Chapter 2

Luwian Monumental Inscriptions and Luwians in Northern Syria

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1 Luwian Studies Until the Year 2000

Already in the year 1938 B. Rosenkranz dared to maintain that the language commonly used in the Hittite Empire (“Umgangssprache”) was Luwian while Hittite was the language of administration (“Hof- und Amtssprache”).1 Later, after having collected the results of his studies on Luwian, he returned to the traditional attitude in the face of general scepticism.2 In those same years, H. Otten increased the Luwian documentation editing a large number of texts3 and providing a grammatical and lexical analysis of it.4

Beginning with 1947, in the space of about fifteen years E. Laroche on the one hand presented several exemplary studies on the Hittite lexicon and, on the other, and with extraordinary insight, furnished new bases for the study of Hattic, Hurrian, Luwian and Hieroglyphic “Hittite”, Lycian.5 His Dictionnaire de la Langue Louvite (1959) not only analyzed the attested grammatical forms, but included also an “Esquisse de grammaire louvite” together with a short collection of chosen texts. Three seminal studies (1958a; 1960; 1967) signified an extraordinary leap forward in our understanding of Lycian, a language related to Luwian.

The Luwian documentation received a new enlarged edition by F. Starke (1985). The analysis of the writing revealed that some of those manuscripts with Luwian incantation passages had already reached Ḫattuša in the Early Empire (/ Middle Hittite) period,6 and the others were later copies of manuscripts from that period. It was, instead, in the 13th century that individual

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1 Rosenkranz 1938.
3 KUB 35; Otten 1953a.
4 Otten 1953b.
5 A collection of Laroche’s studies (Laroche 2016) is in preparation, so future generations, too, may benefit from his approach to the texts and his results.

The affinity of the language of the hieroglyphic documentation to cuneiform Luwian was soon recognized, so that F. Sommer could suggest calling the language of the inscriptions from Karkamiš “Ostluvisch”.8 The label “Hittite hieroglyphs” persisted, however, because that script was used for the seals of the Hittite royal family and the officials of the administration, as well as for “captions” on a few open-air monuments of the very late period of the Empire and in many inscriptions of the so-called “Neo-Hittite” states: those formed during the 1st millennium in several regions of the former Empire. New readings of a few signs made it clear that the language of the monumental inscriptions (included those of the very last Hittite kings, now augmented in number thanks to more recent discoveries) was Luwian.9 This “led to the recognition of Cuneiform and Hieroglyphic Luwian as one language divided by the radical difference of the two corpuses: 2nd mill. BC ritual incantatory texts as against commemorative stone inscriptions predominantly of the 1st mill. BC”.10

2 Recent Research on the Luwians

The volume *The Luwians*, edited by H.C. Melchert (2003), was conceived before the monumental edition of the Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions of the

7 Starke 1985: 30.
8 Sommer 1947: 37; cf. Rosenkranz 1954. Meriggi (1962: 1 n. 1) had already in 1934 suggested to call the language of the hieroglyphic inscriptions “hieroglyphisch-luvisch”.