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Research paper

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THE FIRST EVIDENCE OF INTERACTION BETWEEN THE ARMENIAN HIGHLAND AND EGYPT

Abstract. This article examines the possible interaction between Ancient Egypt and Išuwa, one of the states of the Armenian Highland. The interactions between the Armenian Highland and Egypt have a deep and intricate history, primarily documented since the Hellenistic period. However, a recently discovered inscription at the archaeological site known as the Kom el-Hettân, may provide new insights into the relationship between the Armenian Highland and Egypt. On the pedestal of one of the colossal statues of Amenhotep III, located within the temple complex, inscriptions identify various foreign nations through engravings of their representatives depicted as bound captives. The three captured figures represent the lands of “Ḫatti, Isyw, and Irṭw (Arzawa).” The land of Isyw may correlate with one of the ancient states of the Armenian Highland – Išuwa. This unique depiction prompts intriguing questions regarding the inclusion of an Išuwan figure in Egyptian iconography. The article is used general historical and comparative-historical analysis as the main research methods. The conducted research shows that there is no evidence that Egyptian expeditions ever reached the territory of the Armenian Highland or that they took captives from this region. This image may have a metaphorical, symbolic or propagandistic meaning, since the Egyptian pharaoh sought to emphasize the northern borders of his influence. An alternative explanation for the presence of the Išuwa country may lie in the context of repeated clashes between Mitanni and Ḫatti. It is possible that Hittite and Išuwan prisoners of war were sent by Mitanni to Egypt as diplomatic gifts and later depicted on the above-mentioned monument.

Keywords: Išuwa; Ḫatti; Arzawa; Egypt; Armenian Highland; interaction; Mitanni

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Исследовательская статья

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ПЕРВОЕ СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВО О ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИИ МЕЖДУ АРМЯНСКИМ НАГОРЬЕМ И ЕГИПТОМ

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается возможное взаимодействие между Древним Египтом и одним из государств Армянского нагорья. Взаимодействия между Армянским нагорьем и Египтом имеют глубокую и сложную историю, задокументированную с эллинистического периода. Однако недавно обнаруженная надпись на археологическом объекте, известном как «Колоссы Мемнона» или Ком эль-Хеттан, недалеко от египетского города Луксор, может предложить новые сведения о взаимоотношениях между Армянским нагорьем и Египтом. На постаменте одной из колоссальных статуй Аменхотепа III, расположенной в храмовом комплексе, надписи идентифицируют различные иностранные народы через гравюры их представителей, изображенных как связанные пленники. Три захваченные фигуры представляют земли «Ḫatti, Isyw и Irṯw (Арцава)». Страна Isyw, возможно, соотносится с Исувой, одной из ранних государств Армянского нагорья. Это уникальное изображение поднимает интригующие вопросы относительно появления фигуры исувийца в египетской иконографии, представляя, возможно, первого жителя Армянского нагорья в этом контексте. В статье применены общеисторический и сравнительно-исторический анализ в качестве основных методов исследования. Проведенное исследование показывает, что нет никаких доказательств того, что египетские походы когда-либо достигали территории Армянского нагорья или что они брали пленников из этого региона. Это изображение может иметь метафорическое, символическое или пропагандистское значение, поскольку египетский фараон стремился подчеркнуть северные границы своего влияния. Альтернативное объяснение присутствия страны Исува может заключаться в контексте повторяющихся столкновений между Митанни и Хатти. Возможно, что хеттские и исувские военнопленные были отправлены митаннийцами в Египет в качестве дипломатических даров и позже изображены на вышеупомянутом памятнике.

Ключевые слова: Исува; Хатти; Арцава; Египет; Армянское нагорье; взаимодействие; Митанни

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Introduction

The archaeological site Kom el-Hettân is being excavated by an expedition led by renowned Egyptologist Dr. Hourig Sourouzian, as part of “The Colossi of Memnon and Amenhotep III Temple Conservation Project”. Dr. Sourouzian and her team have undertaken a mission focused on the conservation and restoration of the site. This monument, constructed during the reign of Amenhotep III (1391-1353 BC), one of the most formidable rulers of Egypt’s New Kingdom (XVIII Dynasty), includes a mortuary temple referred to by ancient Egyptians as the “House for Millions of Years.”¹

On the pedestal of one of the colossal statues of Amenhotep III, situated within the temple complex, inscriptions identify various foreign nations through engravings of their representatives depicted as bound captives – a motif commonly found in Egyptian art. The three captured figures represent “Ḫatti (Hittite state), *Isyw*, and *Irtw* (Arzawa).”

The personification of foreign peoples, accompanied by their place names inscribed in crenellated cartouches, reached its peak during the XVIII Dynasty and became one of the defining characteristics of statuary and temple decoration under the reign of Amenhotep III.

Ḫatti, Arzawa

Two of these three states, Ḫatti and Arzawa, are also referenced in other Egyptian inscriptions. The earliest references to Ḫatti and Arzawa in Egyptian records emerge during the reign of Thutmose III (1444-1412 BC). The name Ḫatti appears five times in Egyptian monuments dating to the reign of Amenhotep III, specifically within four geographical lists: at Kom el-Hettân (twice), Soleb, and Karnak (twice) [3, pp. 241].

The countries of Ḫatti and Arzawa are also referenced in the inscriptions on the pillars of the Temple of Amon, built by Amenhotep III in Soleb, Nubia [3, pp. 240]. The name Arzawa appears in two letters from the Amarna correspondence [4, pp. 101-103]², which reference Amenhotep III’s marriage to the daughter of Tarḫundaradu, the King of Arzawa [5, pp. 184]. In one of the Amarna letters [4, pp. 114-115]³ addressed to Pharaoh Akhenaten (1353-1336 BC) by King Suppiluliuma I of Ḫatti (1344-1322 BC), the correspondence highlights Hittite-Egyptian interactions during the reign of Amenhotep III [3, p. 243].

However, these relations were not characterized by amicable ties, as Egypt regarded Ḫatti as a potential adversary in the north.

Historical evidence suggests that the Hittite state maintained close military and political relations with Egypt from the time of Tudḫaliya I/II in the first half of the 14th century BC.⁴ During the reigns of Hittite kings Tudḫaliya I/II and Arnuwanda I, the Hittite state experienced a brief period of military and political upheaval, which resulted in significant territorial conquests. This expansion extended westward to the Aegean Sea, northward to the Eastern Pontic Mountains, eastward into the western regions of the Armenian Highland, and southward, where a decisive blow was dealt to Mitanni. This may explain why, during the reign of Hittite King Arnuwanda I, relations between the former adversaries Mitanni and Egypt began to improve. Mitannian King Artatama I (the first half of the 14th century BC) and Pharaoh Thutmose IV (circa 1400-1390 BC) established amicable relations that were further solidified through a dynastic marriage. Consequently, in northern Syria, the Hittites would now need to consider not only Mitanni’s interests but also those of Egypt.

Arzawa, primarily known through Hittite sources, was situated in the western regions of Asia Minor. At its zenith, Arzawa was regarded as one of the most powerful states in the area and maintained diplomatic relations with Egypt. The Arzawan political entity, often described as a “union” or “confederation,” included Arzawa itself – later recognized as the central part of Lydia – along with several other political units, such as Mira-Kuwaliya, Seḫa River Land, Ḫapalla, Zipasla-Ḫariyati, and Wilusa, among others [7, p. 52].

1. For more information on this inscription and excavations at the site, see: [1, 2].

2. EA 31-32

3. EA 41:7-28

4. The Hittite text KBo XXXI 40 is a fragment of correspondence between the Egyptian and Hittite courts. The letter was sent by the king of Ḫatti to the Egyptian Pharaoh. This segment of text is dated to the reign of Tudḫaliya I/II [6, p. 292].

*Išuwa*⁵

Additional information regarding the aforementioned two countries can be found in other Egyptian inscriptions; however, the representative of Išuwa⁶ depicted in the inscription between the two countries (Ḫatti and Arzawa) stands as the sole example we possess from ancient Egypt.

Historical records indicate that during their northern campaigns, the ancestors of Amenhotep III – Thutmose I (1484-1472 BC) and Thutmose III (1444-1412 BC) – extended their reach to Mitanni, near the Mitannian city of Kargamiš (modern-day Jarabulus/Cerablus, situated near the Syria-Turkey border). However, there is no evidence indicating that Egyptian troops penetrated Išuwa, despite its proximity to Mitanni. Interestingly, in spite of these military operations against Mitanni during that period, the Egyptians later established an alliance with Mitanni to counter the threat posed by Ḫatti.

To solidify the anti-Hittite alliance, during the tenth year of his reign Amenhotep III married Giluk(ḫ)epa, the daughter of Šuttarna I, the king of Mitanni. Subsequently, another king of Mitanni, Tušratta, communicated with the Egyptian king through a letter [4, pp. 41-42]⁷, in which he reaffirmed the treaty between their empires and presented gifts to the pharaoh. Following his successful defense against a Hittite attack, Tušratta not only sent the customary gifts of greeting to Amenhotep III and Giluk(ḫ)epa but also included artifacts from his Hittite conquest, such as chariots and horses. In a later correspondence, it is written that he presented a magnificent goblet, two gold necklaces adorned with rich blue lapis lazuli, ten chariots complete with horse teams, and thirty slaves. Additionally, the king of Mitanni arranged for his daughter, Taduḫepa, to marry Amenhotep III [4, pp. 51-61, 72-84]⁸.

The primary sources of information about Išuwa, located in the southwestern region of the Armenian Highland, are the Hittite texts. Situated near Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, and Syria, Išuwa had established economic, cultural, and military-political connections with the states and peoples of these regions from ancient times. Its territory served as a crucial crossroads, facilitating access to these areas and further into the Armenian Highland. Išuwa is recognized as the earliest state to emerge in the south-western part of the Armenian Highland, with references found in Hittite texts dating primarily to the second half of the 2nd millennium BC.

Išuwa played a significant role in several geopolitical conflicts, initially between Ḫatti and Mitanni, followed by tensions between Ḫatti and Assyria, and more recently, between Assyria and Urartu. The territory of the Išuwa state predominantly corresponds to present-day Elazığ Province in Turkey.⁹ The boundaries of Išuwa extended to the Aratsani River (modern Murat Su) in the north and the Euphrates River in the west. Identifying the southeastern corner of Išuwa presents greater challenges; it is potentially located near the Upper Mesopotamian Plain, close to the upper reaches of the Tigris River [12, p. 212], adjacent to the Taurus Mountains and the land of Mitanni beyond. It is therefore not surprising that the Išuwans, defeated by the Hittite Great King Tudḫaliya I/II, fled to the land of Mitanni. Similarly, after his victory over Išuwa, Hittite king Suppiluliuma I advanced into Mitanni [13, pp. 13-22, 50; 12: pp. 212]. To the east, the borders of Išuwa extended to the Byurakn Mountains (Bingöl Dağları), likely identified in Hittite texts as the Laḫa Mountains [14, pp. 83-84]. In this region, Išuwa bordered Hayasa (Azzi), another significant state within the Armenian Highland [15]. To the south, Išuwa was bordered by the Armenian Highland state of Alzi, situated in the upper basin of the Tigris River within the historical region of Aghdznik in historical Armenia [16, p. 272]. To the north, Išuwa was adjacent to Paḫḫuwa Land (present-day Tunceli region in Turkey, historically known as Dersim) [17, p. 387, 18], as referenced in the Hittite text KUB XXIII 72¹⁰. To the west, across the Euphrates River, Išuwa was bordered by Tegarama¹¹ and the Hittite city of Malitia (modern archaeological site Arslantepe in Turkey) [21].

One of the earliest Hittite references to Išuwa can be found in the texts of King Tudḫaliya I/II of Ḫatti. One such text details Išuwa's aggressive actions toward Ḫatti, as well as Tudḫaliya's subsequent invasion

5. For the history of the Išuan Kingdom, archaeological excavations in the Malatya-Elazığ area, and Hittite-Mittanian relations, see: [5].

6. The word *Išuw* is sometimes compared to the Asia Minor toponym Assuwa or its connection with Išuwa is generally rejected. One of the main reasons given is that Išuwa as a state did not have much influence in the region and is unlikely to have been mentioned in Egyptian inscriptions. In addition, connections between Išuwa and Egypt are considered unlikely. For more details, see: [8].

7. EA 17

8. EA 22, 25

9. About the history and location of Išuwa: See: [9, pp. 154-156; 10, p. 283; 11, pp. 61-63; 12, pp. 212-215].

10. Keilschrifturkunden aus Boğazköi (Berlin, 1921ff.) – KUB.

11. The city was in the vicinity of modern town Gürün: See: [19, pp. 130-133; 20].

and conquest of the region.¹² This event is also documented in a significantly damaged text¹³ associated with the subsequent Hittite king Arnuwanda I, who reigned in the first half of the 14th century BC. The two texts provide evidence of Tudḫaliya I/II's conquest of Išuwa; however, it remains uncertain whether this region was previously beyond the influence of Ḫatti prior to the campaign, as there are currently no sources available to clarify this issue. The accounts detailing Tudḫaliya I/II's invasion of Išuwa suggest that the Hittite king launched an incursion due to the support the king of Išuwa had provided to the king of Mitanni, a rival of Ḫatti. Additionally, significant information regarding Tudḫaliya I/II's raid on Išuwa is found in the "historical introduction" of the treaty [13, p. 13ff.] signed between him and Sanussara, the King of Kizzuwatna (in the south-eastern part of the Asia Minor).

Išuwa was once under Hittite control; however, during a subsequent advance of the Hittite army, a portion of the population rebelled and sought refuge in Ḫurri Land (Mitanni). The king of Mitanni, Saušatar, refused to return these refugees, and Mitannian troops subsequently invaded Išuwa, raiding its cities. This evidence may lend support to the hypothesis that prior to the Hittite conquest, Išuwa maintained an alliance with its southern neighbor, Mitanni, or at the very least, exhibited pro-Mitannian sentiments.¹⁴ If the events described in the treaty are accurate, the following sequence of events can be reconstructed: initially, as noted by Saušatar, during the reign of his grandfather in the first half of the 15th century BC, a segment of the population from Išuwa, likely consisting of noblemen, migrated to Mitanni before returning to their homeland. Simultaneously, Išuwa became subject to the dominance of Ḫatti. Subsequently, Išuwa was liberated from Hittite rule with assistance from Mitanni, which prompted a portion of its population to flee to Mitanni. It is highly probable that these events, occurring during the reign of Tudḫaliya I/II, ultimately resulted in Išuwa succumbing to Hittite control.

A key source regarding the history of Išuwa is the "Text of Mita" [23, pp. 10-44]¹⁵ which describes the rebellion of Land of Paḫḫuwa (in the western part of the Armenian Highland), along with its allies against Arnuwanda I, the King of Ḫatti. It examines the punitive measures enacted by the Hittite king in response to the uprising and the subsequent renewal of an earlier treaty between the conflicting parties. Mita, the leader of the rebellion, provided refuge to those fleeing from Hittite territory and conducted raids on neighboring states, including Išuwa, Kumaḫa, and Timmiya.

In the previously discussed text, Išuwa is referenced in three distinct forms: 1) KUR^{URU}Išuwa, meaning "Land of the City of Išuwa"; 2) KUR^{KUR}Išuwa, translating to "Land of Išuwa"; and 3) URU^{URU}Išuwa, which denotes "City of Išuwa." Among the 13 cities mentioned in the text's third section, three are definitely located within the territory of Išuwa: Ḫinzuta, Sullamma, and Watarusna. These cities are also well-documented in Hittite texts from a later period [23, pp. 111-112].

The land of Išuwa is referenced in the Hittite text KUB XXXI 103, which details a treaty between the Hittite king Arnuwanda I and several regions along the Upper Euphrates. This text is directly connected to [23, pp. 44-50]¹⁶. The Hittite tablet KBo XVI 42 provides a description of the Upper Euphrates region, mentioning several geographical names, including Išuwa, Malitiya/Melid, Manzana, and [Ḫi]nzuta. Information about Išuwa is also present in the instructions provided to the Hittite border commanders, likely dating to the reign of Arnuwanda I¹⁷. These instructions enumerate soldiers originating from the regions of Kassiya, Ḫimuwa, Tegarama, and Išuwa.¹⁸ This suggests that during this period, Išuwa was under Hittite control and was required to supply troops to the Hittite military.

During the reign of Hittite King Tudḫaliya III (1360-1344 BC), the Hittite State faced prolonged conflict against multiple external threats, including incursions from Išuwa,¹⁹ indicating that Išuwa was no longer under Hittite control at this time. This period was marked by assaults from nearly all neighboring states, leading to the temporary loss of significant portions of the Hittite territory, including the capital, Ḫattusa, which fell into enemy hands. It was only through considerable effort that Tudḫaliya III, followed by his son Suppiluliuma I, managed to restore the state's territorial integrity.

12. KUB XXIII 11 Rs. III. The restoration of the damaged parts of the text and their translation was made by O. Carruba. See: [22, pp. 162-163; 23, pp. 51-54].

13. KUB XXIII 14 Vs. II. See: [23, pp. 55-56].

14. KBo I 5+ See: [10, p. 284; 23, pp. 57-62].

15. KUB XXIII 72.

16. KUB XXIII 72.

17. Keilschrifttexte aus Boğhazköi (Leipzig/Berlin, 1923ff.) (KBo).

18. KUB XIII 2 III [24, p. 69; 25, p. 67, 70].

19. See: KBo VI 28.

The agreement signed between Suppiluliuma I and Prince Šattiwaza of Mitanni²⁰ also contains references to Išuwa. The treaty was established following the conquest of Mitanni by the Hittite king Suppiluliuma I and the subsequent appointment of Šattiwaza as the king of Mitanni. The document also provides vital information about an event that took place during the reign of Suppiluliuma's father, Tudḫaliya III, likely at an early stage of his rule. Notably, it references the flight of populations from the eastern regions of Ḫatti to Išuwa. In some scholarly works, this segment of the treaty is informally referred to as the "Išuwān List." This list details the influx of individuals from various areas of the Hittite realm, which faced significant internal and external political challenges at the time. Additionally, this period is corroborated by a text from the era of Ḫattusili III (1267-1237 BC), which notes that Išuwa had launched an attack on the territory of Tegarama.²¹ The Hittites successfully reestablished their control over Tegarama and its neighboring regions; however, a segment of the rebel population escaped to Išuwa [13, pp. 38-39]. The Hittites invaded and subsequently conquered Išuwa. Following this, Suppiluliuma I returned the displaced inhabitants of Išuwa. Similar events are recounted by Muršili II (1321-1295 BC) in his account, "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma" [14, p. 83f.]. Finally, the "Nuhašše Treaty" of Suppiluliuma briefly alludes to his conquest of Išuwa.²² This indicates that during the initial years of Suppiluliuma I's reign, Išuwa was a hostile territory for the Hittites. However, over time, the King of Ḫatti managed to conquer the Išuwāns, regaining control of this strategically significant region.

Following these events, Išuwa temporarily ceased to be a focal point of great-power conflict. Its secure position within the Hittite sphere of influence is suggested by the absence of any mention in the records of Mursili II, even in relation to his war against Hayasa. In the sources pertaining to Muwattalli II (1295-1272 BC), Išuwa is referenced solely in connection with its deities in his grand prayer to the pihaššašši Storm-God [27, p. 18, 38].

In a cult edict, the Hittite king Tudḫaliya IV (1237-1209 BC) enumerates several Išuwān cities along with the deities venerated in each [28, p. 90].

In the inscriptions of Hittite kings Ḫattusili III (circa 1267-1237 BC) and Tudḫaliya IV, two rulers from Išuwa are mentioned: Arišarruma (also known as Ališarruma [29]) and Eḫlišarruma. Additionally, several hieroglyphic seal impressions unearthed at the renowned archaeological site of Korucutepe in the Elaziğ (historically Kharberd) region in Turkey between 1968 and 1970 contribute valuable information to our understanding of the cuneiform sources [30, pp. 135-147].

Comparison of these two groups of sources suggests the existence of kinship ties between the Išuwān and Hittite dynasties [30, p. 140; 31, p. 178]²³. The identification of Kilušḫepa, the Queen of Išuwa, in the seal of Korucutepe has enabled H.G. Güterbock to associate her with Kilušḫepa mentioned in two Hittite cuneiform texts [30, pp. 139-141]²⁴. In these texts, the Hittite queen Puduḫepa, the wife of Ḫattusili III, pledges to bestow numerous gifts upon the deity in gratitude for the recovery of the son of the king of Išuwa. This oath suggests a close kinship between the prince of Išuwa and Puduḫepa, indicating that the dynasties of Ḫattusa and Išuwa maintained strong familial ties, at least during the 13th century BC.

Conclusion

In concluding this article, it is important to highlight that the reign of Amenhotep III represented a pinnacle of Egyptian diplomacy. During his rule, Egypt expanded its influence over foreign lands and peoples predominantly through diplomatic means rather than military conquest. The list found at Kom el-Hettān should not be interpreted as evidence that these territories were explicitly under Egyptian control during Amenhotep III's reign. Instead, the placement of the aforementioned toponyms depicted like bound captives in beneath the

20. Suppiluliuma welcomed the Mitannian prince and installed him as a vassal king on the throne of Mitanni. In the preamble of the agreement, Suppiluliuma provides a historical overview of events dating back to the reign of the new king's father, Tušratta, whose conduct had been antagonistic towards the Hittites. See: Laroche E. Catalogue des textes hittites. Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1971: XII+273 (CTH): 51 [26, pp. 40-41; 13, pp. 38-44; 23, pp. 79-89].

21. It provides insights into the events that transpired in Ḫatti prior to and during the reign of Tudḫaliya III. See: CTH 88; KBo VI 28 obv. 12.

22. CTH 53; KBo I, 4 I 14-17.

23. In the agreement signed between Ḫattusili III and Ulmitešub, the king of Tarḫuntassa, Arišarruma, king of Išuwa [32] is referred to as one of the witnesses of the agreement. Arišarruma is also mentioned in four seal impressions discovered from Korucutepe, one of the Išuwān archaeological sites [30, p. 135ff.; 31, p. 178]. In the agreement signed between Tudḫaliya IV and Kurunta (king of Tarḫuntassa) [33] and in the letter of the king of Ḫanigalbat to the king Tudḫaliya IV (IBoT I 34; 34, p. 280ff.) Eḫlišarruma is mentioned as a prince (DUMU. LUGAL). Probably he was one of the parties of the agreement between Tudḫaliya IV and Išuwa (CTH 123 = KBo IV 14) [35, p. 39ff.].

24. KUB XV 1 III 48-55 and KUB XV 3 IV 5-12.

statue of Amenhotep III underscores the subjective and propagandistic nature of this representation. This is particularly significant given that the use of captive ovals to illustrate foreign lands is a well-established convention in Egyptian art.

The depiction of a toponym within a cartouche or a fortified oval, accompanied by the image of a bound prisoner, constitutes a standard iconographic convention of the New Kingdom used to represent foreigners. Notably, some countries mentioned in these lists were never subjugated by Egypt, and their rulers were perceived as equals by the Egyptian pharaoh. Nevertheless, these names also appear on the statue-base lists at Kom el-Hettân, enclosed in fortified ovals topped by representations of bound prisoners. Similar lists have been found at other Egyptian archaeological sites, such as the topographical lists on the front pylon of Ramses III's grand temple at Medinat Habu and in various other locations. This pattern is particularly observable in the "Aegean list".²⁵ Certainly, several countries on this list were never under Egyptian control. These names are also presented in cartouches, each surmounted by bound prisoners. Consequently, the "Aegean list" cannot be interpreted as an assertion that the Aegean region was under Egyptian control during the reign of Amenhotep III [37, pp. 2-6].

For ancient Egyptians, history was conceived as a ceremonial event in which each pharaoh triumphed over chaos to restore stability, adhering to a canonically established ritual. Central to kingship was the maintenance of cosmic order. The king's primary duties involved establishing and safeguarding this order while averting chaos. This principle extended to the standard military engagements against Egypt's adversaries, portrayed as foreign chieftains who submitted to the king's authority. The destruction of these enemies was celebrated as a ritualistic hunt, often depicted through the imagery of their overthrow. Notably, these political foes lacked distinct identities; their roles were defined solely as opposers of order. The political conquest ensured the maintenance of divine order both in the cosmos and in the afterlife. The king was viewed as the supreme ruler over Egypt and its surrounding territories, embodying authority over the entire world. Thus, both Egypt and its foreign lands were integral to this historical ritual [38].

The reign of Amenhotep III was marked by relative peace, as the Egyptians did not engage in military conflict with Hatti. Furthermore, there is no evidence suggesting that Egyptian campaigns ever reached the territory of the Armenian Highland or that they took captives from this region. This depiction may also carry metaphorical, symbolic, or propagandistic significance, as the Egyptian Pharaoh sought to highlight the northern boundaries of his influence, which extended from the southwest of the Armenian Highland (Išuwa) to the west of Asia Minor (Arzawa).

An alternative explanation for the presence of the Išuwan figure in the stone carving may lie in the context of recurring confrontations between Mitanni and Hatti. It is possible that Hittite and Išuwan prisoners of war were sent to Egypt as diplomatic gifts and later depicted on the aforementioned monument. This event likely occurred during the reign of Hittite King Arnuwanda I, a time when Išuwa was under Hittite control and Mitanni sought to reclaim it. In the final years of Arnuwanda I's reign or the early years of his successor, Tudḫaliya III, Išuwa may have experienced an Mitannian incursion as a result of which the Hittites lost their control over it. Notably, Išuwa was among the regions that rebelled against the Hittite State during Tudḫaliya III's reign (KBo VI 28). During this period, it is likely that the Mitannians sent the captured Išuwans as a gift to the Egyptian Pharaoh. This practice is corroborated by letter EA 17 in the Amarna archive. In lines 28-38 of the letter, Mitannian King Tušratta informs Amenhotep III of his victory over the Hittite forces and details the spoils taken from the Hittites, as well as the gifts he is sending to the Pharaoh along with the correspondence [39, p. 351, 4, pp. 41-42]. While no Išuwan captives were explicitly mentioned, the practice of presenting such gifts was common in Egyptian-Mitannian relations.

It is very interesting that artifacts of Egyptian origin, such as scarab seals, pendants, and luxury items, were discovered at archaeological sites throughout various regions of the Armenian Highland during this period. These findings further attest to the interactions between the Armenian Highland and Egypt during that time [40].

An analysis of historical information regarding the ancient country of Išuwa suggests that the Egyptians were likely aware of Išuwa or may have encountered the Išuwans during their diplomatic missions to Mitanni. Given the established trade relations between Egypt and Mitanni, it is plausible that these interactions extended to Išuwa as well. This could indicate that Egyptians ventured into the Armenian Highland to foster trade or diplomatic ties with the region.

25. The "Aegean List" was uncovered in the 1960s, inscribed on one of five statue bases located in the northern section of the West Portico of the grand Peristyle Court at Kom el-Hettân. Each statue base features a distinct series of toponyms, enclosed within "fortified" or "crenellated" ovals, and superimposed upon depictions of bound captives – an established Egyptian convention for representing foreign lands. See: [3, 36].

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