
Our knowledge of Hieroglyphic Luwian (HL) has increased immensely in the past three decades. New readings of some crucial signs have led to a much better understanding of the HL language and its affinity to Cuneiform Luwian (CL), a closely related dialect. This increase culminated in the release of the majestic Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, vol. 1: Inscriptions of the Iron Age (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000) by J. David Hawkins, which provided not only pictures and drawn copies of all the original inscriptions of the Neo-Hittite states of the Iron Age, but also transliteration, transliteration, and annotation of the texts according to the most recent scholarly insights. The importance of this book can hardly be overestimated, and it must serve as a starting point for anyone who wants to seriously undertake HL studies. It is therefore not very surprising that within one year of its publication three new treatments of HL grammar have appeared: Einführung ins Hieroglyphen-Luwische (Dresden, 2003) by Reinhold Plothl; The Luwians (Boston: Brill, 2003), edited by H. Craig Melchert, which has a chapter ‘Language’ by Melchert (pp. 170–210); and Marangozis’s booklet under review here.

What is surprising, however, is the fact that while the first two books mentioned are based on the most recent readings of the signs and the new editions of the HL texts in Hawkins’ Corpus, M seems to have been fully unaware of the new developments in HL studies. The most recent title referred to in his bibliography is Rudolf Werner’s Kleine Einführung ins Hieroglyphen-Luwische (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), which used an already outdated system of transliterating the HL signs. M’s transliteration of the HL signs is therefore completely outdated and, even worse, inconsistent throughout his book.

Moreover, M does not seem to know that, although HL and CL are closely related, the two languages show some striking differences. The fact that he also based his book on introductions to CL grammar leads to unforgivable confusions. On p. 11, for instance, he states that the HL case-ending for nominative plural is -nzi, and for accusative plural -nz. This is indeed correct for CL, but for HL both endings are -nzi.

Besides errors like this, the book is crammed with inconsistencies and mistakes. On p. 12 an accusative plural arhazí of arha- ‘border’ (modern reading: irhalı-) is cited, in which the asterisk indicates that the form is not extant, whereas on the same page M gives the sentence: ı-DANAwanizíURBS arhazí MANUS-latariha [sic!] ‘the Adanian borders I expanded’, in which we find an accusative plural form arhazí (modern transcription: irhi(n)zi). Why is this form not cited in the paradigm, while M must have known it, and why did he falsely think that the expected form was arhazí? The reader could ask why an apparent nonspecialist like M would undertake to write such a ‘grammar’ in the first place, if his knowledge of HL is so lacking. The answer is given in the last chapter, ‘The Phaistos disk: An attempt to read the document as a Luwian Hieroglyphic script’. M gives an HL interpretation of the signs found on the Phaistos disk and a transliteration and translation of it. The result is completely unconvincing. Most of the equations of Phaistos signs with HL signs are inimitable, the transliterated text does not contain a single well recognizable HL word, and the translation is incomprehensible. It suffices to cite the ‘translation’ of the first few lines of side B: ‘In Sattria there / speaks Leto to men / to men there and these / sacred ship protected / (goes) and the King / to Lita way sent—Health!’ (53).

M’s booklet, which apparently is written only to promote his interpretation of the Phaistos disk, is not even worth looking at superficially, especially not for the price of $36. [Alwin Kloekhorst, Leiden University.]


This volume is the latest in a series of similarly ambitiously titled works (on the United States, Brit-