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**Gordin, Shai:** *Hittite Scribal Circles. Scholarly Tradition and Writing Habits.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2015. XXIV, 461 S. m. Abb. 8° = Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten 59. Hartbd. € 88,00. ISBN 978-3-447-19457-0.

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In recent years, prosopographic study has assumed an ever more important role in Hittitology,<sup>1</sup> and the volume under review now applies this approach to the scribal profession in the Hittite state. Outside of letters,<sup>2</sup> personal

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<sup>1</sup> The first major contribution was Th. van den Hout, *Der Ulmitešub-Vertrag. Eine prosopographische Untersuchung* (Wiesbaden 1995). See now especially T. Bilgin, *Officials and Administration in the Hittite World* (Berlin 2018).

<sup>2</sup> See A. Hagenbuchner, *Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter*, 1. Teil (Heidelberg 1989), 10–14.

names of members of this craft are found most often in the colophons appended to cuneiform tablets written by senior scribes or by junior colleagues under their supervision. Since the bulk of inscribed material from Ḫatti dates to the late empire period and furthermore the use of colophons in earlier eras was extremely limited, the present inquiry perforce centers on the scribal community of Ḫattuša<sup>3</sup> during the thirteenth century BCE.<sup>4</sup>

In chapter 1, Gordin begins with an introduction to the “archives” of the Hittite capital and the physical characteristics and diplomatics of the records displayed in them,<sup>5</sup> but the primary focus of his inquiry is upon the men who created these texts.<sup>6</sup> In addition to the patronymics and hierarchical affiliations provided in the colophons,<sup>7</sup> he examines the particularities evidenced by the scribes in their quotidian practice—the ductus and aspect of their signs,<sup>8</sup> sign choice, use of ideograms, and orthography (e. g., use of plene vs. non-plene spellings), as well as the physical form and text layout of the tablets that they inscribed (chapter 6).<sup>9</sup>

For many of the scribes treated here, the author has provided extensive compilations of sign forms featuring the reproduction of particular graphemes in individual photos, an undertaking of unimaginable tediousness for which the reader can only express admiration and gratitude. He draws several useful conclusions from this exercise: 1) One should not employ paleography<sup>10</sup> too mechanically in dating Hittite manuscripts, since “it is exactly [the] mix between old and new that might characterize an individual scribal hand” (p. 87). 2) The change-over to the

New Script was non-linear. 3) It is important to recognize the “familial character of ancient scribal lore” (p. 336). 4) There is no evidence for a scribe choosing particular sign forms for use in a certain textual genre (p. 344). And 5) Hittite writers tend to express their individuality particularly through their “signatures” in colophons, where we often encounter more elaborate, old-fashioned, and/or unusual signs (pp. 314, 323).

Gordin identifies two primary scribal “circles” active in the late empire: that of Walwa-ziti, founded by his father Mittanamuwa (pp. 148–65; see p. 152, Fig. 8), which is attested most frequently in connection with manuscripts of the *ḫišuwa*-festival (CTH 628; see pp. 255–80), and that of Anuwanza (pp. 166–98), which had a long tradition reaching back to a certain Ḫanikkuli, son of Anu-šar-ilāni, who lived in the fifteenth century (pp. 106–09; see also p. 184, Fig. 14).

Judging from the available evidence, there was little if any collaboration between the two schools (p. 353), and Gordin suggests that a rivalry existed between the first group, established by the immigrant Mittanamuwa only after the fall of Mittani in the mid-fourteenth century (p. 354), and the latter circle, which represented a far older intellectual lineage.<sup>11</sup> This may well be true, but it is surely a stretch to posit antagonism between the groupings (pp. 238, 354).

Gordin believes that the individuals whom he has studied in this book could not have developed such a “strong form of expression” in their writing “if they were also obliged to engage in administrative and economic activities” and that they have therefore earned the right to be referred to as “scholars” (p. 355). This view implies that the lost economic documentation once written on wooden tablets<sup>12</sup> as well as perhaps the majority of cuneiform tablets without colophons were compiled and/or inscribed by someone else. Were these tasks incumbent upon the approximately 75 % of the owners of Anatolian Hieroglyphic seals bearing the professional designation SCRIBA (L 326) whose names are not represented in the cuneiform documents (pp. 105–06 and Appendix A; cf.

<sup>3</sup> Gordin estimates that the number of active scribes grew from only a handful in the fifteenth century to around sixty in the thirteenth century (p. 4).

<sup>4</sup> As shown on p. 112, Table 5, even in this time colophons are rather rare and are most frequently present on EZEN (“festival”; 46 %) and SISKUR (“ritual”; 20 %) tablets. For every other category, the incidence is between 1 % and 8 %. This unexpected distribution by genre must have implications for the organization of scribal and editorial work at Ḫattuša; for thoughts on this question see G. Torri, *WZKM* 107 (2017), 376–77.

<sup>5</sup> This discussion is largely in agreement with the much fuller presentation of W. Waal, *Hittite Diplomats. Studies in Ancient Document Format and Record Management* (Wiesbaden 2015).

<sup>6</sup> See Table 4, pp. 96–105 for a complete list of the scribes attested for this era. It is striking that many of them bear Luwian names.

<sup>7</sup> On p. 134, the phrase *ANA PANI Labarna GAL-i* (Bo 2004/1: 33) should surely be rendered “in front of Labarna senior,” not “the great.”

<sup>8</sup> For the distinction between these terms see p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> See pp. 52–72 for a list of the 172 “signed” tablets available for analysis.

<sup>10</sup> A concise discussion of this methodology is found on pp. 83–93.

<sup>11</sup> Walma-ziti scribes are associated with the “Assyro-Mittanian” script type (pp. 340–41), while Anuwanza’s school is more given to employing archaic elements (p. 340) and designated a number of its products as *TUPPU URUḪatti*, “tablets of Ḫattuša”. On this term see G. Torri, “The Expression *TUPPU URUḪatti* in Colophons and the Work of the Scribe Ḫanikkuli,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 38 (2011), 135–44.

<sup>12</sup> On this writing material in Ḫatti, see W. Waal, “They Wrote on Wood. The Case for a Hieroglyphic Scribal Tradition in Hittite Anatolia,” *Anatolian Studies* 61 (2011), 21–35.

pp. 147–48)<sup>13</sup>? More evidence will be required before we can accept this conclusion.

In any case, Dr. Gordin has produced a tool that will be indispensable both for the study of scribal hands from Boğazköy and as a model for investigating archival and literary activity at other sites.<sup>14</sup>

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**13** On “non-scholar” scribes see pp. 229–37.

**14** Earlier substantive reviews of this work include G. Torri, *WZKM* 107 (2017), 375–78, and R. Francia, *ZA* 107 (2017), 311–15.