

ADALYA



SUNA - İNAN KIRAÇ AKDENİZ MEDENİYETLERİ ARAŞTIRMA ENSTİTÜSÜ
SUNA & İNAN KIRAÇ RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATIONS

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The Stele of Erzin

H. Kübra ENSERT* – Ahmet GÖRMÜŞ** – Demet KARA***

The Stele of Erzin, presently in the Hatay Archaeology Museum¹ with Inventory No. 17183, was purchased in 1987 from Mr. O. Günay, living in Erzin, a town in Hatay Province. The son of Mr. O. Günay stated this stele was found in two pieces during the course of plowing their fields in the locality termed Yurtlak.

The stele (Fig. 1) was originally carved from a single heavy basalt slab, rounded on the top and narrowing downwards. It was later broken about the middle, and is in two pieces. Although some loss occurred as a result of this breakage and through erosion, both pieces fit to each other.

The height of the stele is 95.5 cm. Its width is 46 cm on the top and 38 cm at the bottom. Its maximum thickness is 16 cm. There is an extension at the bottom of the stele to secure the stele into a hole cut in a base and this tongue to secure the stele in position is 19 cm long, 19 cm wide at the top, and decreases to 15 cm wide at the bottom. The bulging back surface of the stele carries no depiction (Fig. 2), but it carries deep scratches that might have resulted during the course of plowing the field. The breakage and erosion that occurred over the course of time have caused greater damage to the upper half of the stele.

A male figure, standing on a bull, walking towards the left, is depicted in relief within a frame on the front surface of the stele (Figs. 1, 3). The head and the feet of the figure are depicted in profile in respect to the body. There is a depiction of a winged sun disc above the head of the male figure that merges with the upper frame of the stele. The horn, attribute of a god, does not appear on his tiara. This Aramaic type of headdress, worn only by the kings, is depicted on Kilamuva, the Sam'al King, carved on a Zincirli orthostat, which is dated at the earliest to the Späthethitische II-III period by Orthmann². A similar headdress is depicted on other orthostats³ and steles⁴, that are dated to the Zincirli Späthethitische IIIa-b period.

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¹ We thank the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Directorate of the Hatay Archaeology Museum for allowing us to work on and publish this artifact.

² Orthmann 1971, 66-7, 545 Taf. 63a, 73a.

³ *ibid.*, F/1a (Taf. 63c); F/9 (Taf. 64c); H/5-8 (Taf. 65b-e); K/1 (Taf. 66c).

⁴ *ibid.*, J/2 (Taf. 66b); K/2 (Taf. 66d).

The hair of this figure is in the form of a knot on the shoulder at the back and a plait of hair extends from his shoulder down to end of his skirt, ending in an outward curve. The closest similarity in hairstyle can be observed on the Pancarlı orthostat⁵, one kilometer from Zincirli. The knot of hair on the shoulder of the figure, depicted on the Erzin Stele is of the Assyrian type and the long plait of hair with the outward curve is of the Hittite style. The figure has a long beard. He wears a dress with a short sleeve, belted and probably knee-high like that of the other Neo-Hittite Storm Gods. He wears bracelets about the arm and wears a sword⁶. His left foot steps forward. It seems most probable that he wears a pair of leather shoes as his toes are not depicted.

This figure brandishes an axe with a double bladed head in his right hand, and holds the trident lightning bundle and squeezes the throat of a giant snake in his left hand which is extended forward. The body of the snake, which is about one and a half times the height of the figure, is depicted curved around behind the figure and its tail reaches the waist of the figure. In front of the forehead of the figure there is a semi-oval sign, similar to that of Lar. 407⁷, which may be the hieroglyphic symbol representing the Storm God⁸.

It is also understood that the figure, standing on the bull, depicts the Storm God from the fact that he holds a lightning bundle⁹ in one hand and an axe¹⁰ in the other¹¹. However, because his head is crowned by the ‘winged sun disc’, this figure should depict a king, deified while in life and bearing the title of Storm God.

As it is known, figures crowned by the winged sun disc, are mostly defined as representing the Sun God¹². The Hittite winged sun disc symbolizes the Hittite sphinx¹³ and the Hittite sphinx symbolizes the extraordinary powers of kings¹⁴. Therefore, the Hittite winged sun disc might have been used as a royal emblem¹⁵. The relief No. 34 at Yazılıkaya is defined as a king from its iconographical peculiarities and as representing the Sun God of the Sky from its hieroglyphic inscription¹⁶. The Hittite kings used the ^DUTU^{SI} (=My Sun) title along with their other titles¹⁷. Written documents record that the souls and hearts of the Sun God and labarna are the same¹⁸.

⁵ *ibid.*, 77, 529 Taf. 48h.

⁶ Bunnens 2006, 66.

⁷ Laroche 1960, 216 no. 407.

⁸ *ibid.*, 66-8 no. 105.

⁹ Hawkins 1992, 56-58.

¹⁰ Bunnens 2006, 66.

¹¹ As a depiction with the lightning bundle and the axe it comes under group A of the Weather Gods by Orthmann (1971, 238-9), the group of weather gods on the bull by Akurgal (1949, 101) and the group of smiting storm-god with an axe and trident-thunderbolt A and B by Bunnens (2006, 111-3). The storm gods on the steles of Tell Ahmar B (Orthmann 1971, Taf. 53c; Hawkins 2000, Pl. 99), Tell Ahmar/Qubbah (Bunnens 2006, Fig. 8), Karaçay Köy (Bunnens 2006, Fig. 57) and Cekke (Barnett 1948, Pl. XIX; Hawkins 2000, Pls. 42-3), in this group standing upon the bull.

¹² Güterbock 1993, 225-6.

¹³ Ensert 2005a, 295-6 Fig. 6; Ensert 2005b, 26 Şek. 2.

¹⁴ According to the Hittite texts the king had been vested with the powers of the sky by the Weather God of the Sky and with the powers of the earth by the Sungoddess of the earth (Haas 1994, 194).

¹⁵ Ensert 2005b, 37.

¹⁶ Güterbock 1943, 276-7; Güterbock 1993, 225.

¹⁷ Bossert 1957, 101-2; Gonnet Bağana 1967, 163.

¹⁸ Haas 1994, 189.

The winged sun disc symbol also represented the sphinx during the Neo-Hittite Period¹⁹. In that period it crowned the heads of the storm and the protective gods²⁰ and goddesses²¹. It is not possible for the above mentioned divinities to simultaneously also be the Sun God, because of the symbol in question. Also Bossert²² disagrees with Güterbock's idea²³ of unifying the Sun God and the Storm God. Furthermore, Hittite written documents mention that the souls and hearts of the Storm God and the king are unified as was the case with the Sun God and the king²⁴. The winged sun disc symbol would have been used to distinguish the depictions of the kings with the Sun God or Storm God titles from those of the actual gods²⁵.

The winged sun disc symbols seen above the sacred trees on the orthostats A/1²⁶ and A/9²⁷ at Sakçagözü, and the winged sun disc symbols carried by bull-men on the Tell Halaf orthostats A3/171²⁸ and Ba/2²⁹, and by a bird-man on the Karatepe orthostat A/7³⁰, demonstrate the exaltation of the kingdom³¹. The winged sun disc symbols seen in the lion hunting on the Sakçagözü B/1 orthostat³² and in the upper part of the feasting scene on the Zincirli Stele K/2³³, indicate these are royal scenes³⁴.

In Hittite depictions this symbol crowns the heads of kings and queens who were deified while living³⁵. There are figures bearing a similar iconography on the steles of

¹⁹ Ensart 2006, Res. 4.

²⁰ Orthmann (1971, 233-63) classified the figures crowned by the winged sun disk on the steles of Tell Ahmar A-C (B/1-3), Maraş (B/5), Kürtül (1), Körkün (1), Adıyaman (2) and Hacıbebekli (1), and the one on the Karasu Rock Monument (1) and those on the orthostats of Karkamış B33 (Bb/1) and Malatya E (A/6) under the headings of weather gods, protective gods and sun gods. Also Akurgal (1949, 101-5) studied the subject figures in a similar manner.

²¹ Steles of Meharde (Orthmann 1971, 104-5, 285, 519 Taf. 38g; Hawkins 2000, 415-6 Pls. 225-6) and Birecik (Orthmann 1971, 481 Taf. 5c).

²² Bossert 1957, 100.

²³ Güterbock (1943, 278) was of the opinion that in the Neo-Hittite Period the wing sun disk was not the symbol of the Sun God only. He explained the presence of the name of the Weather God at the front and the name of the Sun God behind the head of the figure in relief Karkamış A 17a (Woolley 1921, ix Pl. A17a; Hawkins 2000, 191-2; Pl. 72) as the representation of both these gods unified in one figure. The figures of the Weather God on the Stele of Tell Ahmar B (Thureau-Dangin - Dunand 1936, Pl. III; Orthmann 1971, Pl. 53d; Hawkins 2000, Pl. 99) and the protective god on the Stele of Hacıbebekli, both crowned by the winged sun disk are described also in this same manner.

²⁴ van den Hout 1995, 560.

²⁵ Ensart 2006, 326.

²⁶ Orthmann 1971, Taf. 49a.

²⁷ *ibid.*, Taf. 50c.

²⁸ Oppenheim 1955, Taf. 98; Orthmann 1971, Taf. 10g.

²⁹ Oppenheim 1955, Taf. 104; Orthmann 1971, Taf. 12b.

³⁰ Orthmann 1971, Taf. 15d.

³¹ Ensart 2006, 327.

³² Orthmann 1971, Taf. 51c.

³³ *ibid.*, Taf. 66d.

³⁴ Ensart 2006, 327.

³⁵ Ensart 2005a, 297; Ensart 2005b, 38; Ensart 2006, 326.

Adıyaman³⁶, Aleppo³⁷, Borowski³⁸, Karaçay Köyü³⁹ Körkün⁴⁰, Kürtül⁴¹, Maraş⁴², Tell Ahmar A-C⁴³ and Tell Ahmar/Qubbah⁴⁴. All of these figures face to the left. Each of them holds a trident lightning bundle in the left hand, an axe in the right hand and is girded with a sword. All have short sleeved short skirts with heavy belts and wear the horned headdress. Only the figures on the Tell Ahmar B⁴⁵ and the Tell Ahmar/Qubbah steles⁴⁶ stand on bulls, the others stand on the ground. Through this peculiarity our figure resembles the Storm God on the Tell Ahmar B and the Tell Ahmar/Qubbah steles, more than the other examples. The kings, named in the inscriptions on the Steles of Tell Ahmar A⁴⁷, Tell Ahmar B⁴⁸ and Tell Ahmar/Qubbah⁴⁹, describe themselves as, 'child celestial Tarhuns'. In the inscription on the Stele of Aleppo, King Arpas mentions that he established his brother Hamiyatas' name, who set up the Steles of Tell Ahmar A⁵⁰ and Tell Ahmar/Qubbah⁵¹, with Tarhunzas. Also the name of the ruler recorded in the Bulgarmaden rock inscription is Tarhunzas⁵².

The above examples may show that the Neo-Hittite kings might have used the name Tarhunzas, the Weather God, as a title, as the Hittite kings in the 2nd millennium B.C. did, through employing the "DUTUŠİ" "My Sun (The Sun God?)" title⁵³.

As the heads of the figures on the Niğde Stele⁵⁴ and the Malatya E Relief⁵⁵ are also crowned by the winged sun disk and they carry trident lightning bundles in their hands, they should be dealt with in the group of depictions of kings with the Storm God titles. However, the figure on the Niğde Stele depicts King Muwaharanis⁵⁶, titled the Storm God of Fertility, from the bundle of vine and the wheat ear depicted with him. The Malatya Relief E shows more similarity with the iconographic peculiarities of the kings of the Hittite Imperial Period, who were deified while living and were depicted carrying the li-tuus rather than the axe, and were not depicted wearing the horned headdress.

³⁶ Hawkins 1970, Pl. 18a-b Figs. 7-8; Orthmann 1971, 101-2 551 Taf. 67g; Hawkins 2000, 351-2 Pls. 177-8.

³⁷ Barnett 1948, 137 Pls. XXIII-XXIV; Orthmann 1971, 551; Hawkins 1980, 145 Pl. VII Fig. 2; Hawkins 2000, 235-8 Pls. 97-8.

³⁸ Hawkins 2000, 230-1 Pl. 93;

³⁹ Bunnens 2006, 111 Fig. 57.

⁴⁰ Kalaç 1969, 160-3, Abb. 1-5; Orthmann 1971, 52, 147, 235, 241-4, 551 Taf. 38f; Hawkins 2000, 171-5 Pls. 58-9.

⁴¹ Kalaç 1967, 280-2, Pls. VII-VIII; Orthmann 1971, 90, 235, 239, 519 Taf. 38e; Hawkins 2000, 271-2 Pls. 122-3.

⁴² Hawkins 2000, 270-1 Pls. 120-1; Orthmann 1971, 88, 236, 239, 524-5 Taf. 44e.

⁴³ Thureau-Dangin - Dunand 1936, 134-7 Pls. I-VI, VII:1; Orthmann 1971, Taf. 53c-d; Hawkins 2000, 225-30, 239-44 Pls. 91-2, 94, 99-100.

⁴⁴ Bunnens 2006, 1-56 Figs. 5-22.

⁴⁵ Thureau-Dangin - Dunand 1936, Pl. III; Orthmann 1971, Taf. 53d; Hawkins 2000, Pl. 99.

⁴⁶ Bunnens 2006, 1-56 Figs. 5-22.

⁴⁷ Thureau-Dangin - Dunand 1936, Pl. I; Orthmann 1971, Pl. 53c; Hawkins 2000, 228 Pl. 92.

⁴⁸ Thureau-Dangin - Dunand 1936, Pl. III; Orthmann 1971, Pl. 53d; Hawkins 2000, 240-1 Pl. 99.

⁴⁹ Bunnens 2006, 13.

⁵⁰ Hawkins 2000, 236-7.

⁵¹ Bunnens 2006, 13.

⁵² Hawkins 2000, 522.

⁵³ Ensert 2006, 328.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, Res. 1-2.

⁵⁵ Delaporte 1940, 30 Pl. XX. 2; Orthmann 1971, Taf. 40a; Hawkins 2000, Pl. 151.

⁵⁶ Ensert 2006, 326-8 Res. 1-2.

From the above peculiarity the figure depicted on the Malatya Relief E may represent the beginning of the transformation in the depictions of the kings of the Hittite Imperial Period with the Sun God titles, into the kings of the Neo-Hittite Period carrying the Storm God title.

The condition of the snake depicted on the Erzin stele indicates the snake is alive and that the figure is fighting to kill this giant snake with the double bladed axe held in his hand. The struggles between the Storm God and the snake are known from the myths of Illuyanka and Hedammu.

In the Hedammu Myth⁵⁷, a giant snake lives in the ocean. Through the charm of Ishtar, it moves onto the land and was killed by the Storm God. In depictions, Hedammu⁵⁸ is portrayed as the bull-horned snake⁵⁹, as the triple dog or the wolf headed snake⁶⁰, as a man with eight snakes rising from the head⁶¹, and a snake, double-headed, one of a man and the other a woman⁶². Although the type of the Malatya Relief H (Fig. 6)⁶³, dated to the Neo-Hittite Period, is not clear because the head of the snake is broken, the manner of its deterioration suggest that it may also have depicted Hedammu⁶⁴.

The Illuyanka Tales⁶⁵ are a typical new year myth and for this reason it was always recounted and represented within the context of the Spring or Abundance/Fertility Festival (purulli-)⁶⁶.

Although the text shows linguistic peculiarities dating back to the Old Hittite Period (about 1750-1500 B.C.), the copies that survive are dated to the Hittite Imperial Period (about 1500-1190 B.C.)⁶⁷. Two versions of this myth are found. Both of the copies were written by a clerk who wrote down what was said by Kella, priest of the Weather God of Nerik City⁶⁸. Ziggarratta and Nerik are the names of places mentioned in the story. The purpose of the Purulli(ya) ceremony was the renewal of the world, and in connection with this, the renewal of the charismatic powers of the king, or approval of his position by the gods⁶⁹. The renewal and increase of health powers of the king couple were realized through wishing and through the affirmation of the gods, because there was understood to be a direct connection between the king's health and the rhythm of nature⁷⁰. This ceremony was directed by the king, queen and the princes⁷¹. The procedure attached to the

⁵⁷ Güterbock 1945, 67-8; Ünal 1999, 270.

⁵⁸ Özgüç 2003, 16-8.

⁵⁹ Porada 1992, Rosen cylinder, Figs. 1, 1a, Nuzi cylinder Figs. 2-3, Stein 1988, 176-178 Fig. 11; The snake carved on a cylinder seal, Morgan 688, dated to the Late Assyrian Period is horned (Porada 1948, 83, 688E).

⁶⁰ The example is on the Hasanlu Bowl (Porada 1959, 19-21; Porada 1992, Figs. 4-5).

⁶¹ Parrot 1950, Fig. 3.

⁶² Haas 1994, Abb. 54.

⁶³ Delaporte 1940, Pl. XXII, 2; Orthmann 1971, 437.

⁶⁴ Özgüç 2003, 18-9.

⁶⁵ Bryce 2003, 233-7; Green 2003, 147-51; Ünal 1999, 269-70; Haas 1994, 703-7; Hoffner 1990, 10-14; Goetze 1955, 125-6; Gurney 1990, 111, 126-7, 150-2.

⁶⁶ Haas 1994, 700.

⁶⁷ Hoffner 1990, 11.

⁶⁸ Haas 1994, 704.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 697.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 697.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, 699.

renewal of life, symbolized by the Storm God defeating Illuyanka, representative of the obscure and wicked powers, at the beginning of the year was probably empowered through ritual⁷². Although Illuyanka would be defeated and killed, it would be born again to fight, its life would be renewed as through the shedding of a snake's skin⁷³. It shows that the world is coming back to life and in consequence it may be thought Illuyanka symbolized the winter⁷⁴. The snake symbolized evil in the Hittite culture as it did in Babylonian culture and in ancient Israel⁷⁵.

In the first version of the tale⁷⁶ Illuyanka overcomes the Storm God. The Goddess Inara helps the Storm God. Inara calls the snake and his children to eat, the snake becomes drunk after eating and Hupasiya, the mortal, with whom Inara had previously formed an agreement, comes and ties the snake, then the Storm God kills the snake.

In the second version of the tale⁷⁷ the snake not only overcomes the Storm God but takes away the Storm God's heart and eyes. The Storm God devises a plan to regain his heart and eyes from the snake. In order to have a son to marry to the daughter of the snake, he marries a poor man's daughter. He then marries his son to the daughter of the snake and asks his son to bring his eyes and heart from his father in law. When his son brought his eyes and heart back, he regains his past power, fights Illuyanka on the coast, and he kills Illuyanka and his own son.

In ancient Anatolian art the earliest scenes depicting the Illuyanka Myth are found in the ancient Anatolian style of Kültepe-Kanish dating from the 20th-19th centuries B.C.⁷⁸. In the carving on cylinder seals of the Anatolian type (Fig. 4), while (Taru), the Storm God steps with one foot on the rump of a bull, standing on an elevation, like a mountain, the other foot stands on the extension of this same elevation. He holds his bowl/glass and the rein of the bull in one hand and grabs the snake by the nape in the other hand. There is a lightning tree next to the head of the snake recorded on four of these seal impressions⁷⁹. The small worshipper (Hupasiya?) offers a drink with the pitcher. Inara, the Hattian Goddess, is placed amongst the depictions of animals.

The depiction of the Storm God, holding a lightning bundle in one hand and a snake in the other, is recorded on three cylinder seal impressions of the Old Syrian style from Kültepe⁸⁰. These seals, brought from Syria to Kanish were modified by the Hattians⁸¹. In two seal impressions the Storm God is standing on an elevation like a mountain with the rocks depicted and the foreground ending with the frontal depiction of a lion (Fig. 5).

⁷² Bryce 2003, 234.

⁷³ *ibid.*, 234.

⁷⁴ Haas 2002, 440.

⁷⁵ Hoffner 1990, 11.

⁷⁶ Haas 1994, 703-5; Hoffner 1990, 11-2.

⁷⁷ Bryce 2003, 235; Gurney 1990, 151; Haas 1994, 705-6; Hoffner 1990, 12-4.

⁷⁸ Özgüç 2003, 21.

⁷⁹ Özgüç 1965 (Kt. A/k 1435) 27-8, 41-2 Lev. XXIII, 70; Özgüç 2003, 21-2 Res. 1 Çiz. 1; (Kt.g/k 11), Özgüç 2003, 23 Res. 2 Çiz. 2; Porada 1948, 112-3 No. 894; Özgüç 2003, 23 Çiz. 3; Özgüç 2003 (Kt. n/k 1913) 32; Çiz. 5; Garelli - Collon 1975, Pl. 49, 14.

⁸⁰ Özgüç 2003 (kt. a/k 393) Çiz. 6; Teissier 1993, Fig. 1; Özgüç - Özgüç 1953, Lev. LXII no. 698; Özgüç 2003 (kt. n/k 1833B, 1926E) Çiz. 7; Özgüç 2003 (kt. d/k 220. D, 34A, Kt.88/k 866) Çiz. 8.

⁸¹ Özgüç 2003, 32.

Gods fighting the snake are depicted on two reliefs dating from the Neo-Hittite Period. In the Ashara relief⁸² the Weather God (?) fights the snake with an axe. According to the cuneiform inscription on the stone, it was carved by the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta II for his father Adad-Nirari II⁸³, the snake symbolizing the defeated enemies and their fallen cities⁸⁴. The other example is the Malatya Relief H (Fig. 6)⁸⁵.

The Illuyanka Tales show some similarity to the struggle between Zeus and the Typhon⁸⁶, a being between a human and an animal, covered in vipers below the waist. The gods saw this creature attacking the sky and they fled to Egypt. They changed into animals and hid in the desert. Zeus hurled his lightning bolts from far off, and when he came closer in the fight the Typhon knocked Zeus down with his harp. This fight took place at (Keldağ) Casios Mountain and the Typhon cut out Zeus's arm and leg tendons and imprisoned Zeus within his (Korykos) cave at Cilicia. Hermes and Pan (or Kadmos) steal the tendons and put them back into the body of Zeus. When Zeus had regained his former power, he followed Typhon all the way to Sicily and threw Mount Etna on top of him and Typhon was crushed beneath the mountain. The flames that issue from Mount Etna are either the flames vomited up by Typhon or are the lightning bolts poured out by Zeus.

The find of the Erzin Stele in the Province of Hatay, the area of the struggle between Zeus and the Typhon, provides proof supporting the suggestion that this myth was brought into Greek mythology from the Neo-Hittites.

Consequently, the Erzin Stele is important as it shows the myth of Illuyanka of Hattian origin also prevailed in the Neo-Hittite Period. Probably this myth was still related during the Spring or Fertility Festival and this stele depicted this myth. The *purulli(ya)* ceremony was the time when the gods' renewed approval of the king's authority and the restoration of the life, health and power of the king and his wife. As the figure on this stele is a king with the title of the Storm God, this scene should represent the Illuyanka Myth and his fight with Illuyanka, the snake, depicting the restoration of his authority and power. Because the headdress worn by this figure was first worn by the Sam'al King Kilamuwa (832-810 B.C.) and in its iconography this figure carries Hittite, Assyrian and Aramean features, the Erzin Stele can be dated at the earliest to the period extending from the second half of 9th century B.C. to end of 8th century B.C. From its location, the town of Erzin, where this stele was found was in the Neo-Hittite domain.

⁸² Bunnens 2006, 129 Fig. 104; Genge 1979, Abb. 16; Orthmann 1971, 437 Taf. 5a.

⁸³ *ibid.*, 129.

⁸⁴ Orthmann 1971, 438.

⁸⁵ Akurgal 1995, Şek. 67; Güterbock 1957, 64 Pl. 21f; Orthmann 1971, 437-8 Taf. 40e.

⁸⁶ Grimal 1997, 814-5.

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Öz

Erzin Steli

Hatay Arkeoloji Müzesinde 17183 envanter numarası ile kayıtlı bulunan bazalt stel, Hatay İli'nin Erzin İlçesi'nin Yurtlak mevkiindeki tarlasını sürerken O. Günay tarafından iki parça halinde bulunmuş ve 1987 yılında satın alma yoluyla müzeye kazandırılmıştır.

Kırılma ve zamanla oluşan tahribata rağmen stelin iki parçası birbiriyle uyumludur. Alt tarafında bir kaidedeki oyuğa geçmesi için bir çıkıntısı bulunmaktadır. Eserin çıkıntı ile birlikte yüksekliği 95.5 cm, gövde genişliği 46-38 cm arasında değişmekte ve eserin en kalın yeri 16 cm'dir. Kaide çıkıntısı 19 cm yüksekliğinde, 19-15 cm genişliğinde ve 13-10 cm kalınlığındadır. Tasvirsiz bombeli arka yüzünde tarlanın sürülmesi ile oluşmuş izlenimini veren derin çizikler bulunmaktadır.

Eserin çerçeve içine alınmış ön yüzünde, yürüyen bir boğa üzerinde sol eliyle üçlü şimşek demetini tutarken aynı zamanda dev bir yılanın boğazını sıkı ve sağ eliyle çift başlı baltayı savuran bir erkek figürü yer almaktadır.

Figürün kıyafeti, baltası, kılıcı ve üçlü yıldırım demeti Geç Hitit Dönemi'nin Fırtına Tanrılarına benzer fakat onlardan ayrılan yönü Arami tipi bir başlık takmasıdır. Bu tip başlık, ilk kez Sam'al kralı Kilamuwa'da (İ.Ö. 832-810) görüldüğünden ve ikonografik olarak figür Hitit, Asur ve Arami özellikleri taşıdığından, stel en erken İ.Ö. 9. yüzyılın ikinci yarısından İ.Ö. 8. yüzyılın sonuna tarihlenebilir. Hiçbir yerde tam bir benzeri olmayan saç biçimi ise Hititli ve Asurlu özellikler taşımaktadır. Figürün alnı önünde Fırtına Tanrısının sembolü olduğu düşünülen yarım oval şekilde hiyeroglifik bir işaret (Lar. 407) yer almaktadır.

Figürün genel ikonografik özellikleri ve hiyeroglifik işaret (?) onun Fırtına Tanrısı olduğunu gösterir. Ancak figürü kanatlı bir güneş kursu taçlandığı için 'Fırtına Tanrısı' unvanlı bir kralı tasvir ediyor olmalıdır. Bilindiği gibi Yazılıkaya 34 numaralı kabartma ^DUTU.AN=Göğün Güneş Tanrısı' hiyeroglif yazıtını taşıdığı için bu figür gibi başları kanatlı güneş kursu ile taçlandırılmış benzer figürler de Güneş Tanrısı olarak tanımlanmışlardır. Oysa ^DUTU^{SI} (=Güneşim), aynı zamanda Hitit krallarının unvanlarından biridir. Hitit kanatlı güneş kursu Hitit sfenksini, sfenks de yazılı belgelerin de işaret ettiği gibi Hitit kralını temsil etmelidir. Fırtına Tanrısının tüm ikonografik özelliklerine sahip olup başlarını kanatlı güneş kursunun taçlandığı Erzin stelindeki figür ve benzerlerinin hem Fırtına hem de Güneş Tanrısı olması mümkün değildir. Onlar ^DUTU^{SI} veya Tarhunzas unvanlarını taşıyan krallar olmalıdır. Hitit yazılı belgeleri Güneş Tanrısı ile Labarna'nın ruhlarının ve kalplerinin bir olduğu gibi Fırtına Tanrısı ile kralın ruhlarının da bir olduğundan söz etmektedir. Tahta çıkış ritüelleri sırasında krallığın en büyük tanrısallıkları tarafından karizmatik güçlerle donatılan krallar veya kraliçeler, kendi tasvirlerini gerçek tanrı ve tanrıçalarından ayırt etmek için kanatlı güneş kursu sembolünü kullanmış olmalıdır.

Yılanın şekli canlı olduğunu ve figürün onunla mücadele ettiğini göstermektedir. Fırtına Tanrısı ile yılan arasındaki mücadeleler Hedammu ve İlluyanka Efsanelerinden bilinmektedir.

Hurri kökenli olan Hedammu Efsanesi'nde, Hedammu isimli dev bir yılan okyanusta yaşamaktadır. İştar'ın albenisiyle karaya çıkan Hedammu'yu Fırtına Tanrısı öldürür. Tasvirli sanat eserlerinde Hedammu'nun, genellikle sığır boynuzlu yılan, üç köpek veya kurt başlı yılan, başında sekiz yılan yükselen bir adam ve biri erkek biri kadın iki başlı yılan olarak tasvir edildiği düşünülmektedir. Malatya 'H' kabartması üzerindeki yılanın baş kısmı kırık olduğundan başı tam olarak bilinmese de öldürülüş şekli onun da Hedammu'lardan biri olabileceği fikrini vermektedir.

Hatti kökenli İlluyanka Efsanesi'nin ise iki nüshası ele geçmiştir. İlk nüshasında Tanrıça İnara, Fırtına Tanrısına yardım etmek için yılanı ve ailesini ziyafete çağırır, yılan sarhoş olur ve İnara'nın daha önce anlaştığı ölümlü Hupasiya tarafından bağlanan yılanı Fırtına Tanrısı öldürür. İkinci nüshasında İlluyanka, Fırtına Tanrısını yenmekle kalmamış aynı zamanda gözlerini ve kalbini de almıştır. Fırtına Tanrısı gözleri ile kalbini geri almak için bir plan yapar ve yılanın kızı ile evlendirmek için bir oğlu olsun diye fakir bir adamın kızı ile evlenir. Oğlu yılanın kızıyla evlenince babasının gözlerini ve kalbini geri getirir. Eski gücüne kavuşan Fırtına Tanrısı hem yılanı hem de oğlunu öldürür.

İlluyanka Efsanesi tipik bir yeni yıl destanı olup Hatti kökenli İlkbahar veya Bereket Bayramı olan purulli(ya) töreni süresince söylenmiş ve canlandırılmıştır. Purulli(ya) töreninin amacı dünyanın yenilenmesi ve buna bağlı olarak kralın karizmatik güçlerinin yenilenmesi, tekrar tahta çıkışı ya da konumunun tanrılar tarafından yeniden onaylanmasıdır. Muhtemelen bu stel, Geç Hitit Dönemi'nde de yılanın öldürülmesi ile, kralın gücünün yenilenmesini ve yetkesinin tanrılar tarafından onaylandığını tasvir etmektedir. Buradaki yılanı öldüren figürün Fırtına Tanrısı unvanlı bir kral olması, bu stelin üzerindeki sahnede Hedammu Efsanesi'nin değil İlluyanka Efsanesi'nin canlandırıldığını göstermelidir.

İlluyanka Efsanesi'ne benzeyen daha geç bir gelenekteki Zeus ile Typhon arasındaki mücadelenin Hatay bölgesinde geçmesi, söz konusu mitin Hititlerden doğrudan Yunan Mitolojisi'ne geçtiğini belgelemektedir.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

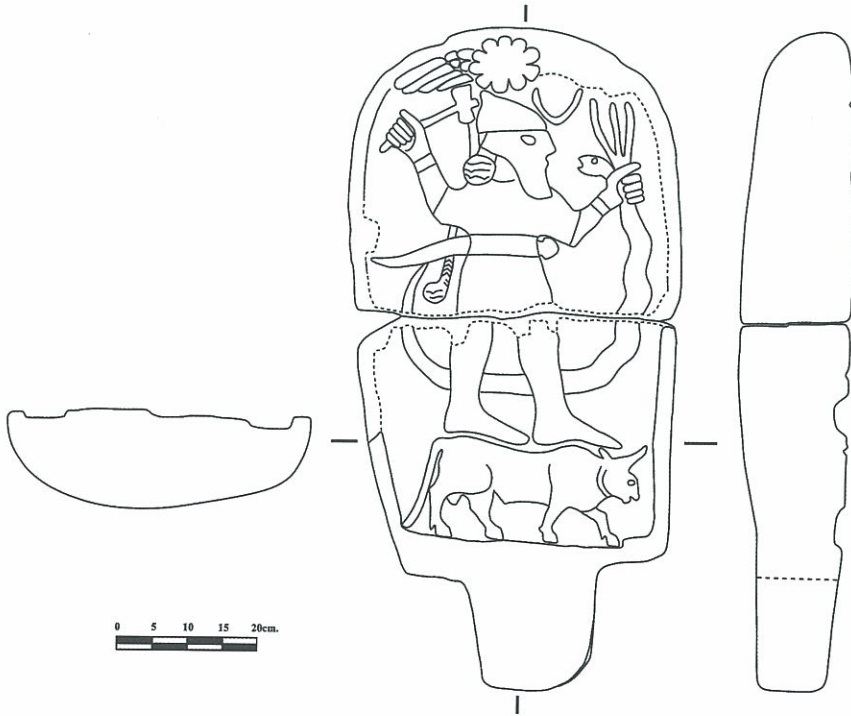


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

