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## INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND RELATIONS BETWEEN AHHIYAWA AND THE HITTITE EMPIRE<sup>1</sup>

It has been repeatedly discussed in science whether the Achaean Greece was seen at the international arena when foreign relations were actively reinforced in the Old East both verbally, through mediators, and through written messages. As it is known, Ahhiyawa mentioned in the Hittite written sources, whose identification has been a subject of dispute for a long time, in the opinion of most researchers must imply the state language of Homer's Achaeans<sup>2</sup>. According to the recent research, Ahhiyawa confirmed in Hittite documents is identified with the country of the Achaeans not only at the phonetic level but also geographically and politically. Latacz mentions that like in case of Wilios – Ilion, “w” has disappeared, “w” must also be lost in the form of the term “Ahhiyawa”<sup>3</sup>. The reason for our article is not to review and summarize the versions expressed in connection with identification. However, we should mention that we support *Latacz's* point of view, which is dominant today.

For the research of informational relations, it is interesting how Ahhiyawa is presented in the Hittite written sources, what place it occupies in the foreign policy of that period, and what ways of information conveyance are confirmed in the documents which have reached us. The review of these issues will cast more light on what is not seen in the Mycenaean sources.

In the Hittite documents Ahhiyawa is mentioned in the union of Asia Minor, such as Artsava, the land of Sekha river, Tsipaslā, Asuva, and Milawanda. Beyond the borders of Asia Minor, Ahhiyawa had relations with the Island of Cyprus. It is

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<sup>2</sup> Initially, E. Forer published a study in 1924 where he discussed the identification of Ahhiyawa and the Achaeans. He also attempted to discover the well-known names from the Greek mythology in the Hittite documents, E.O. Forrer, *Vorhomerische Griechen in den Keilschrifttexten von Bogazköi*, „MDOG” 1924, issue 63.

<sup>3</sup> J. Latacz, *Troia und Homer, Der Weg zur Lösung eines alten Rätsels*, München-Berlin 2001, pp. 151-152.

known that the Hittite Empire was not directly bordered by Ahhiyawa but it was localized at various places<sup>4</sup>. Some historians think that none of the Hittite rulers have campaigned in Ahhiyawa and also none of the kings of Ahhiyawa have campaigned in the Hittite Empire<sup>5</sup>. According to the written sources of the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC, no controversy was observed between the Hittite people and Ahhiyawa. In the opinion of Gordeziani, this mutual understanding was also facilitated by the fact that by that time Ahhiyawa did not represent a powerful association which could have become a rival of the Empire in western Asia Minor<sup>6</sup>.

Relations between Ahhiyawa and the land of Hatti are confirmed in the Hittite documents from the period of “the Middle Kingdom”. This name is first found in the source of Suppiluliuma I (1380-1346) where it is mentioned that the King exiled somebody, possibly his wife, to Ahhiyawa. This fact shows that there were friendly relations between the Hittites and Ahhiyawa during that period. Otherwise, it is unclear how Suppiluliuma could have exiled his wife to a foreign country<sup>7</sup>. In the documents of Mursili II (1345-1315 BC) it can be seen that friendly relations still existed between the Hittite Empire and Ahhiyawa. The connection between Ahhiyawa and Milawanda is first mentioned here. The interests of Ahhiyawa and the land of Hatti were mainly focused on the city of Milawanda<sup>8</sup>. While the attention of the Hittites was mainly focused on the North Syria and Mitana at the beginning of the rule of Suppiluliuma, Mursili II tried to strengthen the weakened positions of the land of Khati in the south-western and western part of Asia Minor<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Some scientists located Ahhiyawa in Asia Minor, however, according to the recent research, its location on the Anatolian continent was excluded. In 1997 two Hittitologists – Frank Starke and David Hawkins – based on various materials independently arrived at the conclusion that Ahhiyawa was not located in Asia Minor, but its foothold was Milawanda (F. Starke, *Troia im Kontext des Historisch-politischen und sprachlichen Umfeldes Kleinasiens im 2. Jahrtausend*, „Studia Troica“ 1997, issue 7; J.D. Hawkins, „Karabel“, „Tarkondemos“ and the Land of Mira. *New Evidence on the Hittite Empire Period in Western Anatolia*, „Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft“ 1999, issue 23, pp. 7-14 (= Zusammenfassung eines kongreßbeitrags Würzburg, Dezember 1998). David Hawkins also addressed the issues of identification of Milawanda-Miletus in the same research paper. Hellenologists assume that Ahhiyawa included the eastern stripe of the Greek continent and the part of islands located to the east up to Rhodes (J. Latacz, *Troia und Homer...*, p. 156).

<sup>5</sup> G. Giorgadze, *Atasi ghvtaebis kveq'ana (khetebi da kheturi tsivilizatsia)*, Tbilisi 1988, p. 81. However, in the opinion of some researchers, Ahhiyawa should also have participated in the anti-Hittite coalition (Milawanda, Artsava, Mira and the land of Sekha river) which had existed until enthronement of the heir of Suppiluliuma, Mursili II (p. 68).

<sup>6</sup> R. Gordeziani R., *Iliada da egeosuri mosakhleobis istoriisa da etnogenezisis sak'itkhebi*, Tbilisi 1970, p. 130.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 130.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>9</sup> G. Giorgadze, *Atasi ghvtaebis...*, p. 70.

The interests of Ahhiyawa and the land of Hatti were mainly focused on the city of Milawanda. The king of the Hittite Empire clearly took Milawanda into consideration. It tried to achieve its plans without the escalation of relations with Milawanda. Milawanda represented a serious military base of Ahhiyawa in Asia Minor. Milawanda was the country where the influence of Ahhiyawa was spread. A vessel is also mentioned which must be pointing to the fact that Ahhiyawa was connected to Milawanda by sea<sup>10</sup>. The document in which the ill Mursili II expresses hope that the gods of Ahhiyawa and Lazpa will be able to cure him should also be taken into consideration.

Piyamaradu is an interesting person in the Hittite written documents which represents the reason for instability along the entire western coast of Asia Minor – from Luka through Vilusa for a long time. His figure allows us to obtain more information about Ahhiyawa<sup>11</sup>.

As for the research of issues interesting for us, particularly noteworthy material is provided by the “*Tawagalawa letter*” dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC which clearly shows that Ahhiyawa already represented a powerful state by that time. The king of the Hatti personally writes a letter to the ruler of Ahhiyawa which points to the significant influence of this country in the foreign policy. Unfortunately, the letter is damaged in many places and the name of the Hittite King is illegible in the text which has reached us. However, Latacz assumes that it must be the king Hattusili III<sup>12</sup>. As it seems, during his reign, Ahhiyawa represented a serious political military power which was recognized by the ruler of Hittites and he tried to settle the controversy with him through negotiations<sup>13</sup>.

A number of nuances attract our attention in this document. It is clear in the “*Tawagalawa letter*” that the ruler of the Hittite Empire considered the king of Ahhiyawa as the king of the equal rank and called him “brother”. As it is known from the history of diplomacy of the Old East, the rulers used to adhere to certain rules while writing to each other. Only the king with equal rights could

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<sup>10</sup> R. Gordeziani, *Iliada...*, pp. 130-34.

<sup>11</sup> Frank Starke points to the noble origin of Piyamaradu in his research and assumes that he was the grandson Arzawa Uḫḫazidi expelled by Mursili II who found a shelter in Ahhiyawa. In his opinion, Piyamaradu was implementing non-peace actions in the western Asia Minor due to his desire to return the kingdom of his grandfather. This was also facilitated by the fact that Piyamaradu was supported by Ahhiyawa and he had a foothold in Milawanda (For overview, see F. Starke, *Troia im Kontext...*).

<sup>12</sup> J. Latacz, *Troia und Homer...*, pp. 153-55.

<sup>13</sup> „Let the words of the son, the Lord of the heaven be returned to me, if I acted in a hostile manner (against you), but now, evil words have been uttered by the mouth (of my brother) and they have reached the great king (the king of the Hattian country). Let's settle it together” (R. Gordeziani, *Iliada...*, pp. 131-134). We refer to the excerpts from the translation of “The Tawagalawa Letter” by R. Gordeziani. For overview, see J. Garstang, O. R. Gurney, *The Geography of the Hittite Empire*, London, 1959, p. 111; B.G. Boruchovič, *Ačejsky v Maloj Azii*, BDI 1964, 3, p. 99.

address the ruler of Ahhiyawa with a friendly speech which would have been impossible in case of relations with the conquered state. It is certain that during that time the king of Ahhiyawa had the same power as the kings of Egypt and the Hittite state. The Hittite king describes in detail in this long letter the actions of Piyamaradu against himself and against the vassal kings. He is worried that Piyamaradu is under patronage of his son-in-law, Atpa in Millawanda, and when the king arrived there to deliver his “speech”, Piyamaradu escaped in a ship. Piyamaradu was guaranteed personal immunity in Ahhiyawa which created rather serious obstacles to the Hattian kingdom to stop him. The letter sent by the ruler of the Hattian kingdom was intended as a means of resolving this problem and an attempt to start negotiations and reach an agreement<sup>14</sup>. He actually asks Ahhiyawa not to provide a shelter to Piyamaradu.

It is particularly significant that this letter points to a rather long-term correspondence between Hattusa and Ahhiyawa. In the letter the Hattian king makes excuses for the mistakes he made when he was young. He does not even leave the offence of the past without attention so that the king of Ahhiyawa does not reject his request because of that trouble<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, it is clear that the relations between Hattusa and Ahhiyawa existed much earlier than the activation of Piyamaradu. The ruler of Hattusa now tries to settle the relations with him using well-disposed words and not using a threat, like years ago. We also learn that some disagreement should have taken place between the kings of Ahhiyawa and Hittites because of Wilusa. “The Hattian king and I – in the issue of Wilusa, due to which we were hostile to each other – he persuaded me and we became friends...”. It has been proved that the city of Troy mentioned in *The Iliad* is Wilusa and it is a historical city<sup>16</sup>. In the opinion of Latacz, due to the above, the name of Greeks or Achaeans attacking Troy in the poems of Homer must not have been invented either. This disagreement is unknown for us, specifically which confrontation the Hittite king implied in his letter. But it is evident that he does not want to make war with Ahhiyawa which must be suggestive of enhancement of its military policy. “War should not happen between us!” – These words of the Hittite king point to the fact that the Kingdom of Khati avoids controversy with Ahhiyawa and its letter is oriented at keeping peace. In the history of diplomacy of the old world it is known that specially selected mediators used to be sent to rulers of befriended and equal countries and any mediator of the “sun” had to be

<sup>14</sup> „Your country protects him. But he permanently invades my country: and wherever I do not meet him, he returns to your land again. Are you of good opinion about such action, my brother?”

<sup>15</sup> „But my brother once wrote to me: you acted in a hostile manner in respect to me” (but in that period, my brother) I was young. If I wrote anything hostile to you then, it was not the result of my evil intention. The army commander may say something like this and such person can become angry with his people”.

<sup>16</sup> J. Latacz, *Troia und Homer...*, p. 150.

acceptable for the subdued. We also learn from the letter that Ahhiyawa had its representatives in Millawanda and the ambassadors established relations with the Hattian kingdom<sup>17</sup>. It is particularly noteworthy that information was conveyed both verbally and by means of written letters.

According to the letter, despite the hostility, the Hittite king demonstrates a mitigated attitude even to Piyamaradu. Through the mediation of the king of Ahhiyawa he offered him guarantees and tried to reach an agreement with the confronting party<sup>18</sup>. As it seems, the influence of Ahhiyawa was so strong that the Hattian ruler found it difficult to stop Piyamaradu bypassing the king. To resolve the conflict, the land of Khati made a diplomatic step and started negotiations with the party which could undertake the function of the mediator between the two confronting parties. It is particularly important that Ahhiyawa has the power to complete this mission. He gave Piyamaradu an opportunity to make a choice. According to this text, Ahhiyawa is shown as a powerful, independent and influential party which is considered as an equal party by the powerful land of Khati. It observed all diplomatic rules and the etiquette recognized by the foreign policy of that period in relations with it. In that period such association in the Aegean Sea basin was created only by the Mycenaean Greece. It had seized the islands of the Aegean Sea and dissemination of its political power first in Miletus, and afterwards in other regions of the coast of Asia Minor, may be attributed to it<sup>19</sup>. The hellenologists assume that Ahhiyawa covered the eastern stripe of the Greek continent and a part of the territory of islands located to the east from the Rhodes<sup>20</sup>. By that moment, the king of Ahhiyawa is mentioned among other great rulers. Tudhaliya I wrote in his letter to the ruler of Amuru: "The Kings who are equal to me: the king of Egypt, the king of Babylon, the king of Assyria, and the king of Ahhiyawa". Ahhiyawa is also mentioned in the chronicles of Tudhaliya I<sup>21</sup>.

It is found out that Ahhiyawa was rather actively involved in the military operations of the Western Anatolia. More importantly, it is mentioned for the first

<sup>17</sup> „My brother, send one of your subordinates: and (to the man who) brought (you this letter) (...)”; „But when (my brother’s ambassador) came to me, he did not give me (regards) and (did not give) me the present (...)”.

<sup>18</sup> „I have already given guarantees to Piyamaradu: now there are the following guarantees in the Hattian country: if anybody gives bread and salt to anybody, it means that he is not hostile to this person. But I have also sent him such letter together with the guarantee: “Come to me and I will put you on your way, I will write to my brother how I will do it. If it satisfies you, let it be this way, if it does not satisfy you, then one of my men will take you to the country of Ahhiyawa”.

<sup>19</sup> R. Gordeziani, *Iliada...*, p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> J. Latacz, *Troia und Homer...*, p. 157.

<sup>21</sup> „5) (So, the country of the river Seha...) launched a war and the king of Ahhiyawa retreated, 6) (now, when ... he) retreated, I, the great king, attacked” (R. Gordeziani, *Iliada...*, p. 135).

time in this document that the king of Ahhiyawa had been in Asia Minor in that period<sup>22</sup>.

Ahhiyawa as the opponent of the Hattian state reached the pinnacle of its power in 1200 BC, i.e. in the late Mycenaean epoch<sup>23</sup>. Ahhiyawa mentioned in the Hittite historic documents fully corresponds to the Achaeans/the Denaans of Homer. It should be noted that in *The Iliad*, the invaders are mentioned by three various names: Achaeans, Danaans, and Argives. In the epos, these three names are interchanged and are used to denominate them in total. It is interesting that while the Hittite documents provide information about Achaeans, Danaans are mentioned in the Egyptian sources. Considering the mythological tradition, this may be not surprising (myth about Aegyptus and Danaus).

None of the researchers put under question the fact that the Greek were also included in the “Sea People” which represented a rather aggressive power<sup>24</sup>. The researchers associate Ahhiyawa mentioned in the Hittite sources with the ethnic name “Aka(i)washa” named in the “Sea Peoples” of the period of pharaoh Merneptah (about 1220)<sup>25</sup>.

Thus, according to the Hittite and Egyptian sources, Ahhiyawa and Danaya appeared at the international arena of that period from the 15-14<sup>th</sup> century BC. Later, as the country equal to the Hattian state and Egypt by power, it played an important role in the foreign policy. Its progress is also confirmed by the fact that the Hattian state made diplomatic steps to settle relations with Ahhiyawa.

It was actually the first time that the Hittites classified the countries by their political power and military potential and identified four most powerful states – Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and Ahhiyawa in the Mediterranean region.

It is difficult to argue about the role of Troy and its union in these relations. However, the existence of the Homeric Trojan union and its allies in western Anatolia must be beyond doubt. Ahhiyawa of the Hittite texts can be considered as a proof that the Achaean army mentioned in the Catalogue of Ships did exist.

<sup>22</sup> R. Gordeziani, *Iliada...*, p. 135.

<sup>23</sup> G.A. Lehmann, *Die politisch-historischen Beziehungen der Ägäiswelt des 15-13. Jh.s. v. Chr. zu Ägypten und Vorderasien: einige Hinweise*, (in): J. Latacz, *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung: Rückblick und Ausblick*. Stuttgart 1991, p. 114.

<sup>24</sup> The concept of the „Sea Peoples” was introduced in the modern science considering the Egyptian sources (for comparison, Gordeziani R., *Medit’eranul-kartveluri mimartebebi, ts’inaberdznuli*, II, Tbilisi 2007, 431-437). In the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BC „Sea Peoples“ suddenly invaded from the west of Asia Minor and ruined the West and Central Anatolia. They reached Egypt too and were defeated there. It is assumed that they originated from the Aegian islands of the Mediterranean region and from the south of the continental Greece. They also included the residents of the western coast of Asia Minor (G. Giorgadze, *Atasi ghvtaebis...*, p. 82).

<sup>25</sup> G. Melikishvili, *Dzveli aghmosavletis khalkhta istoria*, Tbilisi 1988, p. 228.

Hence, it can be argued that the Greeks were actively involved in the foreign policy of the ancient Near East. The information conveyed by the Greek tradition is supported by the archeological finds confirming the rise of the Hellenes in the continental Greece from the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC. The Mycenaean culture spread in the Aegean. According to the tradition, the Mycenaeans went far beyond the Near East, reaching Colchis (The Argonaut legend).

As we can see, Ahhiyawa was also mentioned among the most powerful countries, the country of Achaeans who laid the basis for the development of the Hellenic civilization in the Aegeid. If we consider the Hittite and Egyptian sources and the opinion of researchers who equate Ahhiyawa and Danaya mentioned in the above documents with the Achaeans/Danaans of Homer, then we may think that the Greeks were actively engaged in the international politics of the Old East of that period. This is in compliance with the data of the Greek tradition and the material obtained as a result of the archaeological excavations according to which the advancement of the Hellenic tribes begins in the continental Greece from the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC. Homer and the tradition point at the increase of Atreus' power and his descendants in Mycenae exactly in that period.

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## Summary

The majority of scholars identify the long-disputed term Ahhiyawa found in the Hittite texts as Achaea of the Homeric epics. According to the Hittite texts, Ahhiyawa and Hittite relations can be dated from the Middle Kingdom period. The term was first used in the records of Suppiluliuma I (1380-1346). Documents discussed (the records of Mursili II and Muwatalli II) demonstrate that Ahhiyawa was a powerful country. Its influence extended to Millawanda, which evidently reached the sea. Especially interesting is the “*Tawagalawa letter*” dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC, in which the Hittite king makes excuses for his blunder committed at an early age. The Hittite king takes a diplomatic step towards the resolution of the conflict and starts negotiations with a party (Ahhiyawa) that could act as a mediator. We can infer from the letter that Ahhiyawa had its representatives in Millawanda, while its relations with the Land of the Hatti were managed through envoys. The powerful position of Ahhiyawa is also evident from Tudhaliya IV's letter to the ruler of Amurru, where he refers to the kings of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and Ahhiyawa as to his equals.

Thus, Ahhiyawa of the Hittite texts fully corresponds to Homeric Achaea. The invaders have three appellations in *The Iliad*: the Achaeans, the Danaans, and the Argives. The Achaeans can be found in Hittite documents, while the Danaans are mentioned in the Egyptian sources.

Ahhiyawa is the land of the Achaeans, which laid the foundation for the development of the Hellenic civilization in the Aegean. It can be argued that the Greeks were actively involved in the foreign policy of the ancient Near East. The information conveyed by the Greek tradition is supported by the archeological finds confirming the rise of the Hellenes in the continental Greece from the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC. According to the tradition, the Mycenaeans went far beyond the Near East, reaching Colchis (The Argonaut legend).

**KEYWORDS**

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