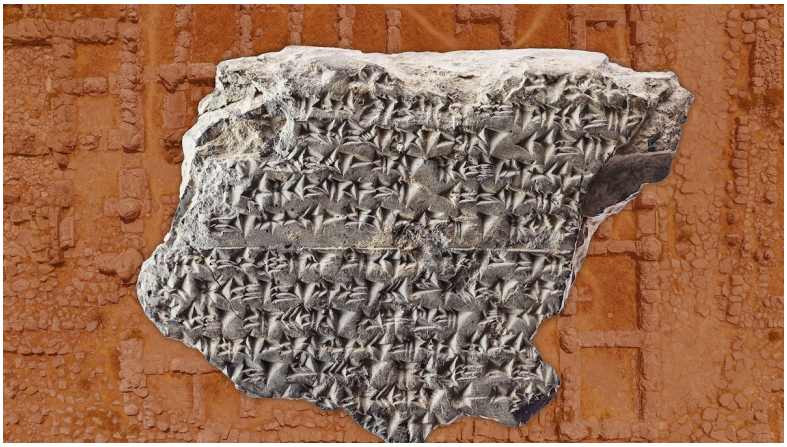
WHAT CAN NEW TABLETS TELL US ABOUT THE LOST HITTITE EMPIRE?



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Archaeologists working in central Turkey have discovered 131 clay tablets written about 3,400 years ago. The tablets belonged to the Hittite Empire, a powerful kingdom that once rivalled ancient Egypt. They were found at Kayal?p?nar, the site of the Hittite city of Šamu?a, rather than at the empire's capital. This matters because most surviving Hittite records come from royal palaces, so they mainly describe kings and officials. The new tablets give a wider view of life. They mention religious ceremonies, government work, attacks by enemy tribes and a serious outbreak of disease. Some describe a baby princess who died during an epidemic and the rituals carried out after her death. Other tablets record how priests studied the flight of birds to understand what the gods wanted. Written evidence like this allows historians to hear Hittite people speaking in their own words, rather than relying only on what Egyptians or later writers said about them. nationalgeographic.com

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

The Hittites are often less familiar than the Egyptians or Romans, even though they were one of the great powers of the ancient Near East. These tablets show that history is not only about kings and battles. They reveal illness, religion, government and family tragedy, helping bring an almost forgotten civilisation back to life.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"What can these tablets tell us about ordinary Hittite life?"

Source: National Geographic

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/hittites-cuneiform-tablets-discovery