

Theo van den Hout

Besides his work as chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC), on the Chicago Hittite Dictionary, and his classes, **Theo van den Hout** submitted several manuscripts for articles. Two of these were in connection with conferences he attended: one on administration in the Hittite Empire held in Pavia, Italy (see last year's report), the other in Leiden in December of 2009 on palaeography and the origins of the Hittite cuneiform script. A shorter German version of the latter was delivered late in January 2010 in Berlin, while a somewhat more popularized version will appear in the catalog for the upcoming special exhibit Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and Beyond here at the Oriental Institute. It has long been unclear from whom the Hittites borrowed their cuneiform script. It looks Babylonian but cannot have been adopted straight from there, both from the point of view of specific sign shapes and for historical reasons. The much closer north Syrian area and especially the town of Alalakh have been mentioned as a possible source, but the script of the latter settlement, although quite similar, also seems to show some deviations that always stood in the way of an easy identification. Now, a careful palaeographic analysis of the Alalakh cuneiform variant and some traits of the oldest Hittite texts that had been largely ignored in the past make Alalakh and the north Syrian area a very likely candidate as the direct source of the Hittite script. Historically, it fits well since the Old Hittite kings Hattusili I and his grandson Mursili I campaigned actively in that part of the ancient Near East in the second half of the seventeenth century BC.

Other manuscripts submitted by Theo in the past year included a contribution to a festschrift for a colleague (on so-called wood scribes), one on Hittite historiography, and one for a volume on Anatolia for Oxford University Press. Theo also submitted to Cambridge University Press the final manuscript of his textbook *The Elements of Hittite*, due out this year. Apart from the conferences already mentioned in Leiden and Berlin in the winter, Theo was one of the speakers at the Oriental Institute mini-series on Creation Stories in October.

Since the previous *Annual Report*, the following publications have appeared in print: "A Century of Hittite Text Dating and the Origins of the Hittite Cuneiform Script," *Incontri Linguistici* 32 (2009): 11–35; "Reflections on the Origins and Development of the Hittite Tablet Collections in Hattuša and Their Consequences for the Rise of Hittite Literacy," in *Central-north Anatolia in the Hittite Period: New Perspectives in Light of Recent Research*, edited by F. Pecchioli Daddi, G. Torri, and C. Corti, pp. 71–96 (Acts of the International Conference Held at the University of Florence, February 7–9, 2007; Studi Asiana 5; Rome: Herder, 2009); "Randnotizen zu einigen Briefen aus Maşat Höyük," in *Festschrift für Gernot Wilhelm anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstages am 28. Januar 2010*, edited by Jeanette Fincke, pp. 394–402 (Dresden: Islet,

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2009); “A Note on Hittite Envelopes and HKM 86” (with Cem Karasu), in *Pax Hethitica: Studies on the Hittites and Their Neighbours in Honour of Itamar Singer*, edited by Yoram Cohen, Amir Gilan, and Jared L. Miller, pp. 372–77 (Studien zu den Boğazköy Texten 51; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 372–77. Two long entries came out in the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* volume 12: “Schaf. B. Bei den Hethitern,” pp. 121–26, and “Schreiber. D. Bei den Hethitern,” pp. 273–80. Finally, Theo wrote a brief article for children on the Luwian Hieroglyphic script entitled “Let’s Talk Luwian,” in *Dig*, February 2010, p. 22.
