

## Reviews of Books

*Formen und Inhalte althethitischer historischer Literatur.* By AMIR GILAN. *Texte der Hethiter*, vol. 29. Heidelberg: UNIVERSITÄTSVERLAG WINTER, 2015. Pp. xii + 404. €45 (paper).

A. Gilan's book here under review deals with one of the most debated topics in the field of Hittology: historiography. The vibrant debate concerns two major questions: Can Hittite historiography be defined as a genre, and can it be regarded as literature? The answer to the first question has been generally negative. The second question has caused a wider debate, for it is connected to the definition of literature itself. Another fundamental question concerns the relationship between historiography and literature. This very welcome book revives these questions and further problems related to Hittite historiography, which are fundamental for our understanding of Hittite culture.

The book consists of four main parts: an introduction, in which research questions and goals as well as methods are described; a section dedicated to three main concepts—Old Hittite ductus, literature, and historiography; an extensive analysis of the documents (the longest part of the work, chapters 3 to 9), grouped according to the criteria described in the previous section; and a concluding chapter, which summarizes the results of the analysis. A bibliography and indices of texts, as well as of personal and geographic names, close the volume.

The work originates from the recognition that Old Hittite historiography had never been the object of a monograph, while previous approaches have stressed their limitations as functional approaches to the study of Hittite historiography. Gilan's proposes to fill this gap by finding a balance between the evaluation of Hittite written sources and the use of approaches from historical and literary studies.

To achieve this goal, the author first discusses the problems related to the Old Hittite ductus, rejecting—with good reason in my opinion—the idea expressed recently by among others Th. van den Hout (see van den Hout 2009, cited in the book's bibliography) that the oldest Hittite documents that report historic events were written in Akkadian. The author explains the absence of Old Hittite historiographic documents written in Hittite by supposing that they were not inscribed in Ḫattuša but somewhere else. I find this idea quite convincing, but we must also consider the possibility that the oldest manuscripts were discarded when new copies were produced.

Second, the author provides a definition of literature that fits the (Old Hittite) historiographic narratives. He accepts the definition of literature as a "Kommunikationssituation" that can be resumed at any time and is not limited to a specific context or function (see Assmann and Assmann 1995, again cited in the book's bibliography). Furthermore, he also takes into consideration three criteria: fictionality, intertextuality, and reception, following the work of Loprieno (1996). However, Gilan seems to dismiss the idea of fictionality, since by marking the boundary between literature and historiography, it does not fit the production criteria for Hittite historiographic literature, but he does refer to this distinction later in chapter 8. Intertextuality, on the other hand, can indeed be applied to Old Hittite historiographic literature. It can be fruitful, even though the author is himself aware that it is very complex to identify what he calls "Prätex" in Hittite written sources available to us. With regard to the reception, Gilan admits that the concepts of authorship and audience are most difficult to define, and that only the analysis of individual documents can allow us to identify them.

The last preliminary definition is that of historiography itself. As already mentioned, prior discussion of this topic has been very vibrant, given that different genres of Hittite textual production may contain passages that can be recognized as historiographic narrative. According to Gilan, the functionality of the texts is fundamental in defining Hittite historiography. A second criterion is to focus not on the text as a whole, but on the narrative(s) that it contains. He gives a "minimalistic" definition of historiography, as a generic term ("Gattungsbegriff") for written documents that represent the past, with the claim of truthfulness.

This extensive introduction is followed by the analysis of the documents. The author groups the texts according to their purposes or functions. CTH 5, CTH 6, CTH 8, CTH 24, KBo 22.1, and KBo 3.28 are defined as didactic political literature. In particular, CTH 6 is interpreted here not as a juridical document, but as a speech of the king, whose dual purpose is to present his heir to the court and the nobles as well as to instruct the young Muršili in his wisdom. CTH 8 is defined more precisely as a didactic amusement, given that the distance from the original communicative situation has increased the literariness of the document. Furthermore, the Telipinu text (CTH 19) is classified as having a didactic purpose, since it—in Gilan’s interpretation—not only aims to justify the past, but has the goal of instructing future kings, as does the Zalpa tale (CTH 3). The so-called annals of Ḫattušili I (CTH 4) have a dedicatory, rather than a didactic function, since the text seems to have been inscribed on a statue of the solar deity. The last group of texts, CTH 7, CTH 16, and KBo 1.1 (CTH 51), are not didactic either. These documents show characteristics of what the author calls subversive narrative; they also show more literary features in comparison to other documents, such as irony (in particular, CTH 7), while the so-called cannibal text (CTH 17) is to be interpreted as lying halfway between historiography and literature. The idea behind identifying subversive literature is indeed intriguing, but I think that our knowledge of Hittite text production is too limited to allow us to validate this suggestion.

In the conclusion, the author divides the documents into three main groups: monumental commemorative historiography, political didactic literature, and local or translated light fiction (“Unterhaltungsliteratur”). Furthermore, he ascribes the production of historical literature to a “school.”

The primary merit of the book is the use of approaches and theories from other disciplines, especially from literary studies, to redefine a topic for which a positive theoretical approach or a functional working instrument has never previously been found. This path should be followed in future research because a new evaluation of Hittite historiography is very much required. Nonetheless, I think that the definition of historical literature put forward here is somehow inconsistent. Moreover, I suggest that the approach of Hayden White ought to be examined in depth in order to remove the limitations that arise through equating historiography with facts and literature with fiction, an approach that cannot work for Hittite documentation.

Also admirable is the amount of secondary literature considered by Gilan, above all in the second chapter. Such an effort to find the right approaches and definitions is a step forward in the debate about Hittite historiography, which I hope will give fresh impetus to one of the most complex and yet interesting topics in the field of Hittitology. However, I cannot avoid emphasizing the absence here of literature about the historiography of ancient Greece and Rome (particularly the works of Gabba and Canfora), which is fundamental to any study of historiographic production in antiquity. Furthermore, while it is certainly important to study single periods of Hittite history, a re-evaluation of Hittite historiography requires an approach that works not only for the Old Hittite period, but for the entire time span and production of texts.

In addition, I appreciate the focus of the author on individual documents, analyzing them in terms of their own structure, purpose, and characteristics, before ascribing them to a specific group. Engagement with the sources is, in fact, the primary step in any historical study. The fact that Gilan chooses not to provide transliterations and translations for all documents makes it rather difficult for the reader to follow some of his observations. Indeed, I would expect greater meticulousness in the philological work, since some complex passages are not discussed in depth. Of course I understand that this would have required a significant amount of additional work within the course of a doctoral thesis. Moreover, there is some imprecision in the readings and the transliterations that have been included (e.g., *ut-ta-qa-ar* instead of *ut-ta-ka<sub>4</sub>-ar* in Rev.<sup>1</sup> 23 of the Uršu-text, CTH 7, on p. 284).

Finally, a few small notes: Some authors cited in the footnotes cannot be found in the bibliography (for example, Güterbock 1954–1955, mentioned in n. 24, or Hecker 1992, cited in n. 50). In other cases, the referenced years in some notes do not correspond to those in the bibliography (for example, Schachner 2008 in n. 2 is cited as Schachner 2009 in the bibliography, while Bunnens 1996 in n. 30 is cited as Bunnens 1994 in the bibliography).

The notes and the suggestions above, however, do not diminish the value of a work that has vividly resumed the debate about the fundamental topic of Hittite historiography, as well as indicated new paths for its study.

MARTA PALLAVIDINI  
BERLIN

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*Schrift und Schriftlichkeit: Die anatolische Hieroglyphenschrift.* By ANNICK PAYNE. Wiesbaden: HAR-RASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2015. Pp. xvii + 232, illus. €68 (paper).

Annick Payne, a recognized expert in the Anatolian hieroglyphs, offers by far the most comprehensive treatment of the subject to date—comprehensive in two senses. First, Payne covers every conceivable aspect of the topic: structure, origin, and chronological development of the script itself; its use (by whom, for what purposes, and in what contexts, in terms of material supports, languages, and competing scripts); the role, social status, and training of scribes and the extent of literacy; and finally the nature of the extant texts (genres, literary structure, and diction).

Second, Payne employs multiple and complementary approaches: general principles of writing systems, relevant parallels from other ancient scripts, self-experimentation with writing materials and consultation with others who have conducted similar experiments; and an engagement with the applicable secondary literature that is generally thorough, up-to-date, and evenhanded (one exception will be noted below).

Another strength is Payne's due caution: she does not hesitate to make clear claims or choices among competing hypotheses, but always properly qualifies them and constantly reminds readers that the limited and skewed nature of the evidence (which future discoveries will only partially alleviate) makes all conclusions even more provisional than is usual in scholarly contexts.

The comprehensive, multifaceted approach and sober handling of the evidence enable Payne to make progress on several points:

1) She demonstrates (pp. 32–34) that the diachronic development of the mixed logographic-phonetic system of the Anatolian hieroglyphs is not, as previously assumed (for this system and more generally), a linear progressive one from entirely logographic to fully phonetic spelling; the use of a logographic “determinative” *plus* full phonetic spelling is the endpoint and the product of full phonetic spelling alone, not vice-versa.

2) She is able to make a very useful start on a projected full paleographical analysis of sign shapes, diachronic and diatopic (pp. 44–64). Even in this preliminary version, Payne can show that each sign must be treated separately without preconceptions and that easy generalizations are hard to come by: neither relative frequency, chronology, nor geographic distribution are consistently determining factors. The paleographic analysis also contradicts the notion of a linear chronological development (p. 64).

3) She offers further arguments (chapter 3) in support of other scholars that the Anatolian hieroglyphs are an autonomous creation within a Luvian-Hittite bilingual context and motivated at least in part by political, propagandistic aims; commonalities with other systems such as Cretan are structural, not the result of borrowing.

4) She supports with new evidence the claim of widespread use of wax-coated wooden tablets and cautiously argues for a large-scale (though not necessarily complete) complementarity of script and language in the late Hittite Empire: hieroglyphs and Luvian on wood and cuneiform and Hittite on clay (with both possible on other supports). In particular, based on comparative evidence and her own experiments, she seriously relativizes the notion of wax-coated wooden tablets as being too perishable to be suitable for long-term documentation.