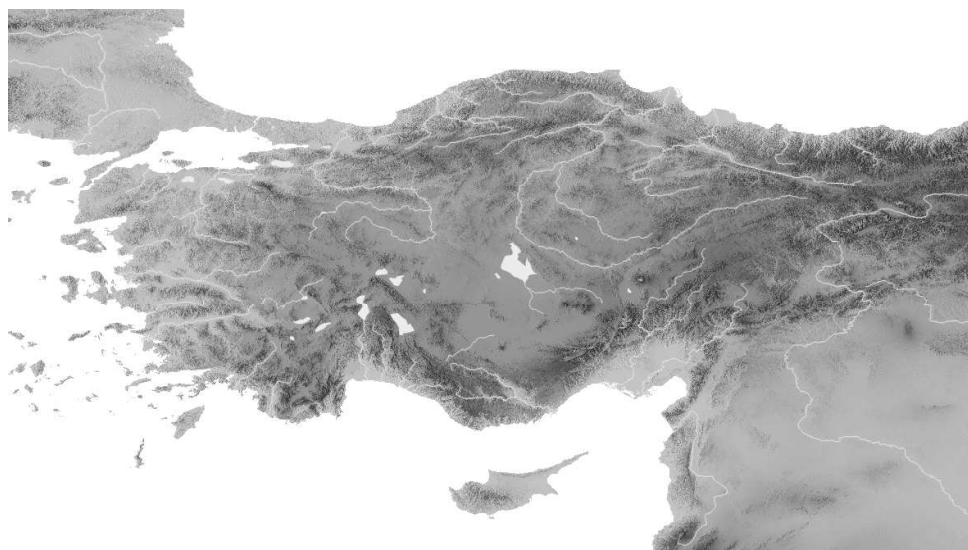


# News from the Lands of the Hittites

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# Who was Karḫuḫa? Dynamics of Contact in the Karkemišean Lands

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## ABSTRACT

*In this contribution, following the recent observations by Frühwirth (2021), I offer some further considerations on the functions, the diffusion and the name of the Anatolian god Karḫuḫa, whose identity and origin within the context of the Karkemišean lands are still partly elusive.*

## INTRODUCTION

In van Gessel's 1998 *Onomasticon of the Hittite Pantheon* the deity Karḫuḫa is neither recorded in the syllabic volume nor in the ideographic one (e.g., under LAMMA). The same holds true for Laroche's 1946 *Recherches sur les noms des dieux hittites*, which to my knowledge was the first attempt to list and frame all the Hittite theonyms. This absence is not surprising given the fact that Karḫuḫa is mostly attested from sources of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, whereas in the Hittite cuneiform texts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC his presence is only evidenced by indirect attestations in broken contexts.

This paper aims to address the Karḫuḫa question from the available sources we have to the discussion of some still-controversial elements regarding both the nature of the god as deer or tutelary, and the rendering of the divine name with or without the sign CERVUS as determinative. Therefore, the object of this research will primarily be Karḫuḫa, rather than LAMMA/KAL.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Here without any distinction. For a discussion, see ARCHI 2019, 49-51 with references.

The broadest possible contextualization of the god will then be combined with some linguistic observations of the theonym.

## SOURCES

Notwithstanding the limitations we have just pointed out, it is possible to outline the evidence about Karḫuḫa in a fairly chronological order from the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, with respect to both cuneiform and hieroglyphic attestations. Particularly, Karḫuḫa is attested as follows.

**a.** KUB 19.27 (CTH 50) left edge 4:<sup>2</sup>

[... na]-an <sup>D</sup>Kar-[ḫu-ḫa <sup>D</sup>K]u-pa-pa DINGIR<sup>MEŠ</sup>-  
aš-ša š[A KUR <sup>URU</sup>Kar-ga-miš ḫar-ni-in-kán-du]  
“And Kar[ḫuḫa and Ku]baba and the gods o[f  
the Land o[f Carchemish will destroy] him”<sup>3</sup>

**b.** KBo 13.225(+)KUB 26.33 (CTH 122)  
iv 7'/8'/9':<sup>4</sup>

[DINGIR<sup>MEŠ</sup> KUR <sup>URU</sup>Kar-g]a-miš <sup>D</sup>Ku[-pa-pa <sup>D</sup>K]  
ar-ḫu-ḫi-iš

<sup>2</sup> SINGER 2001, 639; ARCHI 2009, 217; HUTTER 2017, 114; COHEN – ANOR 2020, 74.

<sup>3</sup> COHEN – ANOR 2020, 74.

<sup>4</sup> SINGER 2001, 639; D'ALFONSO 2007, 211, 213, 218; ARCHI 2009, 218; HUTTER 2017, 114.

“[... e gli dei di Karke]miš: Ku[baba, K]arḫuḫi, [...]”<sup>5</sup>

Both these passages list the divine witnesses of the treaty between Šuppiluliuma I and the Karkemisean counterpart, respectively Šarri-Kušuḫ (*CTH* 50) and Talmi-Teššup (*CTH* 122), whose deities were in charge of protecting the pacts against whoever may try to violate them in the future.<sup>6</sup> The integration of Karḫuḫa in these broken contexts was firstly proposed by Itamar Singer (2001) on the basis of the affinity between Karḫuḫa and Kubaba in the Karkemisean context of the Iron Age. They still represent the only pieces of evidence containing Karḫuḫa in Hittite cuneiform script.

**c.** VSNF 12.50 (*CTH* 500) rev. 6’:<sup>7</sup> [... DIN]GIR LAMMA <sup>D</sup>Ku-pa-pa ša <sup>URU</sup>K[ar-ga-miš ...] “the Tutelary [god] (and) Kubaba of K[arkemiš ...]”

**d.** KBo 47.127 (*CTH* 705) l. 14’:<sup>8</sup> EGIR-šU-ma <sup>D</sup>LAMMA <sup>D</sup>Ku-pa-pa ŠA <sup>URU</sup>Kar-ga[-miš ...] “and again the Tutelary god (and) Kubaba of Karke[miš ...]”

**e.** KBo 5.6 (*CTH* 40) iii 34’:<sup>9</sup> šA <sup>D</sup>[Ku-pa-pa ù š] a <sup>D</sup>LAMMA “... (to the temple) of [Kubaba and] of the Tutelary god ...”<sup>10</sup>

These passages refer to lists of gods in rituals, respectively Kizzuwatnean (*CTH* 500) and Hurrian rituals (*CTH* 705), and to the conquest of

Karkamiš by Šuppiluliuma I (*CTH* 40). According to Hutter,<sup>11</sup> the Karḫuḫa presence lies behind these LAMMA. In my opinion, the closeness of Kubaba to Karkamiš is a clue for the equation, but it is not conclusive proof. Considering the texts in their context as divine lists for rituals, we might even assume that Hittites listed generic LAMMAS for several or different Karkemisean gods which fitted perfectly with the purpose of the ritual.

**f.** ANKARA 2 ‘Silver bowl’: REX *ma-zi/a-kar-ḫu-ḫa*

“This bowl Asmaya himself, Overlord of the Land, donated in front of King Mazi-Karḫuḫa, when [Tu]dḫaliya the Labarna smote the land Tarwiza, in that year he made it.”<sup>12</sup>

The vessel ANKARA 2 is a small silver bowl belonging to the Hittite collection of the Ankara Museum, that carries a hieroglyphic Luwian inscription mentioning three figures (Asmaya, Mazi-Karḫuḫa and Labarna Tudḫaliya) and the toponym Tarwiza. This source has already been discussed in several works,<sup>13</sup> both from an archaeological and a philological point of view; nevertheless, the discussion about the bowl’s provenience and dating is still going on. In relation to the provenience, the bowl should have Syrian/Karkemisean origins, due to the presence of the sign *KAR* (\*315) in the name of the god Karḫuḫa, as an innovation that occurred in texts from Karkamiš (and TELL AHMAR 6) onwards.<sup>14</sup> However, it is not clear whether the date of the inscription is different from the date of the execution of the bowl itself. Furthermore, concerning the dating, the *labarna* Tudḫaliya has been identified with Tudḫaliya I or Tudḫaliya

5 DEVECCHI 2015, 241.

6 COHEN – ANOR 2020, 72.

7 GRODDEK – HAGENBUCHNER – HOFFMANN 2002, 87; HUTTER 2017, 114.

8 GRODDEK 2011, 115-116.

9 *Res Gestae* Šuppiluliuma I, see DEL MONTE 2009, 89, 116-117.

10 DEL MONTE 2009, 117: “Dopo aver vinto la città (i.e. Karkamiš) mio padre, avendo timore verso gli dèi, non permise a nessuno di avvicinarsi sull’acropoli [(al tempio) della dea Kubaba] e del dio tutelare né si ac[costò] ad alcun tempio” (KBo 5.6 iii 34-38).

11 HUTTER 2017, 114; 2021, 212 with n. 115.

12 D’ALFONSO – COHEN 2021, 67. See also SIMON 2009, 247-248; GIUSFREDI 2013, 666, 674.

13 See HAWKINS 1997; 2005; SIMON 2009; DURNFORD 2010; YAKUBOVICH 2010, 119; GIUSFREDI 2013; D’ALFONSO – COHEN 2021.

14 HAWKINS 2005, 196; SIMON 2009, 254; GIUSFREDI 2013, 670; D’ALFONSO – COHEN 2021, 68.

IV.<sup>15</sup> This identification is even more complicated because of the lack of hieroglyphic inscriptions dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, according to Giusfredi this Tudḫaliya is neither I nor IV, rather a homonymous ruler of Karkamiš during the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> Finally, concerning the other two personal names, the king Mazi-Karḫuḫa is formed with a first seemingly Hurrian element *mazi-*, whereas Asmaya is also a Hurrian name (root *ažm*),<sup>17</sup> thus providing another clue for a contextualization into the Karkemiṣean area. Particularly interesting for this paper is the name Mazi-Karḫuḫa, whose hypocoristic form Maziya<sup>18</sup> is also attested in the cuneiform letter JA 303<sup>19</sup> written in the so-called Assyro-Mittannian script.<sup>20</sup>

Even though the provenience and the dating of the letter are unknown, its contextualization is likely to be placed within the Hittite domain in Syria because it was sent by Talmi-Šarruma, governor of Emar, to Nabunnu, governor of the Šuḫu-land. The topic deals with a trial and the related river ordeal.<sup>21</sup> By accepting the proposed hypothesis of considering these two kings as the same figure, we are dealing with two inscribed sources of different nature, hieroglyphic and cuneiform, which represent a watershed between the Bronze and the Iron Age.

With the exception of the Ankara bowl, the vast majority of the hieroglyphic inscriptions featuring Karḫuḫa come from the territory of Karkamiš *lato sensu* and they have mostly been published by Hawkins:<sup>22</sup>

<b>g.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 4a, l. 13:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa
<b>h.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 11a, l. 7; l. 26:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa
<b>i.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 11b, <sup>23</sup> l. 9:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sá
l. 16:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-si-na
l. 18b:	(DEUS) CERVUS <sub>2</sub> +ra/i-ḫu-ḫa-ia
<b>j.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 11c, l. 25:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sá
<b>k.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 12, <sup>24</sup> l. 3:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa
<b>l.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 13d, l. 6:	(DEUS) ka+ra/i-ḫu-ḫa-ia
<b>m.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 14a, l. 9:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa
<b>n.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 14b, l. 4:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa
<b>o.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 15b, l. 1:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-ti-i
<b>p.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 25a, l. 6:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-ia
<b>q.</b> KARKAMIŠ A 25b, <sup>25</sup> l. 3:	(DEUS) ka+ra/i-ḫu-ḫa
<b>r.</b> TELL AHMAR 6, <sup>26</sup> l. 2:	(DEUS) CERVUS-sa    (DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa
<b>s.</b> TELL AHMAR 2, l. 2:	(DEUS) ka+ra/i-[ḫu-ḫa]-sa <sup>27</sup>
<b>t.</b> MALATYA 13, <sup>28</sup> left side:	(DEUS.CERVUS <sub>2</sub> ) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa
<b>u.</b> MARAŞ 10, l. 2:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa
<b>v.</b> CEKKE, <sup>29</sup> l. 24:	(DEUS) ka+ra/i-ḫu-ḫa-sá
<b>w.</b> BABYLON 2, <sup>30</sup> l. 4a:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa
<b>x.</b> BEIRUT ‘Stone bowl’, <sup>31</sup> l. 3:	(DEUS) kar-ḫu-ḫa-sá

15 See HAWKINS 1997; 2005; SIMON 2009, 252, 255, 251-261; DURNFORD 2010, 61-62; GIUSFREDI 2013, 667-668. For Instance, YAKUBOVICH 2010, 119 with n. 58, referring to Tudḫaliya I’s expedition against Tarwiša, even though the identification between the hieroglyphic \*Tarwiza and the cuneiform Tarwiša cannot be regarded as absolutely assured.

16 GIUSFREDI 2013, 676 with reference to SIMON 2009, 255-256.

17 GIUSFREDI 2013, 671 with references. See also DURNFORD 2010, 66.

18 COHEN 2015, 178.

19 COHEN 2015; D’ALFONSO – COHEN 2021.

20 COHEN 2015, 175-177.

21 COHEN 2015, 175; D’ALFONSO – COHEN 2021, 63.

22 The following pieces of evidence are all taken from the Hawkin’s Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions (CHLI, 2000) except elsewhere reported.

As one can easily ascertain from this outline, the hieroglyphic sources related to Karḫuḫa are mostly from Karkamiš and consist of inscriptions containing curse or legitimation formulas by the kings in promoting themselves.<sup>32</sup> Particularly, Karḫuḫa never appears alone: it always forms a dyad with Kubaba, or a tryad with Kubaba and Tarḫunza.<sup>33</sup> Among the gathered recurrence (**g-x**), the majority (16/21) are of *kar-ḫu-ḫa(-)*, whereas an intriguing minority (5/21) retains forms which are now under discussion. Firstly, it should be noted the alternative script (DEUS) *ka+ra/i-ḫu-ḫa-ia*, where the hieroglyphic sign *KAR* is replaced with *KA+RA/I*. This happens in KARKAMIŠ A 13d, l. 6; KARKAMIŠ A 25b, l. 3; CEKKE l. 24; and TELL AHMAR 2, l. 2. In addition to this form, other alternatives are as follows. KARKAMIŠ A 11b,<sup>34</sup> an inscription by king Katuwa of Karkamiš seeking divine protection, where Karḫuḫa appears three times: at line 9 between Tarḫunza and Kubaba; at line 16 alone; and finally at line 18b as (DEUS) *CERVUS<sub>2</sub>+ra/i-ḫu-ḫa-ia*. Here, the signs *CERVUS<sub>2</sub>+RA/I* seem to subtend the usual *KAR*. The sign *CERVUS<sub>2</sub>* also appears in the left edge title block of MALATYA 13 (**t**), but in this case it works as determinative: (DEUS.CERVUS<sub>2</sub>) *kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa*. Finally, at TELL AHMAR 6 in the transition from l. 1 to l. 2 (DEUS) *kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa* follows (DEUS) *CERVUS-sa*, thus providing an opportunity to introduce the analysis related to the ideographic

signs for CERVUS.<sup>35</sup>

y. KARKAMIŠ CYLINDER A,<sup>36</sup> l. 31':  
 [...]*X EN.MEŠ-ia* <sup>D</sup>*Kar-ḫu-ḫu* <sup>D</sup>*Gu-KÁ a-ši-bu-ut*  
<sup>URU</sup>*Gar-ga-miš* ...  
 "... my Lords Karḫuḫa (and) Kubaba, who dwell in Karkemiš, ..." <sup>37</sup>

The last piece of evidence is a twelve-faces cylinder from Karkamiš, attributable to Sargon II, in which the cuneiform Neo-Assyrian text reports Karḫuḫa together with Kubaba.<sup>38</sup>

## DIVINE NATURE

As one can easily see from the sources just listed, the matter of the Karḫuḫa's nature and its features inevitably overlaps with the LAMMA issue **-(c), (d), (e)-**, the CERVUS one **-(i), (r), (t)-**, and therefore with the possible identification of Karḫuḫa as a Stag-god.<sup>39</sup> The equations are as follows: the Tutelary deity is associated with a deer or stag while the Hittite reading of the Sumerogram LAMMA was Kuruntiya<sup>40</sup> with the Iron Age variant Runtiya.<sup>41</sup> In this sense, an equation between LAMMA-(Ku)Runtiya-CERVUS in the Karkemisean region is not surprising.<sup>42</sup>

35 The relative hieroglyphic signs are \*102a (CERVUS), \*102b (CERVUS<sub>2</sub>), \*103 (CERVUS<sub>2/3</sub>), which readings /rú/ and /in(n)a/ can be found in writing the names of the Stag-god: respectively Luwian (Ku)Runtiya and Hittite Innara. See HAWKINS 2006a, 51-52 with reference; PAYNE 2010, 169 for the hieroglyphs; and McMAHON 1991, 23-25; TARACHA 2009, 96, 112 for a contextualization.

36 KH.15.O.221: MARCHESI 2019.

37 MARCHESI 2019, 6-7.

38 MARCHESI 2019, 1-7.

39 HAAS 1994, 578; HAWKINS 2000, 106-107; HAWKINS 2006a, 51; ORESHKO 2021, 132, 142, 159-160.

40 HAWKINS 2005, 290; HAWKINS 2006a, 51; TARACHA 2009, 112; YAKUBOVICH 2010, 80 n. 5.

41 YAKUBOVICH 2010, 80 n. 5: "can be most easily explained through the simplification of a consonant cluster".

42 See HUTTER 2017, 114; 2021, 212 with n. 115.

23 See also HAWKINS 1981, 150-151.

24 See also HAWKINS 1981, 161.

25 See also HAWKINS 1981, 163.

26 See HAWKINS 2006b, 12-13.

27 Integration by HAWKINS 2006b, 18.

28 See also HAWKINS 1981, 169; LOVEJOY 2023, 114-115, 119; D'ALFONSO – LOVEJOY 2023, 186.

29 See also HAWKINS 1981, 163.

30 See also HAWKINS 1981, 174; HAWKINS 1980-83, 259.

31 Originally from Karkamiš, HAWKINS 2000, 558. see also HAWKINS 1981, 174.

32 FRÜHWIRT 2021, 229-230.

33 HAWKINS 1980-83, 258; HAAS 1994, 578; ARCHI 2009, 218; FRÜHWIRT 2021, 230, 232.

34 HAWKINS 1981, 150-151; HAWKINS 2000, 101-108 and Plates 14-17.

In a recent and well-structured article Tatiana Frühwirth (2021) underlines how weak the sources at our disposal are to claim both for reading Karḫuḫa of those LAMMA (c), (d), (e),<sup>43</sup> and for considering Karḫuḫa as a Tutelary deity.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the possibility that Karḫuḫa had features similar to those of (Ku)Runtiya does not mean that we can “automatically attribute the same functions” (ARCHI 2009, 218). The scholar (FRÜHWIRTH 2021, 232, 234) highlights how the identification between Karḫuḫa e (Ku)Runtiya/CERVUS seems practically impossible. For instance, in the inscription TELL AHMAR 6 Karḫuḫa follows (DEUS) CERVUS-*sa*, thus providing proof that Karḫuḫa and (Ku)Runtiya were two distinct gods, at least in Mašuwari.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, the most problematic and discussed piece of evidence is the late 10<sup>th</sup> century stone stele of MALATYA 13<sup>46</sup> (Fig. 1a). The identification of the two depicted gods, Karḫuḫa and Kubaba, is based on two-fold evidence: firstly, on the inscriptions of the edges of the stele, reporting (DEUS.CERVUS<sub>2</sub>) *kar-ḫu-ḫa-sa* (left side) and (DEUS) *ku+AVIS za-pa-wa/i* (right side);<sup>47</sup> and secondly on the identification of the two deities with the animals usually associated with them. Particularly, on this second issue it should be noted that each deity is not represented above its personal animal, but a switch<sup>48</sup> between them appears with the Kubaba’s lion under the Karḫuḫa’s feet and *vice versa*. Furthermore, Kubaba sits in a throne upon a not-well-delineated quadruped:

43 FRÜHWIRTH 2021, 229. *Contra* for example HUTTER 2017, 114.

44 In favour of the equation LAMMA-Kurunta-Karḫuḫa are HAAS (1994, 578): “Karḫuḫa, der mit Kurunta identisch oder wesengleich zu sein scheint”; POPKO 1995, 100, 167; HAWKINS 2000, 328-329; and HUTTER 2021, 304.

45 FRÜHWIRTH 2021, 231, 234.

46 BITTEL 1980-83, 263; HAWKINS 1980-83, 259; HAWKINS 2000, 328-329 and Plate 164. See also ARCHI 2009, 218; HUTTER 2021, 303-304; LOVEJOY 2023, 114-115; D’ALFONSO – LOVEJOY 2023, 186; LOVEJOY – MATESSI 2023, 114.

47 HAWKINS 2000, 328.

48 A situation already underlined by COLLINS 2004, 90.

a bull or a stag.<sup>49</sup> The debate depends on the (mis-)interpretation of all of the three elements related to this ‘Karḫuḫa’: its title block, its stylistic issue, and its related animal.

Firstly, there is no doubt that the title block on the left side of the stele refers to the deity Karḫuḫa. What is unusual, however, is the presence of DEUS.CERVUS<sub>2</sub>, because Karḫuḫa has never had such a determinative,<sup>50</sup> with the only exception of the inscription KARKAMIŠ A 11b where, however, the signs CERVUS<sub>2</sub>+RA/I seem to subtend the more common KAR. Secondly, there is an iconographic question. On one hand, we have a typical picture of Kubaba in the so-called archaic style of Malatya (when the country-Lords of Malatya were subjected to Karkamiš); whereas on the other, we have a gap between the inscription labeling Karḫuḫa and the picture of a *quasi*-Storm-god, more similar to a Šarruma rather than to a Stag-god.<sup>51</sup> For the sake of comparison, one can look at the KARASU relief,<sup>52</sup> where a male figure with bow and spear is standing on a deer; the orthostat MALATYA 5,<sup>53</sup> where a god is standing on a stag; and the CEKKE stele of the Aleppo Museum,<sup>54</sup> where a Storm-god stands on a bull (Fig. 1b-c-d). Thirdly is the question related to the animal depicted under Kubaba. According to COLLINS (2004, 90 n. 19), the deer is never shown or concerned with Karḫuḫa, but his association with the animal is inferred only from the spelling of his name with the CERVUS<sub>x</sub> determinatives. If, however, the CERVUS<sub>2</sub> was not a determinative but rather a syllabic sign for /ka/ in writing the Karḫuḫa’s name, the Malatya stele would represent a more appropriate horned calf or bull, in perfect harmony with a depiction of

49 BITTEL 1980-83, 263; COLLINS 2004, 90; ARCHI 2009, 218.

50 COLLINS 2004, 90 n. 19.

51 MARCHESI – MARCHETTI 2019, 528; HUTTER 2021, 213; FRÜHWIRTH 2021, 232; D’ALFONSO – LOVEJOY 2023, 186.

52 See <https://www.hittitemonuments.com/karasu/>

53 HAWKINS 2000, 306 with plate 148. See also FRÜHWIRTH 2021, 225.

54 HAWKINS 2000, 143 with plate 43.



Fig. 1a. Stele MALATYA 13, CHLI Plate 164.



Fig. 1b. KARASU relief, © hittitemonuments.com.

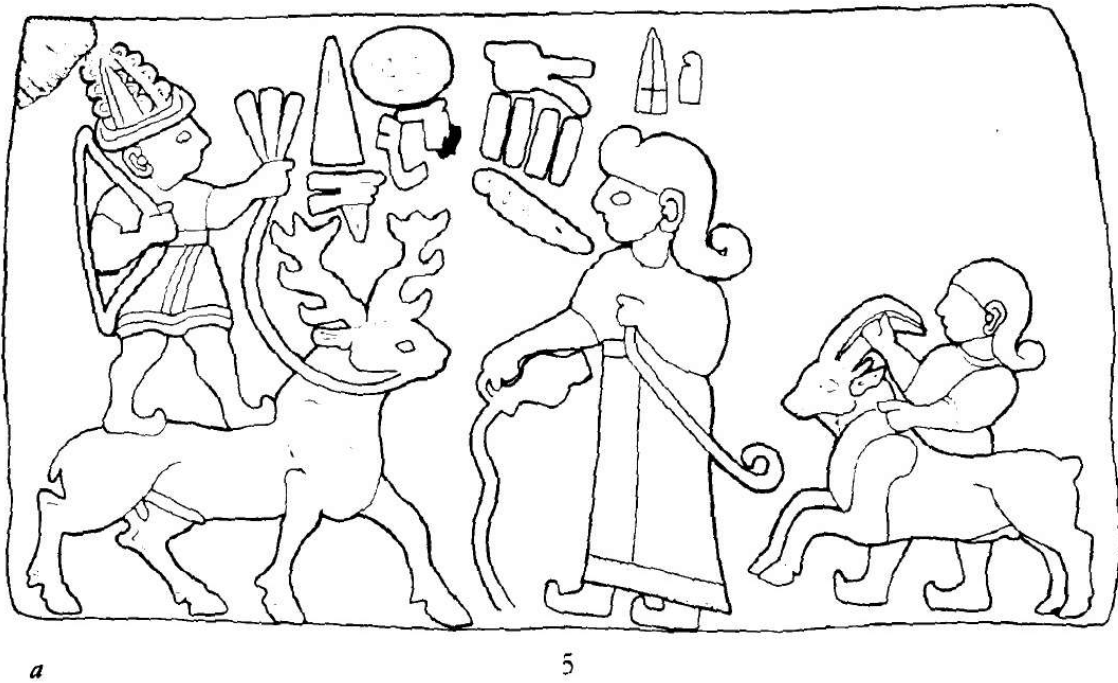


Fig. 1c. Orthostat MALATYA 5, CHLI Plate 148.

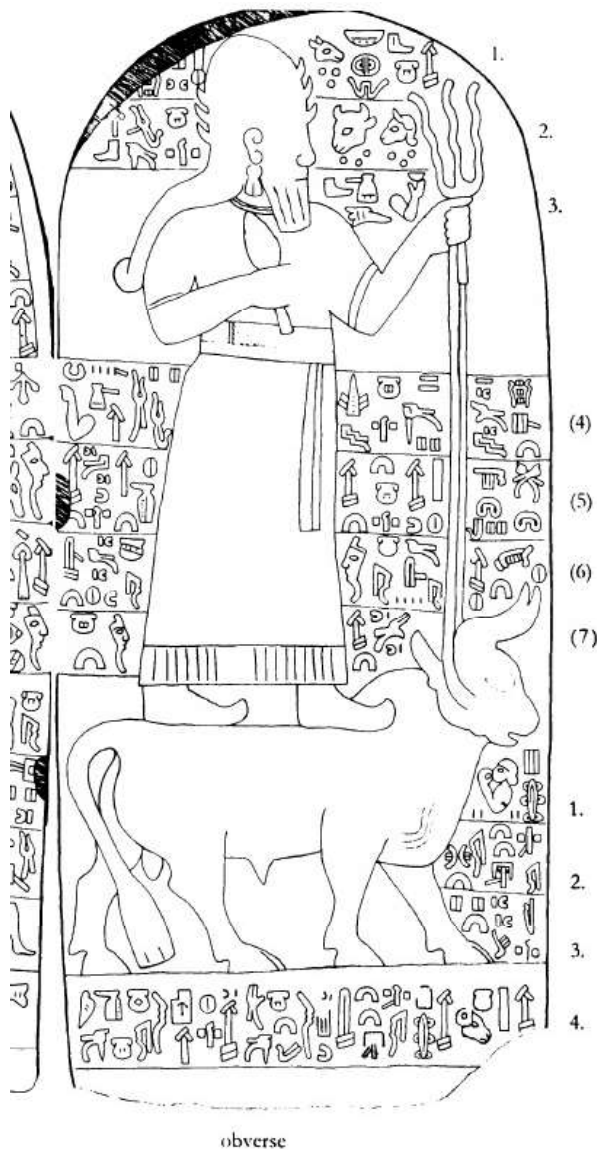


Fig. 1d. CEKKE stele, CHLI Plate 43.

Šarruma or Tarḫunza respectively. Nevertheless, the lack of evidence for interpreting CERVUS<sub>2</sub> as /ka/ makes the present hypothesis quite speculative at the moment.

## ETYMOLOGY

In order to get the most complete picture one can draw of the deity Karḫuḫa and its features, it is necessary to attempt a further step forward to sketch a possible etymology of the theonym.

Looking at Anatolian roots, it is not impossible that a Luwian word *kar-x* for “deer” existed, but there is no evidence of it, yet: Kloekhorst and Melchert assumed \**ker* or \**ker*(*h*<sub>2</sub>) “horn” and \**kru-nt-* “horned”,<sup>55</sup> but we cannot use it for an immediate derivation, so the scholars did not try to etymologize Karḫuḫa from those roots. In other words, how Karḫuḫa could be connected to either of these roots is not immediately apparent: even if one found a way to involve the extended form \**ker*(*h*<sub>2</sub>)-, with preservation of word-internal *h*<sub>2</sub>, the morphology of the second part of the divine name would remain elusive.

Another possibility, considering the geographical provenience of the evidence we possess about Karḫuḫa, would be to look for an explanation in the Mittannian area, whose main language would, of course, be Hurrian.<sup>56</sup> Richter, in his Glossar (2012, 190), cautiously mentions a Hurrian *karh-*, meaning “behindern(?)”, and so “to hinder, to encumber” (all meanings being hypothetical and duly marked by a question mark). In this case, deriving Karḫuḫa from Hurrian *karh-* would not be impossible, given that the meaning is uncertain (and it may also have positive connotations), but, on the other hand, we cannot do so with any degree of certainty, because the meaning does not highlight any certain links to Karḫuḫa and his hypothetical functions. A more serious problem would, emerge when dealing with the morphological analysis, because the Hurrian derivational suffix *-hhe*,<sup>57</sup> which would grammatically be able to attach to the verbal root, cannot play a role, because we have no geminate *h* in the theonym. The *-he* suffix that would seemingly appear would not be grammatical in this context, as it should not attach to verbal roots.

A different speculative hypothesis could rely on folk etymology. The form *kar-ḫuḫa* could originally be Hurrian, and have been interpreted by non-native speakers of Hurrian as a Luwian

55 KLOEKHORST 2008, 446-447; MELCHERT 2012, 209.

56 MARCHESI – MARCHETTI 2019, 529.

57 GIORGIERI 2000, 206-210.



theonym containing Luwian *huḫa*-<sup>58</sup> “grandfather, forefather, ancestor”, and possibly the Akkadian *kār* in construct state, also present in the very name of Karkemiš. The extension of the concept of “ancestor” to a figure of the divine sphere would be obviously unsurprising.<sup>59</sup>

A final aspect to take into consideration is the theme. According to the integration in KBo 13.225(+)KUB 26.33 (b), we can note that the name of the god should be represented *Karḫuh-a/i*-,<sup>60</sup> with an alternation that, rather than qualifying as a proper Luwian *i*-mutation (for which we would need a stable *i*-theme at the nominative) provides a clue for a possible *i*-stem, which is typical of Hurrian (or rather of the way Hurrian thematic vocalism was perceived and rendered in cuneiform. If Karḫuḫa was Hurrian in the first place, and the name was unchanged, a pure *i*-stem would appear to be closer to the original phonetics. We could infer that Luwian *Karḫuh-a* was the form by which it was initially adopted, perhaps in analogy to other conservative *a*-themed names that resisted *i*-mutation (or, if the idea is correct, as a consequence of the folk-etymological imposition of *huḫa*-). The form then also resisted *i*-mutation within Iron Age Hieroglyphic Luwian. If this solution was possible, the theonym would have entered Luwian language as *Karḫuḫa* while the *Karḫuḫiḫ* form attested in (b) is to be explained as an instance of the Hurrian version. It may be worth adding that the Neo-Assyrian cylinder from Karkamiš (y) reports *Karḫuḫu*, with imposition of the Akkadian morphophonology, thus supporting that derivational morphology for the specific occurrences of the name Karḫuḫa strongly correlates with the different cuneiform traditions, while a Luwian conservative *a*-form was maintained in the hieroglyphic inscriptions.

58 KLOEKHORST 2008, 352-353.

59 Michele Bianconi, *pers. comm.* 12/05/2023, suggested the *kar-huḫa*- etymology to me; Federico Giusfredi, *pers. comm.*, 29/05/2023, suggested solving the remaining formal problems by integrating it in the folk-etymological scenario.

60 HAAS 2003, 301-302; ARCHI 2009, 217.

An additional proof that one of the Hurrian hypotheses should be correct can be provided by the comparison between the king's name Mazi-Teššub,<sup>61</sup> clearly Hurrian in character, and that of Mazi-Karḫuḫa (f). If we consider both as full Hurrian personal names, the case for a Hurrian origin of Karḫuḫa's would be reinforced.

## CONTACTS

The last element to consider concerns the contextualization of the god Karḫuḫa. Chronologically, the deity Karḫuḫa is attested from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Geographically speaking, the area of interest spreads around Karkamiš, in a cultural space enclosed by Hittite Kizzuwatna in the west, Hurrian Mitanni in the east, and Syrian Aleppo in the south. Further north, the in-between-position of Malatya offers a possible reason for the hybrid ‘Luwo-Karkemišean’ tradition<sup>62</sup> which combines, for instance, Karḫuḫa's cult with Runtiya's elements. According to this picture, it can be assumed that two cultural *milieu* were present at the beginning of the Iron Age: one originated in the former Hittite empire, where the Luwian Stag-god (Ku)Runtiya was the Tutelary god; and another originated closer to the former Mitannian kingdom, where the Hurrian deities were prominent.<sup>63</sup> The Karkemišean region of the 11<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC (also embracing ÇEKKE, TELL AHMAR, MALATYA) was both a political heritage of the Hittite kingdom and a cultural heritage of the Hurrian cultural *milieu*. In such a context, the contacts between the different areas could have caused cultural interferences and divine equation or syncretisms, amalgamating Luwian

61 See GIUSFREDI 2013, 671 with nn. 14-15.

62 LOVEJOY – MATESSI 2023, 114; D'ALFONSO – LOVEJOY 2023, 186.

63 FRÜHWIRT 2021, 233 with table.

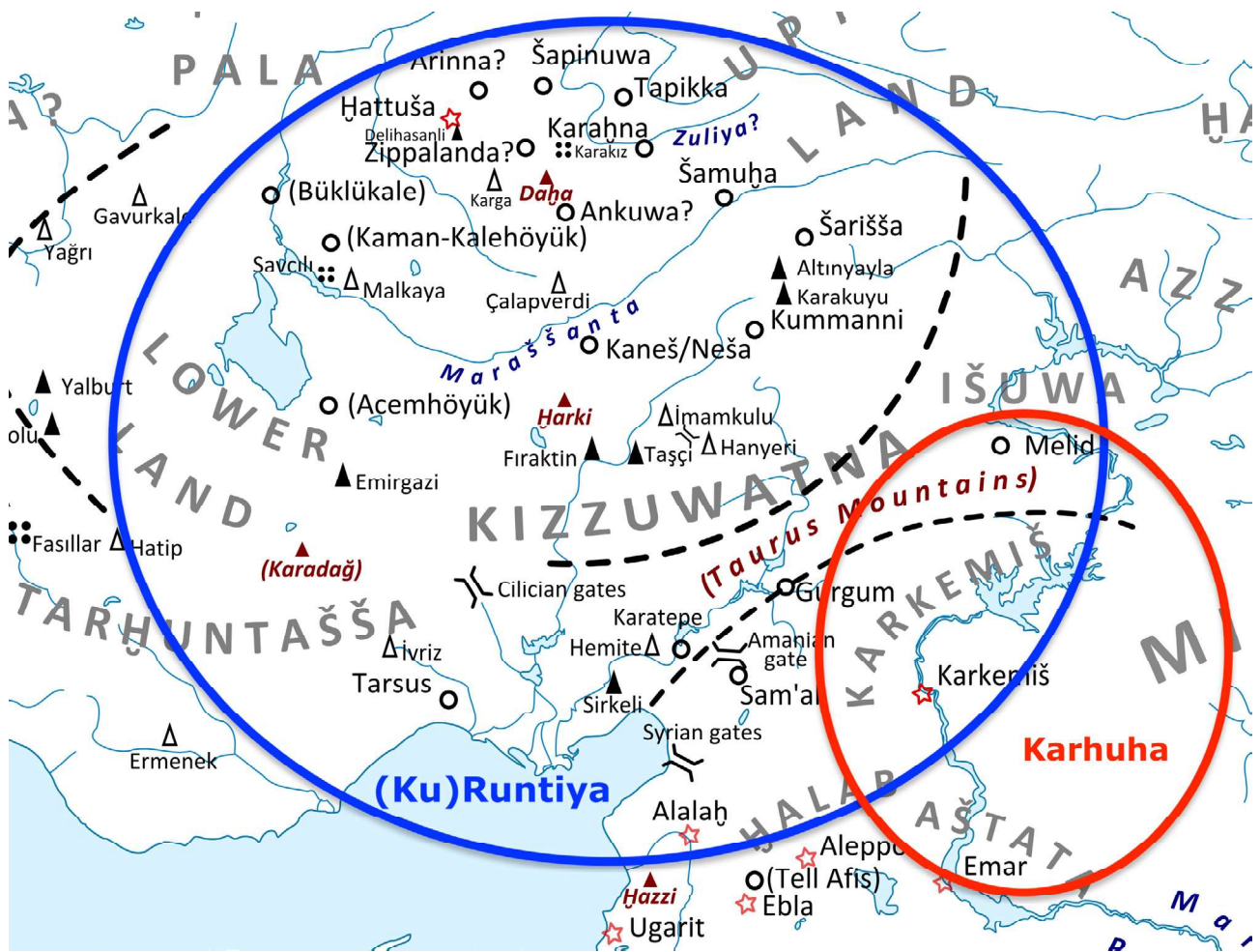


Fig. 2. (Ku)Runtiya and Karḫuḫa cultural milieu between Late Bronze and Iron Ages. (Background picture © Michele Cammarosano, *A Map of the Hittite World*).

and Hurrian traditions, and finally providing Karḫuḫa with the determinative CERVUS (Fig. 2). In such a scenario MALATYA 13 “represents a translation or interpretation of the Charchemishean divine pair into the local Malizian cultic context”.<sup>64</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

What follows is an attempt to answer the question in the title of this paper. Karḫuḫa was a Karkemiṣean god, most likely a male *paredros*

of Kubaba,<sup>65</sup> whose cult played an important role within the region of Karkamiṣ between the Late Bronze Age and the early Iron Age. According to the evidence at our disposal, Karḫuḫa was neither a Tutelary god nor a Stag-god. Even though some syncretic traditions with (Ku)Runtiya could have been created somewhere, in my opinion, it is most likely that Karḫuḫa was a local type of Storm-god or Šarruma, thanks to the hieroglyphic inscriptions (tryad with Tarḫunza) and to its iconography of the stele MALATYA 13 (bearded warrior god facing

64 LOVEJOY 2023, 115. Similarly, D’ALFONSO – LOVEJOY 2023, 186.

65 FRÜHWIRT 2021, 232. See also D’ALFONSO – LOVEJOY 2023, 186.

Kubaba). Therefore, the quadruped depicted under Kubaba should be interpreted as a bull.

The identification between Karḫuḫa and (Ku)Runtiya falls primarily on three pieces of evidence where the determinative CERVUS precedes Karḫuḫa. However, looking in detail at these occurrences, it is possible to note that: one (TELL AHMAR 6) refers clearly to Runtiya because Karḫuḫa follows; another is the peculiar case of MALATYA 13 (DEUS.CERVUS<sub>2</sub> *karḫuḫa*); the last is the case of KARKAMIŠ A 11b l. 18b (DEUS CERVUS<sub>2</sub>+*ra/i-ḫuḫa*). My proposal is to read the sign CERVUS<sub>2</sub> /ka/, thus providing an explanation for both the exceptional instances of KARKAMIŠ A 11b (CERVUS<sub>2</sub>+*ra/i-ḫuḫa* = *ka+ra/i-ḫuḫa*), and MALATYA 13 (where CERVUS<sub>2</sub> *karḫuḫa* could represent a case of diplography *ka-kar-ḫuḫa*). I am fully aware that at the moment the lack of evidence for interpreting CERVUS<sub>2</sub> as /ka/ makes this hypothesis quite speculative.

Finally, the diffusion of Karḫuḫa's cult in Hurrian territory suggests a Hurrian etymology for the theonym. The present hypothesis is based on the Hurrian *i*-stem for *Karḫuḫ-i* of KBo 13.225(+) KUB 26.33 and on the fact that the theonym would have entered Luwian language as *Karḫuḫa* because divine names are naturally conservative. It is possible that a folk-etymological reanalysis of the element *ḫuḫa* also played a role, but this remains, at the moment, a speculative hypothesis.

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