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Review Article

A Hittite trio

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Books Reviewed

ANDREAS SCHACHNER. *Hattuscha: auf der Suche nach dem sagenhaften Großreich der Hethiter*. 364 pages. 158 b&w & colour illustrations. 2011. München: C.H.Beck; 978-3-406-60504-8 hardback €34.

TREVOR BRYCE. *The world of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms: a political and military history*. xiv+356 pages, 20 illustrations. 2012. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 978-0-19-921872-1 hardback £75.

THEO VAN DEN HOUT. *The elements of Hittite*. xvi+204 pages, 13 illustrations. 2011. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-0-521-11564-3 hardback \$99 & £60; 978-0-521-13300-5 paperback \$39.99 & £24.99.

The Hittites inhabited central Anatolia over much of the second and first millennia BC, ruling an empire that included almost all of Anatolia and northern Syria during the Late Bronze Age. Their descendants ruled smaller kingdoms and chiefdoms spread over southern central Anatolia and northern Syria during the Iron Age (Neo-Hittites). They were in lively contact with most of the great powers of the time, Babylonia and Assyria to the east, Egypt to the south and Mycenaean Greece to the west, and are credited, somewhat erroneously, for having concluded with Egypt the first ever bi-lateral peace-treaty, a copy of which now hangs at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva.

The three books under review separately give an up-to-date introduction to three different areas of study related to the Hittites, namely the archaeology of their capital, Hattusa (modern-day Boğazkale), the language of state as preserved on

thousands of cuneiform tablets found in that capital, and the history of the Neo-Hittite states, as mostly revealed by native and Neo-Assyrian sources.

Hattusa

Andreas Schachner has been the director of the German Archaeological Institute's excavations at ancient Hattusa since 2006, inheriting the mantle from a series of German and Turkish excavators stretching back to 1906. This book presents his overview of the city's history, from an archaeological perspective. A specific problem in Hittite archaeology has frequently been that the wealth of textual documentation has tended to colour or even lead the analysis of archaeological data. A decided step away from this approach has been taken in recent years, especially since the directorship of Jürgen Seeher, who pointed the way towards scientifically-based re-evaluations of many previously held views on the development of the city. New methods in pottery analysis and the use of radiocarbon dating have contributed to much revision of older perspectives. In particular the date of the Upper City at Hattusa, which had previously been considered a temple district built in one fell swoop during the last phases of the Late Bronze Age Hittite occupation in the thirteenth century BC, has now been convincingly pushed back to the sixteenth century. It is thus high time that this new direction in the excavation of this fascinating city be presented to the reading public in an accessible synthetic form that also has the authority to be used by academics and researchers. The latter should, however, note that references to previous literature are restricted to a further-reading section and are not included as footnotes to the text.

This beautifully and informatively illustrated book begins with consideration of the palaeo-environment of this topographically extremely odd and difficult place to build a capital city, a theme which runs through much of the book and should be central to any consideration of the Hittites. How was it possible to build a successful state and indeed empire from the mountainous terrain of the central Anatolian plateau in the Late Bronze Age? The next two chapters present the archaeology of the city in its historical development, with frequent references to historical material from texts. It is the sixteenth century BC, from the archaeological perspective, which emerges as the most important period in urban development. There follow chapters dealing with aspects of the city's urban character as illustrated by representative buildings and structures: organic *versus* planned elements, grand buildings of the ruling elite, temples, streets, sanitary and water installations. Art, handicrafts and social issues are also examined. The last chapters detail the city's development after the Hittites disappeared, from a plunge back to a Neolithic level of existence to the gradual re-assertion of urban characteristics in the later Iron Age, a pattern that repeats itself throughout the history of this geographically challenging area.

What emerges is a picture of an organic urban entity in history, where the relations between the various parts of the city are becoming clearer. As one example, one might mention the recently excavated House of the GAL *MEŠEDI* "Chief of the Royal Bodyguard" (pp. 282–84) which contained exquisite dining-related artefacts and is interpreted as the residence of a high functionary with links to the royal family. The building was identified because a letter was found there written by the "Chief of the Palace Servants" to the "Chief of the Bodyguard", although caution should be encouraged, as a letter from precisely the same official as sender to the same addressee was also found in the royal palace (Bk. E) and has previously been used as evidence that the "Chief of the Bodyguards" was to be found there, at least for this letter (KBo 18.95, Marizza 2009: 36).

Recent survey work also indicates that the city extended much further than the walled area usually associated with it, much of the area as far as the rock sanctuary of Yazılıkaya, some 2km from Hattusa, having been settled during this period (pp. 99–109). This was thus an extensive metropolis set in a mountainous landscape, our understanding of which has recently begun to change course significantly.

The Neo-Hittites

The Hittites left Hattusa and disappeared entirely from central Anatolia. While Schachner's book seeks to explain their disappearance in terms of the difficulties of maintaining a state in this area, Trevor Bryce resumes the story with the history of the Neo-Hittite states, where Hittite culture could best be said to have continued in the Iron Age, although quite transformed and mixed with other cultural elements. Bryce's book is one of a number of publications which follow in the wake of J.D. Hawkins's work (2000), which presented for the first time in one place all the available Iron Age inscriptions written in Anatolian hieroglyphs and the Luwian language in three volumes in hand-copy, photograph, transliteration and translation with detailed historical, epigraphic and philological commentary. Note that the language written here is no longer Hittite, which we assume to have died out at the end of the Late Bronze Age, but Luwian, a related Anatolian language that survived Hittite by at least five centuries.

The world of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms is an attempt to present a history of these states using the available ancient textual sources: native Luwian (hieroglyphic), mostly monumental inscriptions on stone, Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, the Hebrew Bible, Phoenician, Urartian and Aramaic inscriptions, among others. The structure of the book is slightly confusing. An introduction combining details of the end of the Late Bronze Age Hittite Empire, definition of terms and a section on the Biblical Hittites is followed by five chapters on the kingdoms and their dynasties, which are not intended to be read straight through, but to be referred back to when needed. However, these chapters also contain much historical speculation. Then a synthetic narrative history is presented in chapters 10–12, an afterword considers effects on population and the legacies of both Late Bronze

Age and Iron Age "Hittites" and four appendices give details of transliteration from hieroglyphic texts and lists of kings, followed by notes and indices. Despite this minor criticism of the structure, the book is extremely readable.

A major criticism, however, is that there is little consideration of the archaeology, topography or geography of the areas concerned. The narrative is almost entirely textually oriented. For a book entitled "*The world of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms*", this is lamentable indeed. Any consideration of history in Anatolia has to pay close attention to the interplay between event, society and landscape, the natural borders and the palaeo-environment within which state-power was formed and contested. Granted, a detailed presentation or overview of the data is not available for this period. However, remote-sensing techniques and satellite images are widely accessible, and the extensive archaeological literature is in need of review.

Given the book's heavy textual bias it is also surprising that virtually no philological issues are discussed bearing on the interpretation of those texts. Occasionally scholars' discussions are rehearsed, but suggested solutions sometimes fall a little unhappily. The notion that Hilaruada, the ruler of Malatya known from an Urartian inscription, might conceivably be identical with Sa(?)tiruntiya from the hieroglyphic Luwian inscription of ŞIRZI is justified by the observation that foreign renditions of names frequently misrepresent them (p. 108). While this is probably the case for the garbled but recognisable second half of the name, *-ruada = runtiya*, it is very unlikely that the Urartians would mishear the first half of the name, which is partially unclear but nevertheless incompatible in the Luwian inscription, and still make out of it a viable Hittite/Luwian name beginning in *Hila-* ("courtyard"). The Hilaruada mentioned in Urartian sources and the Sa(?)tiruntiya from hieroglyphic sources are clearly different names, which suggests different people. This kind of argument may betray a lack of confidence in the interpretation of the original sources. However, it is precisely the lack of such philological clutter which largely contributes to the book being so readable.

Luwian studies is a rapidly advancing field and many a word written on the subject is out of date by the time of publication, not just in the case of this book. Here one might mention the discovery of the function of the word-divider in early texts (Hawkins 2010) which has allowed a re-dating of the inscriptions of king Taita of Walistin/Palistin, making it probable that there were in fact two kings of this name, one earlier and one later, rather than one who was either early or late (pp. 128–29). One should also mention the erroneous impression which may arise from reading the section on Tabal (Chapter 7), namely that this place-name is mentioned in native Luwian sources and was the name given to the area by the people who lived there, although Bryce does not explicitly state this. We need to be clear that this name is solely preserved in external accounts. The same is true of the town-name Šinuhtu (pp. 145, 148). For further views on Tabal, which appeared too late for Bryce to consider, see Giusfredi (2010), Weeden (2010) and D'Alfonso (2012).

A Hittite crash course

Returning to the Late Bronze Age, the final book to be considered in this review is Theo van den Hout's *Elements of Hittite*, which is a publication of the Hittite language course as taught by the author at the University of Chicago over the last 20 years. Recent years have seen the appearance of Hoffner and Melchert's *Grammar* (2008), which provided for the first time a reference grammar of the language, as well as of a number of other primers.

The author describes how he learnt Hittite—a short introduction to the grammar and then straight into reading texts—and states it was his intention to find another, more accessible didactic method. This reviewer must signal here that the "in at the deep-end" pedagogy rejected by van den Hout has served him very well and will remain for many students the best way of getting to grips with the language and its related issues. However, there is no doubt that the gradual method of introduction to the language favoured by van den Hout will be the more popular and will provide an excellent basis for future study of Hittite.

After an introduction dealing with general background issues to do with script, orthography, transmission and literature, the student is led through ten lessons which deal with the parts of speech and their paradigms systematically, as well as given incremental portions of the difficult cuneiform script and orthography. The student learns to read cuneiform texts in both transliteration and hand-copy via exercises appended to each chapter. All that is missing is practice in the use of the unfortunately disparate and unevenly published dictionaries and manuals, which can be a very confusing part of the subject for the beginner. References to the relevant paragraphs in Hoffner and Melchert's standard reference grammar would also have been useful. The appendices contain reference paradigms, indices and a glossary for ease of use. The book is designed for study with a teacher, but is in this reviewer's opinion it is also well suited to use by teach-yourself enthusiasts. It should make Hittite a more accessible subject for generations to come.

The three books under review all contribute greatly to providing access for the general reading public to the fascinating continuum of cultural elements grouped under the rubric Hittite, as well as making a contribution to academic discourse. Schachner's authoritative account of the archaeology of Hattusa needs an English translation to reach a wider non-academic and non-German speaking world public, a project that would be well worth investing in.

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