Introduction

§1. *Hittite* is an Indo-European language; it is related to such languages as (Ancient) Greek, Latin, and Vedic, and also to the Germanic, Slavic, and Celtic languages. Of the entire Indo-European family of languages, Hittite is the oldest attested to date. Within the Indo-European language family, Hittite is only one of the subgroup of *Anatolian languages*, so called after Anatolia, the classical name of the land nowadays known as Turkey. The other members are Palaic, Cuneiform Luwian, Hieroglyphic Luwian, Lydian, Lycian, Carian, Pisidic, and Sidetic (see map, p. xv). Of these, Hittite is by far the best attested, with tens of thousands of texts containing many different genres. The text corpora of the other Anatolian languages are mostly relatively small and fairly restricted in their contents. As a result, our knowledge of these languages is often very limited.

The Anatolian languages span roughly the last two millennia BC and have come down to us in different writing systems, as is shown in the chart below.

	2nd millennium BC				1st millennium BC				
Languages	Hitt.	Palaic	Cun. Luwian	Hier. Luwian	Lydian	Lycian	Carian	Pisidic	Sidetic
Scripts									
Cuneiform	✗	✗	✗						
Hieroglyphic				✗					
Alphabetic					✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

Hieroglyphic Luwian is the only one of the above languages attested in both millennia: Its oldest attestations date from about 1400 BC, and they continue until approximately 700 BC. None of the Anatolian languages seem to have survived the Hellenization of Anatolia. Although in rural areas Anatolian languages may have continued to be spoken into the first few centuries AD, no written records have been preserved of them.

§2. Indo-European speakers must have entered Anatolia some time in the third millennium BC and spread over the entire peninsula (see map, p. xv). Hittites and Luwians settled on the Anatolian plateau in the center, and in the mid seventeenth century the Hittites established their capital Ḫattuša (Turkish *Boğazköy*, nowadays *Boğazkale*) some 150 km east of Ankara. Between

1650 and 1200 BC the Hittites were one of the major powers of the Ancient Near East, alongside the Assyrians, Babylonians, Hurrians, and Egyptians. They also established contacts with the Mycenaean Greeks to the west.

Within Anatolia, Hittites and Luwians partly expelled, partly assimilated with the local inhabitants of the time, the Hattians. These Hattians spoke a non-Indo-European language, of which specimens have been preserved in the Hittite texts, introduced by the term *Ḫattili* "in Hattian." The Hittites named their own language after the city of *Neša* (also known as *Kaneš*, modern *Kültepe*), taken in the eighteenth century BC by the father of Anitta, the man who can be considered the founder of the Hittite royal dynasty. Hittite passages are thus sometimes referred to as *Nešili* "in the language of Neša, in Nesite." Early Hittite scholarship tried to introduce the term "Nesite," but the earlier association with the Biblical Hittites proved too strong, and "Nesite" never caught on. On the other hand, the Hittites did call themselves "men of Ḫatti," borrowing the name of the indigenous Hattians, so our designation is not a complete misnomer.

Writing came relatively late to the Hittites. Anatolians, among whom were Hittite and Luwian speakers, must have been very familiar with the Old Assyrian cuneiform of the merchants from Assur during the first two centuries of the second millennium BC; however, they never took the step of adopting their writing system for internal purposes. It was not until military campaigns brought Ḫattušili I to Syria around 1650 BC that he started employing local Syrian scribes for occasional tasks and missions. Over the following century the volume of writing in the originally Syrian cuneiform was low, but enough to evolve into what we call the typical Hittite cuneiform by about the middle of the sixteenth century. Until 1500 BC, and for some time thereafter, the writing was almost exclusively Akkadian, the language that had come along with the Syrian cuneiform. Hittite text sources began to flow early in the fifteenth century, and by 1400 BC Akkadian was no longer used for internal purposes. The Hittite text tradition came to an end with the fall of the Hittite empire around 1180 BC. No Hittite texts dating after that time have been found.

§3.   Although Hittite political history can be described as one continuum from Anitta until the breaking-up of the empire, several chronological stages can be discerned in the time in which the Hittite language has been attested. Most compositions that tell of the early period of Anitta, or of Ḫattušili I and his successors until Telipinu (*c.* 1500 BC), are attested in late thirteenth-century copies or in older manuscripts. Those texts are difficult to date exactly, but were probably written down in the course of the fifteenth century. Both these older texts and the late copies contain all kinds of linguistic elements that allow us to label this entire period up to around 1400 as Old Hittite. After a brief period

of transition, "classical" New Hittite starts with Muršili II in the second half of the fourteenth century and continues until the end, with a few developments of its own.

During these stages the language evolved in phonology, morphology, and syntax, but the cuneiform script evolved as well. The older manuscripts from the fifteenth century just mentioned can be identified by looking at certain sign shapes, and we are thus able to determine whether a given tablet was written down in the Old or New Hittite period. This gives us a fairly clear impression of how the language developed over the centuries. Moreover, due to the continuous copying of older texts by Hittite scribes, we can also observe how later, thirteenth-century scribes on the one hand retained older grammatical characteristics of originally Old Hittite compositions, while on the other hand modernizing them. When in the course of this book the terms "Old Hittite" or (more generally) "older language" are used, they refer to the period of Hittite attestation until around 1350 BC.

§4. The main script carrier was the clay tablet, but the texts also mention tablets of gold, silver, bronze, and iron. One bronze tablet has been preserved: a treaty between the Hittite Great King Tutḫaliya IV (*c.* 1240–1220/1210 BC) and his vassal Kuruntiya of Tarḫuntašša in southern Anatolia. We also know that, for instance, one of the copies of the famous peace treaty of the year 1259 between the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II and his Hittite counterpart, Ḫattušili III, was made of silver. Such metal tablets seem to have been made for special occasions only. Besides these, there is also mention of wooden tablets, that is, wooden tablets covered with wax on which signs could be written. One such wooden tablet has been recovered from the fourteenth-century BC shipwreck near Ulu Burun, off the south-western coast of Anatolia, although no wax remained on it. It is a matter of some debate whether these tablets were used for cuneiform or hieroglyphic script. The Hittite chancellery, at any rate, seems to have distinguished between simple "scribes" and "wood-scribes."

By far the majority of Hittite texts have been found at the former capital Ḫattuša (modern Boğazköy/Boğazkale). The first real tablet collection to have come to light outside the capital was the small archive of over one hundred tablets, mainly letters, from the site of Maşat Höyük (ancient Tapikka) in the early 1970s. More recently a larger collection has been recovered in Ortaköy, as well as other smaller ones at Kuşaklı (Šarešša) and Kayalıpınar (Šamuḫa?; see map, p. xv). Besides these, there have been incidental finds of Hittite texts in Alaca Höyük, Tel Açana (Alalaḫ), Dur-Kurigalzu, Meskene (Emar), Tarsus, and Ras Shamra (Ugarit). Even the famous Egyptian archive at Tel-el-Amarna (Akhet-aten) contained two letters in Hittite. Found in the late nineteenth century AD, they were the earliest known Hittite tablets.

§5.   The total corpus of cuneiform clay tablets and fragments now numbers around 30,000. The following table lists all genres constituting the corpus (the CTH-numbers refer to Emanuel Laroche's standard work, *Catalogue des textes hittites* [Paris 1971], a classification of all texts into genres. This is still maintained online: see www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/).

A. *Texts with duplicates*	**B**. *'unica'*
historiography, treaties, edicts (CTH 1–147, 211–216)	letters (CTH 151–210)
	land deeds (CTH 221–225)
	administrative texts:
	– palace and temple administration (CTH 231–250)
	– cult inventories (CTH 501–530)
	– tablet inventories (CTH 276–282)
	– labels (CTH 283)
instructions and loyalty oaths (CTH 251–275)	
laws (CTH 291–292)	court depositions (CTH 293–297)
oracle theory (CTH 531–560)	oracle practice (CTH 561–582)
hymns and prayers (CTH 371–389)	vows (CTH 583–590)
festival scenarios (CTH 591–721)	
ritual scenarios (CTH 390–500)	
mythology (Anatolian and non-Anatolian) (CTH 321–370)	
Hattic, Palaic, Luwian, Hurrian compositions (CTH 725–791)	
Sumerian and Akkadian compositions (CTH 310–316, 792–819)	
hippological texts (CTH 284–287)	
lexical lists (CTH 299–309)	

The above table shows a basic distinction between long-term (A) and short-term (B) records. Most of the long-term records were stored, sometimes for several centuries, in the tablet collections, because of their general or potential usefulness. As such, they were often updated, and the royal chancellery often made sure to have more than just one copy in one place. One can easily imagine how the Law collection was regularly consulted, and how the series containing the Royal Funerary Ritual was pulled from the shelf whenever a king or queen had died and the ritual needed to be performed. For similar reasons, treaties and edicts, instructions and loyalty oaths addressing various professional groups in Hittite society, ritual and cultic festival scenarios, hymns, prayers, and

the Anatolian myths (which were probably acted out as part of certain rituals) were kept and copied for future use and consultation. Apart from their primary function as legal instruments, the treaties and edicts were also an important historical source for the Hittites themselves, as well as an efficient point of departure whenever new such documents had to be drawn up. It is perhaps for this reason, too, that historiography was stored and kept. This is the most elusive of genres under A, in terms of its *Sitz im Leben*, goal, and audience. It has also sometimes been praised for its lack of all-too-obvious propaganda in comparison with, for instance, Mesopotamian historiography, as well as for its – at times – relatively sophisticated narrative style. There is room for reflection, and for the achievements of people other than the king. Although Hittite historiography can be seen as accounting to the gods, for whom kings administered the land, the texts sometimes contain hints at a worldly public as well. How their dissemination took place, however, remains largely in the realm of speculation.

It is likewise difficult to assign a function to the more "literary" genres of the foreign – Akkadian, Hurrian, and Sumerian – compositions, to the so-called lexical lists or vocabularies, and also to some of the rituals. It has been convincingly shown that several rituals as recorded bear little relation to reality in the sense that they were useless as scenarios for real-life proceedings. These texts may well have been deliberately collected out of some "academic" interest, and as such they come closest to our modern notion of a library. The same may be true of the Hittite versions of foreign myths like the Gilgameš Epic. Based on parallels with Mesopotamia, these texts are often assigned a role in the scribal curriculum, but evidence for this is lacking. The possibility that these texts were (also?) used for entertainment purposes at the royal court cannot be excluded.

Most of the genres under B can be characterized as administrative and of only short-term importance. It is no coincidence that, with a single well-defined exception, all texts belonging to this group date to the last period of the Hittite empire. They have survived only by virtue of the fact that they had not yet been recycled when the ruling class decided to give up the capital Ḫattuša and move elsewhere. As in every administration, there was an ongoing appraisal of records deciding which could be discarded and which should be stored for the time being. Incoming correspondence was kept only as long as it was necessary and relevant for the administration. Outgoing correspondence was likewise sometimes filed for future consultation, and some letters were copied and bundled into dossiers. Similarly, court depositions, oracle reports, and vows are almost exclusively late thirteenth-century documents, whose destruction was pre-empted by the decision to abandon the capital.

The palace and temple administration under B mostly deals with the Hittite system of taxes and the redistribution of goods. The real exception are the charters or land deeds. These form a special group in many respects: shape, language, date, and storage. They record the bestowing of extensive land and properties by

the king to members of the royal dynasty. The tablets are thick, pillow-shaped, with a royal seal in the middle; in all probability clay bullae were attached to them by means of strings, embedded in the clay core of the tablet and with the seals of the witnesses impressed on them. The language is Akkadian, written according to a strict formula, and Hittite technical terms are regularly inserted into the text. They were not kept with the other records of Groups A or B, but stored separately along with other documents or objects that were or had been sealed with clay bullae. Finally, there is the chronological anomaly: Unlike all other texts in Group B, these original land deeds were stored and kept for hundreds of years. The oldest ones date to the reign of Telipinu of the late sixteenth century, but were found as an integral part of the tablet collections of the late thirteenth-century residence that was given up by the Hittite ruling class.

§6.   Except for specific text genres, such as letters, that are usually fairly small (*c.* 5×10 cm) and the land deeds just mentioned (§5), Hittite tablets mostly measured *c.* 20×30 cm. Needless to say, most of the time they have come down to us in a fragmentary state. It is the job of Hittitologists to restore the tablets to as complete a form as possible from the tens of thousands of fragments preserved. A physical linking of two or more fragments is called a *join.*

Although there are tablets written without any subdivision, or inscribed on only one side, most of them show a layout with two columns on the obverse (abbr. obv., Turkish *önyüz*, abbr. *öy.*, German *Vorderseite*, abbr. *Vs.*, French, Italian *recto*, abbr. *ro.*) and two on the reverse side (abbr. rev., Turkish *arkayüz*, abbr. *ay.*, German *Rückseite*, abbr. *Rs.*, French, Italian *verso*, abbr. *vo.*). Certain tablets, like festival descriptions or administrative texts, may have three columns per side. The columns are usually indicated in our modern editions by Roman numerals, either capital or lower case (as done here: obv. i, ii and rev. iii, iv; see Figure 1).

The direction of the script is always from left to right, and an average tablet contains some 70 lines per column. When changing from the obverse to the reverse on a normal two-column tablet, the scribe would turn the tablet along its shorter *horizontal* axis (so, *not* as we turn the pages of a book, along the longer vertical axis) and would start writing the third column on the right side of the reverse. The bottom side of the obverse thus becomes the upper side of the reverse. As a consequence, the third column on the reverse (rev. iii) corresponds to (i.e., is opposite to) the second column (obv. ii) on the obverse but upside down! The obv. i corresponds with rev. iv in the same way. The lower and upper edges normally remain uninscribed. At the end of the obverse columns a horizontal line (German *Randleiste*) was drawn over the full width of the tablet to mark the lower end, and similar lines were drawn on the upper and lower sides of the reverse (see Figures 1 and 2). Usually there was no such line at the top of the obverse, and neither was there at the sides.

Columns were usually separated by two vertical lines, the so-called *inter-columnium*. Words were often separated by small spaces, just as in our modern script; Old Hittite tablets often show a denser script with fewer word spaces. Words were never broken off at the end of a line. If a word proved too long, a scribe could write the remainder of the word vertically in the intercolumnium (see, for instance, the handcopy of KBo 3.4 i 8 in Lesson 2.8.5) or, if writing in a right-hand column (either obv. ii or rev. iii), on the edge of the tablet. If, however, there was still space left at the end of a line, scribes often shifted the last sign of the last word towards the end, thus filling out (justifying right) the text (for an example, see the placement of UR.SAG in the handcopy of KBo 3.4 i 1–2 in Lesson 1.8.4). The left and right edges were normally not used, but if some text was still left when all four columns were already fully inscribed, and the scribe did not want to start a whole new tablet, the remainder of the composition could be written on the edges. If so, the scribe would start on the left edge, writing from the bottom to the top, as seen from the obverse.

The average tablet is flat on the obverse and curved on the reverse. There are, therefore, several indications to determine the obverse and reverse of a fragment, if the contents do not allow such a decision: the presence or absence of the *Randleiste* on top, the curving of a tablet, and the direction of the script on an edge. But if no edge at all has been preserved and the fragment is too small to show any curvature, it is often difficult to identify the obverse or reverse side of a tablet. "Folded out," a tablet looks like this:
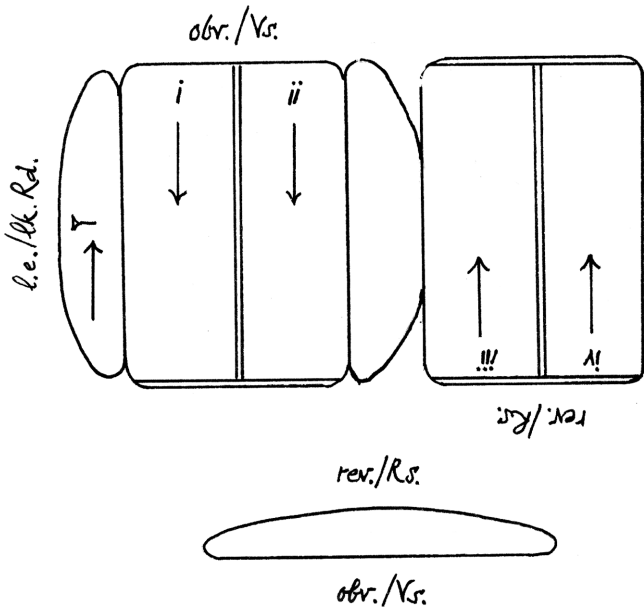

Figure 1 "Folded-out" tablet and directions of the script. Illustration by the author.

Within a column a scribe divided his text into paragraphs using horizontal lines. A major break – sometimes the beginning of a new composition on a tablet – could be indicated by a double horizontal line. Further punctuation, that is, devices like commas, colons, semicolons, periods, or question marks, did not exist. Neither did the cuneiform script distinguish between capital and small type or between roman and italic. Yet there were certain ways to mark parts of a text for which we use punctuation, capitalization, or different fonts. For instance, proper names, whether personal, geographical, or otherwise, were preceded by specific cuneiform signs indicating that the following word belonged to the category of personal names etc. Such signs are called *determinatives* and can be said to replace our capitalization (see below §9). Similarly, foreign words which we would often italicize were, in the case of Luwian (and rarely Hurrian) words, often preceded by a single (‹) or double wedge (‹) called *Glossenkeil*(*e*) (for an example, see Lesson 10.7.2 KBo 3.4 iii 73). The use of our quotation marks (“ ”) to mark direct speech was taken over by a grammatical element at the beginning of each clause, which was part of the direct speech. Likewise, the beginning and therefore also the end of clauses is in most cases easily recognizable in Hittite because of specific grammatical elements marking clause beginnings. However, the absence of question marks is problematic. Of course, questions introduced by interrogatives (e.g., *kuwat* “why?”) are easily recognized, but those without (“Did you do your homework?”) are not, since Hittite word order usually does not change.

In case of an error, a scribe could erase the faulty part with the back(?) of his stylus or his fingertip. He would then either write over the erased part or continue after it. Such erasures (Latin *rasura*, German *Rasur*) are usually marked in modern handcopies by dotted lines around the erased area. If a passage was corrupt in any way or illegible to a scribe copying a new text, he could indicate this by putting the relevant part between crossed wedges (⊁<).

The largest tablet collections are housed in the museums of Ankara and Istanbul in Turkey. What Hittitologists work with are hand-drawn copies made from the originals. An example of such a handcopy, showing the inversion of the script from obverse to reverse and how the edge might be used, is given in Figure 2. The actual size of the fragment is smaller; most copies are enlarged. The average height of a cuneiform line is about 3 to 4 mm.
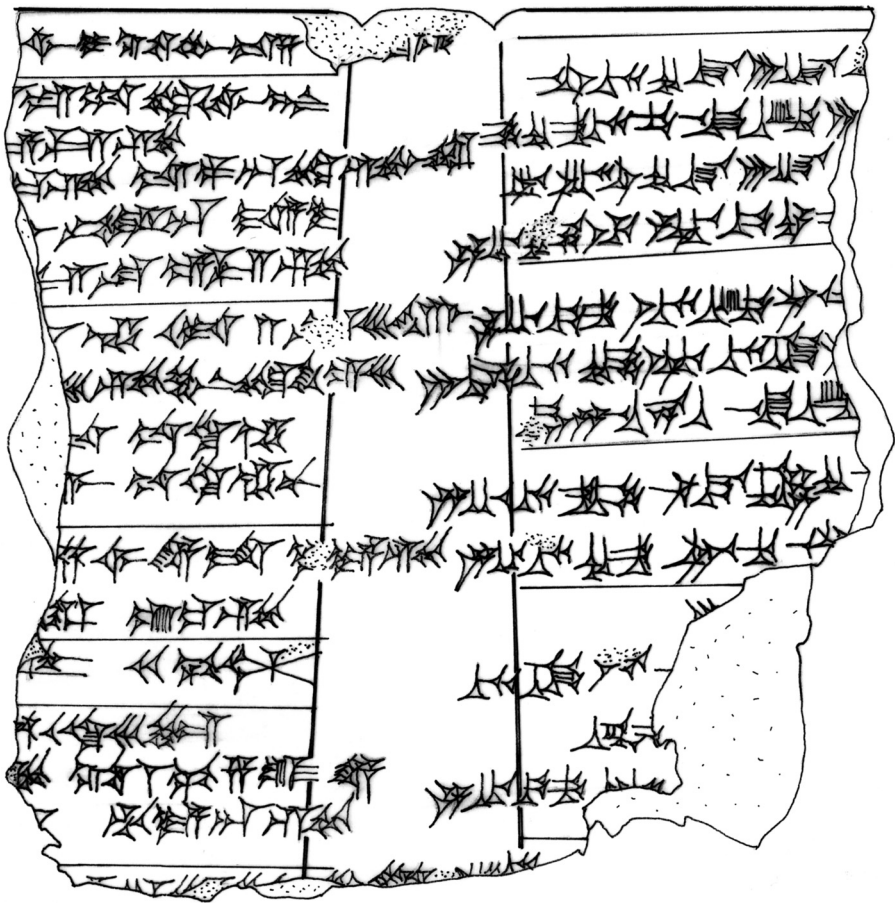
Figure 2 Handcopy of 842/z with, from left to right, the obv., edge, and rev.
(upside down).

§7.   The cuneiform script uses the following basic elements: the vertical (⌐),
the horizontal (⊨), and the diagonal wedge (⊼, with the head either up or
down), and the *Winkelhaken* (⊰). The heads of the horizontal and diagonal
wedges always point to the left. The typical triangular wedge-like form (Latin
cuneus "wedge") of the head derives from the "pen" or stylus, which had a
triangularly cut end. By pressing this end in the soft clay, the scribe left a trian-
gular impression. With light coming in from the left, a shadow appears in the
impression, and the sign form characteristic of cuneiform script is the result. By
making combinations of the basic elements, a practically endless range of signs
can be made. Compare the following series and their readings:

PÍ	GU$_4$	GA	DUG	ŠA	TA	UL

The cuneiform writing system, as used by the Hittites, was a syllabic script: Each sign represents a syllable, that is, a vowel (A, E, I, U), a vowel + consonant (type VC, e.g., AP, ID, UK), consonant + vowel (type CV, e.g., PA, DI, KU), or consonant + vowel + consonant (type CVC, e.g., TAR, KAT, MIŠ). Taking into account the fact that there is no consistent distinction between the vowels *e* and *i* and that there is no vowel *o*, signs of the type VC and CV can be put into series, as illustrated in the table below.

	CV			VC			
	a	*e/i*	*u*	*a*	*e/i*	*u*	
t	TA	TE TI	TU	AT/D	ET/D	UT/D	*t*
d	DA	DE	DU				*d*
p	PA	PE	P/BU	AP/B	EP/B	UP/B	*p*
b	BA						*b*
k	KA	KE	KU	AK/G	EK/G	UK/G	*k*
g	GA	GE	GU				*g*
m	MA	ME MI	MU	AM	EM	UM	*m*
n	NA	NE NI	NU	AN	EN IN	UN	*n*
l	LA	LE	LU	AL	EL IL	UL	*l*
r	RA	RE	RU	AR	ER	UR	*r*
š	ŠA	ŠE ŠI	ŠU	AŠ	EŠ IŠ	UŠ	*š*
z	ZA	ZE ZI	ZU	AZ	EZ	UZ	*z*
ḫ	ḪA	ḪE ḪI	ḪU	AḪ	EḪ	UḪ	*ḫ*
y	YA						
w	WA	WI					

Whenever in the inventory in this table a sign with the vowel *e* appears alone (e.g., DE), it can also be read with *i* (DE/I). When both values are listed (e.g., TE and TI), two separate signs exist distinguishing *e* and *i*. For signs of the type CV there is an almost complete distinction between voiceless (TA, PA, KA) and voiced (DA, BA, GA) consonants. Signs of the type VC, however, make no distinction between the two. Signs of the type CVC have no apparent system in them, but their use increases over the centuries.

With this sign inventory, practically anything can be written. For instance, the Hittite word for "lord" (as subject of a sentence) was *išḫaš*. If we want to write this, we have to split the word up into syllabic signs, which we separate by hyphens: *iš-ḫa-aš*. More problematic are words which have clusters of consonants in them as, for instance, *walḫta* "he struck." In such a case we have to resort to "graphic" vowels, that is, vowels which were only written, but not pronounced. We find a