Mt. Hurtulas	Mt. Nemrut	MIA	ANCOZ 3, 5, 8, 10: list of gods, gazelle offering to the mountain	Hawkins 2000, 349–50, 358, 360
Mt. Muti	Mt. Medetsiz	MIA	BULGARMADEN: animal offering to the mountain	Hawkins 2000, 523
Divine Great Mountain	Mt. Karadağ	MIA	KARADAĞ 1: dedication of building? sanctuary?	Hawkins 2000, 438

LBA = Late Bronze Age; MIA = Middle Iron Age.

category in the preserved texts; far more frequent are attestations of specific NA4/pekur monuments with particular identifying attributes. Such accompanying qualities allow us to understand subclasses of the NA4/pekur, especially those described as É.NA4 DINGIR-LIM, translated as "divine stone houses," or royal mausolea, and the NA4/pekur SAG.UŠ, "eternal peaks," referring to memorial monuments for the deceased's cult. Ultimately, NA4/pekur seems to have operated as an umbrella term for peak, which could then be qualified in a number of different ways including burial

The other term relevant to an archaeological exploration of second-millennium religious practice is the Hittite word *huwaši*, generally interpreted as a cult stele and/or its associated shrine, a frequent recurrence in ritual texts and cult inventories that has therefore been the subject of much study.⁴⁹ Although a great deal of

place, funerary monument, mountain sanctuary, and

palatial institution.48

⁴⁶ van den Hout 2002, 75.

⁴⁷ van den Hout 2002, 80; Singer 2009; Balza and Mora 2011.

⁴⁸ van den Hout 2002, 87.

⁴⁹ Darga 1969; Singer 1986; Hutter 1993; Popko 1993; Nakamura 1997; Lorenz and Rieken 2007; Michel 2014; Cammarosano 2018, 74–86.

variability in the texts is likewise present for this term, 50 there are several key attributes of a *huwaši* that are repeatedly attested: its material is usually stone but can occasionally be metal or wood; it is typically a fixed installation, although in certain cases it can be small enough to be transported or even placed on an altar; it is most frequently situated extramurally, such as on rocky outcrops or in forests, but may also be found inside a settlement's temple; it embodies a deity, and thus receives cultic care such as offerings and libations; though generally left undecorated, it may occasionally bear a relief or inscription; and it is often situated in a building or an enclosure that can be entered through a gate (fig. 9).51 Here, too, Middle Bronze Age antecedents at Kültepe, where household stelae found in domestic contexts in the lower town's stratum Ib were installed to receive libations, suggest an earlier version of cult stelae whose roles would become more formalized in the Late Bronze Age.⁵² Texts associate these cult images with rocky outcrops in many cases.⁵³ Because most of the Late Bronze Age stelae were found in secondary contexts, such as within the walls of much later buildings, it is difficult to reconstruct their original spatial and social contexts. However, good examples of Late Bronze Age stelae include: ÇAĞDIN, ALTINYAYLA,54 DELİHASANLI,55 ÇALAPVERDİ 3,56 and KOCAOĞUZ.57

Reconstructing the religious beliefs associated with mountain peaks and rocky outcrops is far more challenging for the Iron Age, at which time our textual corpus is restricted to monumental inscriptions that are generally brief and offer none of the detailed rituals and cult inventories that are ubiquitous in the Late Bronze Age historical record. 58 There are plenty of Iron Age







FIG. 9. Examples of Late Bronze Age ħuwaši: a, ÇAĞDİN (after Bittel 1976, fig. 207); b, ÇALAPVERDİ 3; c, BOĞAZKÖY 3 (b and c: courtesy T. Bilgin).

stelae, referred to as wanit- in Hieroglyphic Luwian, that closely resemble the Late Bronze Age stelae just mentioned (discussed further below), but we do not know the extent to which their precise cultic salience continued Late Bronze Age beliefs. However, there are a small number of textual references to mountains that indicate a strong level of continuity in religious associations held in conjunction with peaks into the early first millennium BCE (see table 1; fig. 10). The late eighth-century BCE BULGARMADEN inscription, for example, written by one Tarhunazas, situated on a rock face in the Taurus Mountains 20 km from the Cilician Gates pass, records how his overlord Warpalawas (of the more famous relief and inscription at İvriz) had donated to him the "divine mountain" Muti.59 It stands to reason that Mount Medetsiz, on which the inscription was placed, was itself Mount Muti, and the inscription is likely to have been placed, at least in part, with the location of the nearby Bolkar Dağ silver mines in mind. 60 Regardless of the motives behind the inscription, that mountains possessed a divine force seems an underlying assumption of the text. The same is demonstrated by the HİSARCIK 1 inscription, which refers to the offerings of gazelles to Mount Harhara, presumably to be identified with the

⁵⁰ The word itself appears already in Old Kingdom texts (Cammarosano 2018, 77), and may even have a Hattian origin (Soysal 2008, 119), although Akkadian and Luwian etymologies have also been proposed.

⁵¹Wilhelm 2015, 95; Cammarosano 2019.

⁵² Heffron 2016, 34.

⁵³ Cammarosano 2018, table 4.

⁵⁴ Müller-Karpe 2003.

⁵⁵ Seeher and Hawkins 1996.

⁵⁶ Taş and Weeden 2010.

 $^{^{57}}$ Şahin and Tekoğlu 2003. For a discussion of the many idiosyncrasies present in the KOCAOĞUZ inscription, see Oreshko 2013, 386–400.

⁵⁸ Hutter 2003, 264–77.

⁵⁹ Hawkins 2000, 522-23.

⁶⁰ The obscure phrase in §6 may even be referring to a silver mine, although this is uncertain (Hawkins 2000, 524). A passage from Shalmaneser III's Black Obelisk describing his itinerary of 837 BCE places him in Tabal and makes reference to Mount Muli, presumably to be equated with Hieroglyphic Luwian Mount Muti (*RIMA* 3: A.0.102.14, lines 104b–107a; Hawkins 2000, 426; Hutter 2003, 273).





FIG. 10. Examples of Iron Age stelae: *a*, TAVŞANTEPE 1 (after Lanaro 2015, fig. 6); *b*, KEŞLİK YAYLA (after Berges and Nollé 2000, pl. 46).

modern Erciyes Dağ / Mount Argaeus on whose slopes the inscription was found. TEKİRDEBENT 1, also found (ex situ) on the slopes of Erciyes Dağ, names that mountain as the "divine Mount Harhara," as does the KARADAĞ 1 inscription, located at the summit of the Karadağ volcano, and naming presumably that very peak as "the divine Great Mountain."

LATE BRONZE AND IRON AGE PEAK SITES IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

Ironically, the relative quantities of textual information for mountains and peak sites during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages are reversed for the archaeological record: for all of our historical sources referring to Hittite rituals pertaining to peaks there are precious few archaeological examples of peak sites that one can point to confidently, while the relatively silent Iron Age textual sources are complemented by comparatively abundant archaeological evidence for engagement with rocky outcrops and peaks (table 2).

The Late Bronze Age Evidence

The general absence of known peak sites from the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1650–1200 BCE) is all the more vexing given the presence of textual passages indicating that such must have existed. The EMİRGAZİ inscriptions on the stone altars of Tudhaliya IV, for example, describe setting up cult objects and stelae, including likely the Emirgazi altars themselves, on the slopes of divine Mount Šarpa (fig. 11a).64 Given the proximity of the village of Emirgazi, where the altars were found in secondary context, to the nearby Mount Arısama, it is likely that modern Mount Arısama is the Late Bronze Age Mount Šarpa. 65 The Konya-Ereğli survey project (KEYAR) visited the site in 2015 and dated a 125 x 92 m fort at the mountain's summit to the Byzantine period. However, they also noted the generally scant quantities of ceramics, the presence of a Middle Iron Age diagnostic sherd, and multiple phases of architecture, suggesting that earlier periods, including a possible Hittite period construction, may also be present.66 For now, unfortunately, Mount Arisama is symptomatic of our understanding of Late Bronze Age peak sanctuaries on the Anatolian plateau: we have textual indications of cultic ceremonies atop a mountain and even their likely location, but little accompanying archaeological information.

By far the clearest example of a Late Bronze Age peak sanctuary dedicated to a mountain god is found at Kuşaklı, an archaeological site identified as the ancient city of Šarišša. The city is located on the bottom slopes of Mount Karatonus, the highest point of the Kulmaçdağı range, and is likely the Hittite Mount Šarišša cited, as noted above, in festival texts such as CTH 591. CTH 636 describes festival rituals performed by the Hittite king at Mount Šarišša, which can be reconstructed on the basis of tablets found both in Ḥattuša (e.g., KUB 20.99) as well as in the recent excavations at Kuşaklı, Building A (tablet KuT 19).⁶⁷ Together, these texts refer to several features that should,

 $^{^{61}}$ Hawkins 2000, 483–84. Mount Harhara also appears in the in situ inscription HİSARCIK 2, although this text is difficult to decipher.

⁶² Hawkins 2000, 499.

⁶³ Hawkins 2000, 436-38.

 $^{^{64}}$ Hawkins 1995, 86–102; 2006, 54–58. See Michel 2015 for a slightly different reading of the EMİRGAZI inscriptions.

⁶⁵ Hawkins 2006, 57–58. Further light on Mount Šarpa may be shed by the KARAÖREN inscription, of which a new fragment was recently discovered by the KEYAR survey project. See Maner et al. 2021, 369–78, for the published edition of part of this text and a detailed consideration of its implications for regional historical geography.

⁶⁶ Maner 2016, 240-42, figs. 23, 24; 2017, 359.

⁶⁷ Wilhelm 1997, 17-18.

TABLE 2. Peak sites in central Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age archaeological records.

Site Name	Period	Туре	Description	References	
Mt. Karatonus / Gölgediği	LBA	sanctuary	Sanctuary complex near an artificial pond at the feet of Mt. Karatonus	Müller-Karpe 2003; 2015	
Mt. Arısama	LBA	sanctuary	4 altars and 2 inscribed blocks describing foundation of sanctuary	Hawkins 1995	
Gâvurkalesi	LBA	royal mausoleum	Platform on hilltop, with corbelled chamber, relief below platform	Lumsden 2002	
Yazılıkaya	LBA	royal mausoleum	Sanctuary complex in rocky outcrop, with several reliefs covering chamber walls	Bittel 1967; Bittel et al. 1975; Seeher 2011	
Sirkeli Höyük	LBA	royal mausoleum	Large building on rocky outcrop, associated with three reliefs and cup-marks	Novák 2020	
Tavşantepe 1, 3	EIA/MIA	shrine	2 stelae and 2 stele sockets on hilltop	Çınaroğlu 1986; Lanaro 2015; d'Alfonso 2021	
Tavşantepe 2	EIA/MIA	shrine	1 stele socket on hilltop	Çınaroğlu 1986	
Dikilitaş	EIA/MIA	shrine	1 stele inserted in its original base, with stepped platform, one rock-cut road, several stele sockets	Çınaroğlu 1986; Lanaro 2015; d'Alfonso 2021	
Keşlik Yayla	MIA	shrine	1 stele and 1 stele socket on hilltop	Çınaroğlu 1986; Lanaro 2015; d'Alfonso 2021	
Göllüdağ	MIA	sanctuary	Large fortified site on top of volcano, with large building ("palace") and numerous buildings with cell-like rooms	Arık 1936; Tezcan 1969; 1992; Schirmer 1999;	
Karadağ	MIA	sanctuary	2 inscriptions associated with a rock-cut corridor	Ramsay and Bell 1909, 255–56; Hawkins 2000, 438–41	
Kızıldağ	MIA	royal mausoleum?	5 inscriptions, "throne" with engraving, step monument, large fortress	Alp 1974; Bittel 1986; Karauğuz et al. 2002	
Bulgarmaden	MIA	shrine	1 inscription on the slopes of Mt. Medetsiz	Hawkins 2000, 522-23	
Hisarcık 1, 2, Tekirderbent 1	MIA	shrine	3 inscriptions on the slopes of Mt. Erciyes, possibly two or more different shrines	Hawkins 2000, 483–84, 489	

LBA = Late Bronze Age; EIA = Early Iron Age; MIA = Middle Iron Age.

in principle, be discernible archaeologically. These include a *huwaši* of the Storm God located outside the city, an adjacent *huwaši* of the Stag God, a nearby spring given the name Šuppitaššu, and a nearby building known as a *halentuwa*.⁶⁸ In short, we would expect

to see not far from Kuşaklı an extramural sanctuary with some or all of these features.

Remarkably, 2.5 km south of Kuşaklı, and now several hundred meters higher in elevation and just below the summit of Mount Karatonus / Mount Šarišša, is located a complex that the Kuşaklı project associates plausibly with precisely these features (see fig. 11b). Most conspicuous in this complex is a circular pond known as Gölgediği, with a diameter of 120 m, that can only be the Hittite Šuppitaššu. Small-scale excavations of the pond demonstrated that parts had been framed with stone slabs and that the pond was surrounded by an artificial ditch that had been filled with dense clay,

 $^{^{68}}$ Wilhelm 2015, 93–94. Although previously understood as either a palace (Güterbock 1974, 307–11) or the adyton of a temple (Alp 1983), in the context of the texts of CTH 636 the *halentuwa* appears to be a building in which the king sleeps during the multiday festival and prepares himself for the rituals, such as by donning the appropriate attire (Wilhelm 2015, 94).

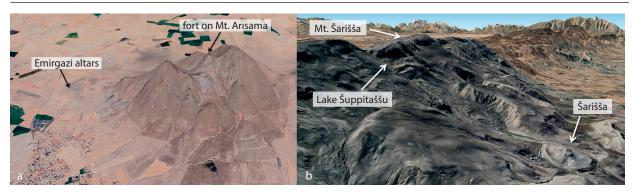


FIG. 11. Google Earth image with exaggerated elevations: *a*, findspot of the Emirgazi altars and nearby Mount Arisama with associated fort; *b*, the center of Šarišša (Kuşaklı) with its associated sanctuary of Šuppitaššu on the slopes of Mount Šarišša (© Google Maps, accessed 10 June 2023, modified; map data: Google, Maxar Technologies).

presumably to help retain water.⁶⁹ Just over 200 m west of the pond, on a small promontory, is an unexcavated 75 x 45 m temple whose outline has been determined through geophysics; just downslope to the northwest is a second, much smaller building. It is thus highly likely that the large temple structure is the huwaši sanctuary referred to in the texts, 70 while the smaller building nearby possibly served as the halentuwa structure.⁷¹ In short, the Kuşaklı-Gölgediği combination represents one of the best archaeological examples of a festival venue specified in historical sources. The ancient city of Sarišša and the pond-temple complex at Šuppitaššu consisted of a sacred landscape in which the king would perform sacred rituals at both locations, proceeding between them at marked intervals of time. In case of any doubt about the veracity of this reconstruction, the ex situ discovery of an inscribed stele at the village of Altınyayla, 16 km southwest of Kuşaklı, helps dispel it: the stele depicts an individual pouring libations before the Stag God Kurunta on the top of a mountain, thus serving as a third line of evidence for the activities reconstructed to have taken place here.⁷²

As striking as the converging archaeological and textual information is for the Šarišša-Šuppitaššu peak sanctuary, the site is equally noteworthy for its uniqueness. Other Late Bronze Age sanctuaries associated

with rocky outcrops exist but are not as well understood. Quite a bit more ambiguous, for example, and despite being far more extensively researched, is the Yazılıkaya complex outside the Hittite capital at Hattuša. A full description of the monument and its many elaborate reliefs is not possible or necessary here.⁷³ What is significant for our purposes is that, although not situated on the slopes of a mountain per se, the site's presence inside a conspicuous karstic outcrop clearly associates it with the rocky setting itself. Although multiple phases of use are attested in the buildings that framed the rock sanctuary, Yazılıkaya took its final form in the late 13th century BCE as indicated by the reliefs of Tudhaliya IV (Chamber A, relief 64; Chamber B, reliefs 81 and 83). Despite detailed identifications of the deities and kings depicted in the two chambers' reliefs and the excavation of Yazılıkaya's associated architectural features, an understanding of the site's function remains elusive precisely because, unlike Šarišša-Šuppitaššu, there are no texts that can be definitively associated with rituals that took place there. The excavators interpret the main Chamber A, with its rows of male and female deities converging on the Sun Goddess Hepat and the Storm God Teššub, the latter standing on top of two mountain gods, as the venue for the celebration of the new year's festival on the basis of texts describing new year's events attended by all the deities, but this remains uncertain.⁷⁴

⁶⁹Ökse 1999.

⁷⁰ Indeed, within the walls of the building, and sufficiently prominent to be visible even in Google Earth, are two large unworked blocks of stone that are tempting to associate specifically with the *huwašis* of the Storm and Stag gods, although at present this remains speculation (Wilhelm 2015, 95).

⁷¹ Müller-Karpe 1999; Wilhelm 2015, 95.

⁷² Müller-Karpe 2003; Hawkins 2006, 63.

⁷³ For monograph-length comprehensive accounts of the site, see Bittel 1967; Bittel et al. 1975; Seeher 2011.

⁷⁴Seeher 2011, 155; Otten 1956, 102. Far more speculative proposals exist, such as a recent suggestion that Chamber A functioned as a calendrical reckoning device (Zangger and Gautschy 2019).

We are on slightly more sound footing with Yazılıkaya's Chamber B and related monuments, however. To start with, the Yazılıkaya complex in general accords very well with the Hittite word for rocky outcrop or peak, NA4 hekur, as described above. Chamber B specifically possesses additional indications that this portion of the NA4 hekur was used as an É.NA4 DINGIR-LIM, that is, as a "divine stone house" or royal mausoleum, in this case for Tudhaliya IV.75 The large niches carved into the walls of Chamber B immediately bring to mind a columbarium, and the deities depicted in the chamber's reliefs (the 12 running deities of reliefs 69-80 and the Sword God of relief 82) are typically understood to have chthonic associations. It thus seems logical that Chamber B was where the bodily remains of the deceased and deified monarch rested, at least temporarily.⁷⁶

Similarly, the NA4 hekur SAG.UŠ mentioned in the bronze tablet treaty between Kurunta and Tudhaliya IV (CTH 106), identified since Otten's edition of the text as referring to the memorial monument of Kurunta's father and Hittite king Muwattalli II,⁷⁷ may thus be tentatively associated with the rock monument of Muwattalli II at Sirkeli Höyük in Cilicia,⁷⁸ topped with two cup-marks for receiving presumably netherworldrelated ritual libation offerings.⁷⁹ Intriguingly, excavations at Sirkeli Höyük have recently brought to light a monumental building, dubbed the Steingebäude, with large stone walls built up to, and indeed using as a wall face, the rocky outcrop on the opposite side of which the Muwattalli II relief is carved—a building that the excavators cautiously identify specifically with the NA4 hekur SAG.UŠ of the bronze treaty tablet (fig. 12).80

A highly similar monumental structure integrated with the living rock, this time on a prominent peak rising 60 m above the surrounding valley, is found at Gâvurkalesi. Here, brief excavations in 193081 and site survey in 1993-9482 identified a 35 x 37 m Cyclopean structure, made of andesite that had been quarried several kilometers away, built into and above the rocky outcrop at the top of the peak on which three monumental Hittite reliefs were carved: two male deities 3.5 m in height standing before a seated female deity (fig. 13).83 The only room within this structure is a 3.00 x 4.65 m chamber with a roof capped with monolithic blocks. Although surrounding features, including a series of fortification towers, apparently belong to a 50 ha Middle Phrygian settlement, 84 there are a number of features scattered on the slopes of the peak that point toward a substantial Late Bronze Age presence, including Hittite ceramics, a lintel stone, a reused capital or column base, and other displaced architectural blocks. 85 Given the peak setting, the reliefs, the monumental building with a single chamber, and other possible features, the whole site has the appearance of a Late Bronze Age funerary complex and thus is another strong candidate for being both a NA4hekur (rocky outcrop or peak) and a É.NA4 DINGIR-LIM (tomb monument) where the Hittite kings or other important individuals may have been laid to rest.86

In short, the Late Bronze Age archaeological evidence, particularly when it can be combined with textual sources, indicates that peak sites are often closely associated with nearby centers. Besides their general

being a mortuary complex for Muwattalli.

⁷⁵ Seeher 2011, 159–62.

 $^{^{76}}$ van den Hout 2002, 80; see also Hutter 2021, 219–21. This argument rests, in part, on classifying separately the $^{\rm NA4}lekur$ SAG.UŠ, "eternal peak," or memorial monument, of *KBo* 12.38 with the Nişantepe monument, another rocky outcrop, this time within the city of Hattuša. See van den Hout 2002 and Balza and Mora 2011 for references. Singer (2009, 174) disagrees with the identification of Yazılıkaya Chamber B as an É.NA $_4$ on circumstantial grounds.

⁷⁷ Otten 1986, 42–44.

⁷⁸ van den Hout 2002, 89–90.

⁷⁹Ussishkin 1975, 86–89.

⁸⁰ Kozal and Novák 2017, 385–86. Kozal and Novák do caution, however, that the eroded relief of a figure adjacent to Muwattalli II, recently demonstrated to be his son Urhi-Teshub/Muršili III (Marazzi et al. 2019), would mitigate against the interpretation of the Muwattalli scene and associated building as

⁸¹ Osten 1933, 56-90.

⁸² Lumsden 2002.

⁸³ Ehringhaus 2005, 11-14.

⁸⁴ Lumsden 2002, 113.

⁸⁵ Lumsden 2002, 118.

⁸⁶Naumann 1955, 408–9; Güterbock 1967, 81; Kühne 2001. Just who would have been buried at this peak sanctuary É.NA₄ is of course difficult or even impossible to say. Certainly, there is good reason to suppose that the Hittite kings would have preferred to have their remains kept in Ḥattuša (Singer 2009, 171–72). For this reason, Singer (2009, 172) proposes that "the funerary structure at Gâvurkalesi may have been a *lyekur* monument, but not the Stone House of a Great King or Queen of Hatti. Alternatively, if it was a Stone House, it could have served as the final resting place of the king(s) of a secondary or vassal state." For an alternative interpretation of Gâvurkalesi as a deified entrance to the underworld, or DINGER.KASKAL.KUR, see Sørensen and Lumsden 2016.



FIG. 12. Aerial view of the *Steingebäude* of Sirkeli Höyük, with locations of the reliefs and cup-marks indicated (courtesy M. Novák).

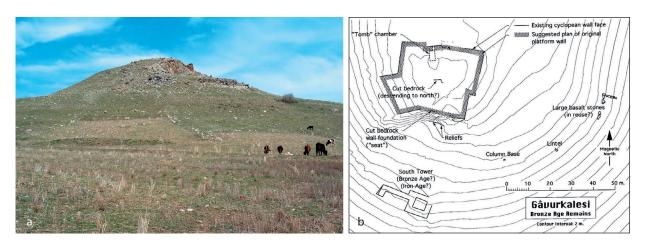


FIG. 13. Gâvurkalesi: *a,* distant view from the southwest (courtesy T. Bilgin); *b,* plan of the Late Bronze Age remains (modified from Lumsden 2002, fig. 11).

religious character formed by virtue of their natural setting and Hittite beliefs associated with mountains, these peak sites were also often used for funerary purposes. Such specificity of meaning cannot be ascertained for Iron Age peak sites, due to the general lack of texts, but similar usages are suggested by the archaeological record.

The Iron Age Evidence

Archaeological evidence for significant rocky outcrops and peak sanctuaries is quite robust by the early first millennium BCE, when Anatolia was characterized by new, smaller political formations across the central plateau. These were rapidly changing polities that at times led to the formation of larger kingdoms (e.g., Phrygia in the eighth century BCE). In terms of the spatial distribution of rocky outcrops and peaks, one can discern a fairly clear geographical pattern. Distributed around the western edge of the central Anatolian plateau are step monuments⁸⁷ as well as other categories of rock-cut monuments, namely facades,

⁸⁷ Berndt-Ersöz 2006.

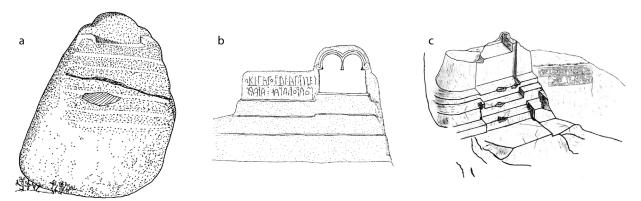


FIG. 14. Examples of step monuments: *a*, Dümrek; *b*, Midas City (*a* and *b*: adapted from Berndt-Ersöz 2006, figs. 92.a and 80.d); *c*, Kızıldağ (after Karauğuz et al. 2002, pl. XI).

niches, and idols, although outside of the highlands between modern Eskişehir and Afyon it is the step monument that predominates. Many, though not all, of these rock monuments, and the step monuments specifically, are located in rocky outcrops that stand out from their surroundings, are visible from great distances, and are situated atop prominent ridges (fig. 14). These monuments are inherently challenging or even impossible to date accurately. The precise religious significance of the step monument also remains frustratingly ambiguous; a relationship with the Phrygian cult of Matar is generally assumed. To the best of our knowledge, there is no direct Late Bronze Age precedent for these step monuments, although the general continued interest in peak sites in the Iron Age

is striking for communities that are clearly experimenting with new monumental forms.

On the eastern side of the plateau is the second major group of Iron Age rocky monuments: stelae that are often accompanied by an inscription in Hieroglyphic Luwian, iconography, or both, and that are associated with the polities in the region referred to as Tabal by the Assyrians (see fig. 10 for examples).92 Many were discovered reused in much later architectural contexts and are therefore difficult to interpret. Nevertheless, the few examples we possess of in situ stelae and stele sockets were similarly associated with rocky outcrops and peaks. Contrary to suggestions that this tradition was reintroduced to the region from the Syro-Anatolian world related to the Neo-Assyrian expansion, as some have suggested, 93 the overall similarity of Iron Age stelae to their second millennium BCE predecessors and their association with peaks and rocky outcrops suggest a lingering Late Bronze Age cultural practice. An interpretation of cultural continuity seems hard to avoid, particularly since the Iron Age stelae are highly evocative of the Hittite cult stelae in appearance and thus likely had a similar cultic function, especially in light of the Late Bronze-Iron Age continuity of beliefs associated with sacred mountains witnessed in texts (discussed above). We cannot be certain that these Iron Age stelae played the same cultic role as their Late Bronze Age predecessors, but

⁸⁸ These monuments are traditionally referred to as Phrygian—that is, associated with the Phrygian ethnic group that allegedly migrated from the Balkans into Anatolia during the Early Iron Age. Since such associations are not always clear (see, e.g., the discussion below of the step monument at Kızıldağ), we avoid ethnic terminology.

⁸⁹ Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 12–15. There are significant exceptions, however. The many step monuments at Dümrek, for example, do not have significant vistas themselves, even though the site is situated on a bluff overlooking the gorge of the Sakarya River. To our knowledge, no visibility analysis of Phrygian step monuments has been conducted, although Berndt-Ersöz 2006 takes steps in this direction.

⁹⁰Recent analysis by Summers (2018) has shown that at least some of the step monuments of Midas City must have predated the construction of that site's fortification system, and ceramics at the site of Dümrek near Gordion, where several such monuments are located, span the tenth through the sixth centuries BCE (Grave et al. 2005).

⁹¹ Roller 1999, 79–82.

⁹²Melville 2010. Unlike for the Phrygian step monuments, there is no synthetic archaeological treatment of this corpus, although the inscriptions and associated references have been collated in Hawkins 2000.

⁹³ Summers 2017, 267.

their formal similarities strongly suggest that this is the case (cf. figs. 9 and 10).

There are a small number of examples in which these two Iron Age traditions converge. 94 One interesting case is the so-called Cappadocia Gate at the site of Kerkenes, a 270 ha late seventh- to mid sixth-century settlement in north central Anatolia. 95 In this monumental gateway, excavators found an artificially constructed (i.e., not rock-cut) step monument with a semi-iconic stele originally fitted onto the top step. Still within the gateway but directly opposite was an aniconic stele set into the paving stones, in this case highly suggestive of the Hittite *huwaši*. Visibility graph analysis has shown that this aniconic stele was situated at the most visible location along the walls of the gate, emphasizing its cultural salience. 96

A monument that fuses both traditions is attested in the Dikilitaş stele, located in the Altunhisar Valley, north of the site of Kınık Höyük. It is a large, aniconic stele that has been inserted into a step monument carved from the living rock at the top of a hill. It was dated to the Middle Iron Age by its original publisher,⁹⁷ but no artifactual remains are associated with it. 98 As d'Alfonso has stressed,99 the parallels with western Anatolian step monuments, and Midas City in particular, are clear; the aniconic stele itself, however, is equally clearly a descendant of local practices from the Bronze Age. Three other stelae—Tavşantepe 1 and 2, and Keşlik Yayla—carved with relief scenes and with preserved tenons for their original settings in rockcut depressions carved from the hilltops, have been found in the Altunhisar Valley. The specific dating of each is contested, although all very likely belong to the early first millennium BCE. 100 Lanaro proposes that Tavşantepe 1 may have been a *huwaši* monument;¹⁰¹ we take this further and suggest that indeed all four of these stelae atop peaks, and especially the aniconic Dikilitaş, can be considered *huwaši* stelae.

Critical to understanding the function of the Altunhisar Valley monuments is the site of Göllüdağ, one of south-central Anatolia's most prominent Iron Age peak sites. Although the site has long been notoriously difficult to interpret, partially as a result of the excavations being woefully underpublished, Göllüdağ is arguably a strong example of a first millennium BCE peak sanctuary—one that, like the Late Bronze Age Šuppitaššu, is integrated with surrounding sites and monuments. The late eighth- to seventh-century remains of Göllüdağ are perched on the edge of an extinct volcano's crater, adjacent to a lake in the crater's basin, and are surrounded by a massive circuit wall enclosing an area of approximately 110 ha. Inside this enceinte are multiple cellular structures, covering about 15 ha, that are extremely well preserved but unfortunately largely devoid of content. 102 Located at the northern end of the Altunhisar Valley, it seems that the site marked the end point of a ritual procession that started at the settlement of Kınık Höyük at the valley's southern end, passing the four stelae mentioned above en route (fig. 15). Such has been argued by Lanaro, 103 building on the ideas of Schirmer, the most recent excavator, who proposed that Göllüdağ functioned as a cultic center that hosted seasonal ceremonies with hundreds of participants. 104 This interpretation seems plausible, especially in light of the parallels with other peak sanctuaries we have just elaborated; in addition, Summers' suggestion that the site was the seat of the weather god of Tabal—partially, again, on the grounds of the stelae in the nearby Altunhisar Valley is equally reasonable.105

Although the site of Göllüdağ itself did not furnish unequivocal evidence of its use as a cultic center, there are several circumstantial factors—besides its placement on a mountain peak, which, as we have seen, was itself resonant with religious significance—suggesting that must have been at least one of its primary roles. The first is simply its remote and inaccessible location. Despite its size, the maximum population of Göllüdağ is dramatically limited by scarce water supplies beyond the crater lake and small springs on the mountainside. ¹⁰⁶ It is a long and steep walk from

⁹⁴ See also Osborne and Massa forthcoming.

⁹⁵ Summers 2021.

⁹⁶Osborne and Summers 2014, 301, fig. 9.

⁹⁷ Çinaroğlu 1986.

⁹⁸Lanaro 2015, 90.

⁹⁹ d'Alfonso 2021, 189.

¹⁰⁰ See Lanaro 2015, 87–88, for art historical reasoning dating Tavşantepe to the early first millennium BCE, contra the more commonly accepted eighth-century date (e.g., Aro 2003, 321).

¹⁰¹ Lanaro 2015, 92.

¹⁰² Arık 1936; Tezcan 1969; 1992; Schirmer 1993; 1999.

¹⁰³Lanaro 2015, 91.

¹⁰⁴ Schirmer 1999.

¹⁰⁵ Summers 2017, 261.

¹⁰⁶ Schirmer 1999, 137–38.

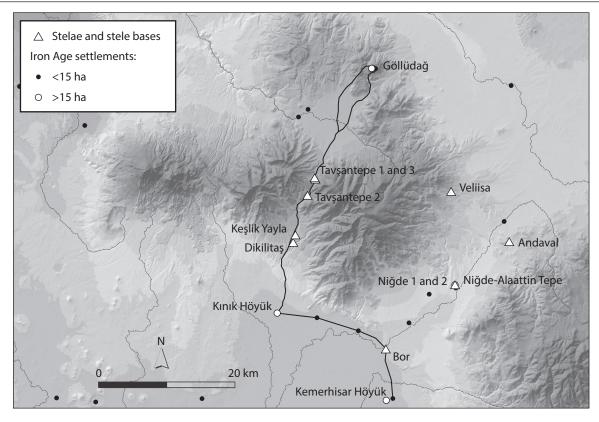


FIG. 15. Proposed reconstruction of suggested processional way connecting Kemerhisar Höyük / Tuwana and the Göllüdağ sanctuary via the center of Kınık Höyük.

productive agricultural land, ¹⁰⁷ and its distance from settlements makes one wonder how effectively it could have served as a permanent garrison. The environment itself is highly restrictive to year-round occupation: Schirmer reports that July and August are the only pleasant months on the mountaintop, ¹⁰⁸ and Tezcan likewise mentions that those were the only months in which viable excavations could take place due to cold, rain, and mist the rest of the year. ¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the high location provided occupants spectacular views of the Çiftlik plain below and the kingdom of Tuwana to the south.

The site plan of Göllüdağ is unhelpful for interpretation, despite buildings being so well preserved that they are easily mapped even without excavation. No obvious temple is present. On the contrary, the one structure that stands out from the dozens of small, regular cell buildings is a palatial structure interpreted by

Schirmer as having been designed in the Assyrian bīthilāni style, replete with carved portal lions, sphinxes, and column bases. However, excavation of the cell structures showed that they were used for housing, not storage, and seem to have been occupied for brief periods only. Göllüdağ's layout clearly implies a planned settlement, not an organically developed construction, and the sheer effort that would have been necessary to build it is itself demonstrative of its special status. Schirmer thus concluded plausibly that a late eighthcentury ruler had the site built to facilitate festivals that took place on the top of the mountain, 110 festivals whose processions presumably began at Kınık Höyük at the southern entrance to the Altunhisar Valley, or the slightly more distant Tuwana at modern Kemerhisar, and passing the several monuments described above.

The absence of inscriptions renders this reconstruction uncertain, but in light of its peak setting, its anomalous built character, and its relationship with surrounding monuments, it is quite likely that

¹⁰⁷ Tezcan 1969, 212.

¹⁰⁸ Schirmer 1999, 138.

¹⁰⁹ Tezcan 1992, 1 n. 1.

¹¹⁰ Schirmer 1999.

Göllüdağ can be described accurately, if only partially, as a peak sanctuary that served a local ruler and his kingdom. ¹¹¹ Göllüdağ thus appears to have had a function quite like Late Bronze Age Šuppitaššu but on a much more monumental scale, both in terms of the site itself and the landscape that it serviced (table 3).

DISCUSSION

The overall picture provided by a review of archaeological and textual evidence pertaining to peak sites in Late Bronze and Iron Age central Anatolia is highly informative both with respect to contextualizing the sites of Kızıldağ, Karadağ, and Türkmen-Karahöyük specifically and to the Bronze to Iron Age transition more generally.

First, regarding the sacred landscape we have reconstructed in the Konya Plain during the Iron Age, it would appear instructive to envision a relationship between the center of Türkmen-Karahöyük and the peak sanctuaries of Kızıldağ and Karadağ not unlike the archaeologically and historically well-understood relationship between the Late Bronze Age center of Kuşaklı/Šarišša and the peak sanctuary complex of Šuppitaššu, described above, and structurally similar to the relationship between Hattuša and Yazılıkaya. Indeed, it would seem that the Iron Age ruler Hartapu intentionally created monumental peak sites in the Late Bronze Age Hittite tradition, taking advantage of the local topography and long-held religious associations with orographic features near his city to create a state-sponsored cultic landscape that related directly to his capital. 112 If that comparison is apt, then, also like the Late Bronze Age exemplars described above, we should envision Hartapu leading periodic religious journeys out from his city and up onto Kızıldağ and Karadağ to perform sacred rituals there, perhaps adding to his monumental program every few years as accomplishments accrued. Given the intervisibility between the three sites, and especially the looming presence of Karadağ to anyone standing at Türkmen-Karahöyük (see fig. 7), it is easy to imagine how

Along similar lines, we propose that it might be viable to consider Kızıldağ as an É.NA₄ DINGIR-LIM that is, as a "divine stone house" or royal mausoleum, in this case the resting place of Hartapu. For now, this can only be a hypothesis, but the suggestion is supported by three lines of evidence: first, Kızıldağ's location is reminiscent of Late Bronze Age parallels for the use of rocky outcrops and peak sanctuaries at Gâvurkalesi and Yazılıkaya. Second, the concentration of inscriptions and monuments authored by a single person is uncommon in south-central Anatolia and suggests that Kızıldağ would have been Hartapu's logical choice for a resting place. Third, and most importantly, the seated figure on Hartapu's engraving is a well-known iconographic trope of mortuary scenes in Iron Age Syro-Anatolian reliefs, such as the iconographically similar scene on the Katamuwa mortuary stele from Zincirli (fig. 16).113 All of these suggest that the Kızıldağ relief was created in relation to Hartapu's passing.114 Future, and sorely needed, excavations at Kızıldağ will be able to evaluate this reconstruction and will go far in clarifying further both the nature of the site and its relationship to Türkmen-Karahöyük.

Second, this facet of religious life suggests that certain aspects of Late Bronze Age society continued into the Iron Age, at least in south-central Anatolia, in a way that has been unappreciated to date. Well-documented settlement-sanctuary pairs are still rare in Anatolia (Šarišša/Šuppitaššu being a notable exception), and this is in large part due to archaeologists' scarce interest in landscapes beyond the excavated trenches. Still, the evidence brought forward in this article clearly suggests that peaks and rocky outcrops in central Anatolia were significant locations for investment in religious architecture during the Late Bronze Age, including architecture related to elite burial practices; that natural landscape features were intimately incorporated directly into such architecture; and that peak sites were

powerful such rituals must have been at imbuing these sacred peaks with royal and religious ideology for residents of the settlement.

¹¹¹ Schirmer (1999, 141) proposed that the settlement was constructed by Warpalawa.

¹¹² Although in the absence of earlier textual data we cannot know for certain, it seems likely that Hartapu consciously adopted local beliefs pertaining to places like Karadağ into an elite political agenda, as Harmanşah (2015) has demonstrated in other Bronze and Iron Age contexts.

¹¹³ Struble and Herrmann 2009, fig. 3. On the iconography of funerary meals and the deceased ancestor in southeastern Anatolia and northern Syria, see Bonatz 2000. It is also worth noting that there are several rock-cut tombs on the slopes of Kızıldağ that belong to later periods (Karauğuz et al. 2002, pls. V.2, XII), possibly suggesting functional continuity from the Iron Age.

¹¹⁴Schürr forthcoming.

TABLE 3. Bronze and Iron Age centers in central Anatolia, their associated peak sanctuaries, and the distance from one to the other.

Settlement: Modern Toponym	Settlement: Ancient Toponym	Associated Peak Sanctuary: Modern Toponym	Associated Peak Sanctuary: Ancient Toponym	Distance Between	Period
Kuşaklı	Šarišša	Mt. Karatonus / Gölgediği	Mt. Šarišša / Lake Šupitaššu	2.5 km	LBA
Eskikışla Dikilitaş	Uda?	Mt. Arısama	Mt. Šarpa	3.2 km	LBA
Uşaklı Höyük	Zippalanda?	Mt. Kerkenes	Mt. Daha	7.4 km	LBA
Ortaköy	Šapinuwa	Mt. Karadağ	Mt. Šakaddunuwa?	9.7 km	LBA
Türkmen-Karahöyük		Mt. Kızıldağ		13.4 km	MIA
Türkmen-Karahöyük		Mt. Karadağ	"Divine Great Mountain"	26.8 km	MIA
Kemerhisar	Tuwanuwa	Mt. Göllüdağ		48.4 km	MIA

LBA = Late Bronze Age; MIA = Middle Iron Age.



FIG. 16. Comparison of enthroned king reliefs: *a*, the Hartapu engraving (after Hawkins 2000, pl. 236); *b*, depiction of Katumuwa on his funerary stele (modified from Struble and Herrmann 2009, fig. 3); *c*, banquet scene from the Karatepe-Aslantaş relief (courtesy T. Bilgin).

a major component of rituals sponsored by the state and other civic authorities.

The significance of peaks and rocky outcrops clearly remains in the following Iron Age, continuing Late Bronze Age practices in some ways and adopting new manifestations in others. Texts attest indirectly to the continued importance of mountains and peaks in Anatolian belief systems, although in this period we are not in possession of detailed ritual and festival itineraries. But archaeological evidence shows how widespread such practices must have been. The Hittite predilection for involving stelae in cultic practices clearly continued, evidenced by their shared morphology and

decorative programs. Such monuments are found across the eastern edge of the Anatolian plateau in both decorated and undecorated versions and are often (though by no means always) found situated atop prominent peaks and rocky outcrops, as for Dikilitaş and the other stelae in the Altunhisar Valley. Step monuments on the western plateau, although formally innovative in this period, also often used this kind of venue for their setting. In rare instances, such as at Kerkenes, İvriz 2, and Dikilitaş, we even see these two traditions converging in a single locale and, of course, KIZILDAĞ 4 is part of a step monument itself (see fig. 5), making Kızıldağ another example of multiple

monument traditions on peak sites being present in a single venue. 115

Such continuity bolsters our interpretation of what may be the most dramatic archaeological examples of Iron Age religious practices that parallel Late Bronze Age antecedents—namely, the sacred landscape that others have reconstructed for the likely cultic site of Göllüdağ and that we have similarly proposed for the settlement of Türkmen-Karahöyük, the hill of Kızıldağ, and the volcano of Karadağ. The eighth-century BCE ruler Hartapu clearly used these two peak sites as venues for ritual activities, in addition to whatever else may have happened there, and very likely considered them part of the religious landscape tied to his city. In both cases, it is likely that Hartapu was taking advantage of local attachments to place that had long been present.116 If the proposal that Kızıldağ functioned also as the mausoleum of Hartapu in the manner of Gâvurkalesi is correct, then there is additional support for seeing cultic continuity across the Late Bronze to Iron Age transition.

In sum, there is a strong case for religious continuity with respect to mountains and peaks from the late second into the early first millennium BCE in central Anatolia. The nature of the transition from the Bronze Age into the Iron Age is a large topic to which this study contributes an additional perspective. Scholars have gone back and forth in their assessment of continuity versus innovation of cultural practices, but in recent years it has seemed increasingly apparent that within the bend of the Kızılırmak River, a series of significant transformations took place from the end of the second millennium into the early first millennium. These include decreased social complexity, including the decline of writing practices and monumental art production, decreased use of seals and sealings, and reduced site sizes. 117 Conversely, in southeastern Anatolia there was a complicated mix of cultural traditions continuing well into the first millennium BCE even as new practices emerged, largely an outcome of the demographic merging of multiple population groups. 118 An emerging consensus in the past several years is that the process was highly variable and regionally

determined, such that different processes may have been taking place even in closely adjacent areas. While several transformations are undeniable in north-central Anatolia, for example, d'Alfonso has recently examined the results from Kınık Höyük to propose a model of urban reorganization in south-central Anatolia, recognizing that, in this particular region, certain aspects of post-Hittite continuity are equally undeniable. 119 Our arguments here contribute to this line of thinking. If we are correct in reconstructing Türkmen-Karahöyük, Kızıldağ, and Karadağ as an integrated cultic landscape, and especially if Kızıldağ did serve as the rocky burial place of Hartapu, then we have a strong example of elite cultic continuity from the Late Bronze Age into the Middle Iron Age, as well as additional indications of continuity in belief systems associated with sacred mountains and their connections with significant political centers. This model fits nicely with other indicators of ritual continuity in the area, like the Late Bronze Age *huwaši* stelae finding first millennium descendants in stelae found on mountains and rocky outcrops.

CONCLUSION

The historical and archaeological evidence for the significance of mountains and rocky peaks in the Bronze and Iron Ages of Anatolia is substantial. Hittite texts tell us repeatedly of the rituals performed in such places, and in rare instances we can document the settings archaeologically. Iron Age Hieroglyphic Luwian texts attest to divine mountains, and archaeological indicators for a predilection for setting stelae and sanctuaries in elevated locations is accumulating. In light of recent finds at the site of Türkmen-Karahöyük, it now even seems likely that the enigmatic sites of Kızıldağ and Karadağ were fashioned in the manner of Bronze Age patterns of peak sanctuaries in the ninth or eighth century BCE. How other aspects of Hittite culture continued into the first millennium in south-central Anatolia is unclear, given the historical lack of archaeological interest in this region. Future fieldwork will hopefully clarify such dynamics. In the meantime, it seems that south-central Anatolia may have been a significant vector for cultural continuity, at least with respect to religious beliefs and practices, and that, given the apparent importance of Türkmen-Karahöyük, polities in the Konya Plain and surrounding regions were deliberately modifying their Hittite legacy to suit new

¹¹⁵ Osborne and Massa forthcoming. The date of the Kızıldağ step monument is unclear, but it was very likely carved at the same time as the KIZILDAĞ 4 inscription.

¹¹⁶Harmanşah 2015.

¹¹⁷Genz 2011; Summers 2017.

¹¹⁸ Osborne 2021.

¹¹⁹ d'Alfonso 2020.

agendas. Excavation at sites like Türkmen-Karahöyük and Kızıldağ, as well as additional field research in the region of Tabal, will help determine the importance of southern Anatolia in the Bronze and Iron Ages, and how much its first millennium cultural practices evoke those of the second in domains beyond just the peak sanctuaries outlined here.

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Abbreviations for cuneiform text compendia:

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- KUB Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi. 1921–1990. 60 vols. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
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