

Press release

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Cooperation agreements, Research results
Cultural sciences, History / archaeology, Language / literature
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Cuneiforms: New Digital Tool for Researchers

Major milestone reached in digital Cuneiform studies: researchers from Mainz, Marburg, and Würzburg present an innovative tool that offers many new possibilities.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Boğazköy-Hattuša is located in the north of Turkey. It was once the capital of the Hittite Empire, a great power in the late Bronze Age around 1650 to 1200 BC.

The cuneiform tablets discovered there and in other Hittite sites represent one of the largest groups of texts from the ancient Near East. They include thousands of sources in Hittite, an early-attested Indo-European language, as well as numerous fragments in other Anatolian languages, alongside Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hurrian texts.

An innovative digital tool has been offering researchers and students online access to these historical sources since 2023: the Thesaurus Linguarum Hethaeorum Digitalis (TLHdig 0.1) which was launched on the Hethitologie-Portal Mainz platform (HPM). Ever since its initial launch, this thesaurus has become one of the digital tools that Hittitologists use every day, with more than 100,000 accesses per month.

Expansion of the Tool with Many New Options

This tool is now even more powerful: As TLHdig 0.2 it is comprising more than 98% of all published sources—approximately 22,000 XML text documents, many of which consist of multiple rejoined fragments. Currently the corpus consists of almost 400,000 transliterated lines. But that's not all: TLHdig 1.0, expected in late 2025, will offer complete coverage of all published texts.

Researchers can browse and search texts in transliteration or cuneiform and apply various filters for more complex queries. TLHdig is embedded within the infrastructure of Hethitologie-Portal Mainz and is integrated with various digital catalogue tools, media databases, and text editions.

Online Pipeline for New Text Publications

TLHdig is a community research tool. In compiling the corpus, the TLHdig team has drawn on digital and analogue resources developed by several generations of Hittitologists, including digital text edition projects on Hethitologie-Portal Mainz and the contributions of many individual scholars.

As a collaborative tool, TLHdig features an online submission pipeline for scholars publishing new Hittite cuneiform texts. Users can copy and paste their transliterations into the creator interface and follow the prompts to finalise their submissions. For further guidance, users find support in a Step-by-step Manual.

Through this dynamic approach, TLHdig will continue to expand alongside the field, ensuring it remains as up-to-date as possible, and both the quantity and quality of the data increases continuously. It thus serves as both a foundation for text editions and a valuable resource for a wide range of research questions and methodologies, including the use of innovative AI approaches.

Funding and Project Management

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) funded the development of TLHdig. The project was led by Professor Gerfrid Müller (Mainz Academy of Sciences and Literature / University of Würzburg), Professor Doris Prechel (University of Mainz), Professor Elisabeth Rieken (University of Marburg), and Professor Daniel Schwemer (University of Würzburg).

Türkçe versiyonu için buraya tıklayınız:

<https://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/TLHdig/press-release-TR-2025-03.php>

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URL for press release: <https://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/TLHdig/> TLHdig on Hethitologie-Portal Mainz



From cuneiform to code: section of a Hittite cuneiform text found in Boğazköy-Hattuša in 2024 (photo and XML text).
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