In 1937, Director Müller, a German engineer who worked with the Maden Tetkik ve Arama Enstitüsü (Institute for the Study and Investigation of Mines) at Ankara, mentioned a Hittite inscription he had seen on one of his journeys. He had taken a small photograph of the inscription of which he kindly gave a copy to Prof. Landsberger, who turned it over to Güterbock. The picture was too small to show the detail clearly and was not suitable for publication; but it made it sufficiently clear that there was a new Hittite inscription in late incised writing on an uneven surface of stone. The size and position of the monument, whether it was a rock, an isolated block or a stone built into a wall, could not be made out from the picture. As location of the inscription Mr. Müller mentioned a village called Deveci, not far from the railway stations of Hekimhan and Hasançelebi on the Sivas-Malatya line. It was clear that only by visiting the place would it be possible to make a copy of the inscription, but this visit could not be made until last summer.

When the Faculty of Letters of the University of Ankara kindly granted the funds for a scientific excursion to the Institutes of Sumerology, Hittitology and Archaeology in the summer of 1946, one of the reasons for choosing the environs of Malatya as our goal was our hope to be able to visit Deveci. When the train stopped at the stations of Hasançelebi and Hekimhan on our way to Malatya, we asked how we could reach that village. At both places, we were told that it could be done only on horseback. At Malatya, the young and very active Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Rifat Akıncı, to whom we are much indebted for valuable help during the whole of our journey, immediately shared our interest in the new Hittite inscription and did everything to help us to reach the place. Moreover, as it happened that he had to inspect the recently organized primary schools in the villages of that region, he made it possible to go with us.

Thus, we left Malatya by train on the morning of September 6th, 1946. The members of the expedition were Professors Landsberger and Güterbock, Dr. Sedat Alp, Dr. Ekrem Akurgal, Dr. Emin Bilgiç, Director Akıncı and an inspector in the department of Public Instruction at Malatya. We arrived at Hekimhan, center of a district (ilçe or kaza), at about 10 a.m. Thanks to the orders given by Mr. Akıncı, everything had been very well prepared by the local authorities, so that, after a copious lunch, we were able to leave Hekimhan at 12
o'clock. Landsberger did not want to ride a horse, Alp who just before had had a slight accident was not able to do so either, and Akurgal chose to stay with them at Hekimhan. Therefore, the expedition, this time, consisted of Mr. Akıncı, the Inspector, the local School Director, Güterbock and Bilgiç, it was lanned that these should visit Deveci and the inscription on the same day, spend the night at Deveci, and come back to Hekimhan the next morning. Deveci was reached after two hours' ride, but nobody there had ever heard of an „inscribed stone”. Ali the villagers very well remembered the visit of the mining engineers, they said they were able to show Ali the places which the engineers had visited and where they had taken pictures, but they knew nothing of an inscription and could not identify Mr. Müllers photograph when it was shown to them. In spite of these discouraging prospects the expedition decided to visit the places the engineers had seen and photographed, hoping the place where Mr. Müller had taken the picture of the inscription would be among them. The villagers led the way to the so-called Maden Dağı („Mine Mountain”), about one hour north-east of Deveci, a mountain apparently containing much iron, with traces of old mining activities. But the party was disappointed in its hope of finding anything there like an inscription; moreover, the surface of the rock was completely unfit for an inscription as it crumbled off in flat splinters. The only reward of this trip were some byzantine potsherds collected on the hill, among the splinters which covered its whole surface. The disappointment was great until, late in the evening, a man brought a message from Landsberger saying that he and Alp had found a Hittite inscription, that they were going to spend the night at Şırzı, and that they would wait at a place near that village for their comrades next morning. When the messenger was shown Mr. Müller’s photograph, he at once recognized the inscription seen by him with Landsberger and Alp.

The engineers had, in 1937, visited both Şırzı and Deveci, and as Deveci was the place where they worked on the „Maden Dağı”, apparently its name had stayed in Mr. Müller’s memory rather than that of Şırzı. The Şırzı inscription, therefore, had to be re-discovered by Landsberger and Alp who, when they saw it, did not know that it was the same as had been seen by Mr. Müller, his photograph being with the other members of the staff at Deveci. How had they found it?

As in most small Anatolian places the people of Hekimhan were eager to know who the newly arrived specialists were, and to help them as far as possible. Landsberger, Alp and Akurgal who stayed at

1 Cp. V. Kovenko, Hasan Çelebi Mıntıkası Demir Yatakları = Les gîtes de fer de la region de Hasançelebi, in : Maden Tetkik ve Arama Enstitüsü Mecmuası, sene 5, 1940, No. 1/18, p. 75-93.
Hekimhan wanted to obtain some indications about the antiquities of the region and, if possible, with the help of the people, to determine new goals for scientific research. When they came to the market they were immediately surrounded by the inhabitants of the place and by the villagers who had come there for trade. While talking to them they heard of so many different places at such scattered intervals, that it was really difficult to choose the most important, especially in view of the short time available. Since the environs of Hekimhan, as far as we can see, have not yet been thoroughly investigated, one could expect a certain amount of new information. From the information given to the expedition by different persons during its stay at the school house and on the market, the following items were noted:

1) Girmana, Akhisar tepesi ("hill" or "mound").
2) Ibocuk (three "hills" or "mounds", "temples" and a "statue (?)"); it was said that points 1 and 2 together could be visited in one day, which gives an idea of their approximate distance from Hekimhan.
3) Kızılhisar (3 1/2 hours on foot from Hekimhan)
4) A mound called Maltepe ("Treasure Mound") near the railway station of Hasancıhebi.
5) The ancient remains (asar) of Cüzüngüt (1 hour from the station of Hekimhan).
6) Sazköyü near Deveci (gold coins reported).
7) Salacak (big mound; 1 1/2 hours from Hekimhan).  
8) A cave called Mal Mağarası (1 hour from Hekimhan).
9) Şırzı (inscription).
10) Akpınar (inscription).

Among these, the information given by the muhtar (village mayor) of Şırzı, Vahap Dursun, and a man called Mustafa Ulaş from the same village, in whose field the inscription was said to be situated, seemed the most interesting. It was not easy, though, to make out whether the inscription mentioned was Hittite, and of course there was no reason to think that it was the one reported from Deveci. The description given by the villagers first seemed rather to point to a Greek inscription, but on further questions it seemed possible that a Hittite inscription

2 The first place is marked Girmene on the Turkish Map (1: 800000), on the S. W. slope of the Kuruçay valley, about 18-20 km S. E. of Hekimhan (Kiepert's map has two "Kirmane", one farther down in the valley, the other farther W. in the mountains). The second place is indicated only on Kiepert's map, W. of the lower Kirmana (spelled Ibudjuk).

3 Marked on the Turkish map as the name of a village and a mountain, about 16 km W. of Hekimhan.

4 Salıcık, N. E. of Hekimhan, on the Turkish map. On Kiepert's map, the positions of "Devedji" and "Saldjik" seem to have been changed by mistake.
might be meant; thereupon Landsberger and Alp decided to go there. Akurgal stayed in Hekimhan to collect more information and went to Şırzı only the next day on receipt of a message.

Landsberger and Alp left Hekimhan at 2 p.m. with the mayor Vahap Durmuş, Mustaфа Ulaş and a merchant from Hekimhan called Rüştü Önder. They followed the road running parallel to the railroad in the Kuruçay valley to the North. About 4 km before reaching Şırzı they had to leave the road and had to take a path climbing the mountain slope to the Northeast. After a march of 3 1/2 hours, partly on foot, partly on a donkey, they reached a block lying on the slope. As they approached, they saw that it bore an inscription in Hittite hieroglyphs. Landsberger and Alp immediately started copying it, in the evening they went to the village of Şırzı where they passed the night as guests in the new school-house.

The village of Şırzı is marked on the 1:800,000 map of Turkey, section of Sivas, square H 29, between Hasan Çelebi in the North and Hekimhan in the South, it is just above the Kuruçay valley in which both the road and the railway from Sivas to Malatya run. Deveci is situated east of Şırzı, in the mountains, and also marked on the Turkish map.

About half-an-hour’s walk north-east of Şırzı we were shown some ruins, a large „ören“ with many stone walls easily traceable in the ground. The potsherds collected there proved to belong to the Roman period. We are not able to say whether this place is already known and whether the ancient name „ad Praetorium“ which appears on Kiepert’s map in the vicinity has anything to do with it.

The inscription lies about 2 km south-west of the village and about one hour from theören; this distance, taken with the difference of periods, shows that there can be no connection between the ruins and the inscription. The inscription is situated on the west slope of the mountain range, above a small natural terrace which bars the view of the valley. Although, roughly speaking, the mountains on which the village of Şırzı as well as the inscription are situated, dominate the Kuruçay valley, the individual spot of the inscription does not really overlook the valley. The inscription itself is incised on a huge block, about 1.5 m high and 2.5 m wide, which lies loose on the sloping ground. Apparently it has rolled down from a group of rocks visible at the top of the slope. Akurgal, Bilgiç and Mr. Akıcı rode up to these rocks but could not find anything of interest there. The question arose, and was discussed on the spot, whether the block had been inscribed when it was still up there and had rolled.

Şırası does not appear on Kiepert’s map which gives «Bally Kaja» (Ballı Kaya) as the name of a mountain in the vicinity. For Deveci see n. 4.
down in historical times, or whether it had been inscribed in its present position. The fact that the inscription follows the oblique situation of the block is in favour of the second alternative. The vertical rows of signs are really perpendicular now, although the lines are slanting downward from right to left; this arrangement suggests that the block was in its present position when the inscription was made. Since no traces of buildings or worship are visible near the block, one might even imagine that the block rolled down in Hittite times and that the inscription was meant to commemorate this very incident.

The signs are incised and show the current style of the late period. The average height of the first three lines is 20 cm, whereas the fourth line covers a broader part of the surface and its bottom is not marked by a stroke. The surface has not been smoothed artificially but left more or less uneven as it was. It is covered by spots of light-coloured lichen which we could not remove and which obliterate some parts of the inscription, especially toward its left end. The first line, unfortunately, is almost illegible.

When Landsberger and Alp arrived there in the afternoon of September 6th, they started copying the inscription immediately. The next day, Güterbock and Alp collated the part of the copy made the first day and copied the rest of the inscription. Güterbock took some photographs which came out rather well, allowing considerable enlarging. The copy published here was drawn at home on a photograph which afterwards was bleached out, and for each sign both the hand-copy and the traces visible on several photographs were consulted and discussed by both of the authors of this article. Even so, there remain some questions, which can be solved only by a new examination of the original; but these are not many, and we hope that our copy is fairly reliable for a first edition. There is little hope that anything can be made out of the top and left part of the inscription.

We abstain from an interpretation of the text. Some groups of signs we were able to identify with words known from other inscriptions and interpreted in some way or other by different scholars. But at the present state of the decipherment of the Hittite hieroglyphs it seems inadvisable to give a full transliteration, not to speak of a translation. No personal or geographical names seem to occur in the legible part of the inscription; if the name of the ruler of a certain city had been there, it would have been expected at the beginning which is in a hopeless state. The occurrence of the divine name written with the „antler“ sign (nr. 120 of Meriggi’s sign list) and read „Ruta“ (or the like) generally, is clear in several places, and this seems to be the only deity mentioned in the text.
The nearest group of hieroglyphic inscriptions is that in the Tohmaçayı valley: Kötükale, Ispekçür, Darende and Gürün. Geographically, Şırzı is separated from that region, and since no geographical name can be found in the Şırzı inscription, it is not clear whether it has anything to do with that group. On the other hand, there is Arslantepe, the ancient site of Malatya, where several inscriptions have been found; and the Tohmaçayı valley belonged to the territory of Malatya as shown by the occurrence of the name of that city in all of the inscriptions as far up as Gürün. Since the Kuruçay valley, too, opens towards the Malatya plain, it is very probable that Şırzı belonged to the kingdom of Malatya as well.

When, on our way home, we stopped at the station of Çetinkaya, we met a man from Şırzı called Ahmet Şahin. According to him, there is another inscription, resembling that of Şırzı, at a place called Başak near Şırzı and Deveci. Unfortunately we had no time to go back to Hekimhan and visit that inscription.