

Hittite Studies

H. G. Güterbock

Not all controversies are quickly settled, and not all proposed advances in our

understanding of the ancient Near East prove to be useful. Apart from his ongoing work on the *Chicago Hittite Dictionary*, Professor Hans

Güterbock provides two examples of this from his own work during 1981–82.

An invitation to participate in a symposium on East-West contacts in antiquity organized by the Archaeological Institute of America prompted him to look at the so-called Ahhiyawa problem again. This is the question of whether or not the term “land of Ahhiyawa” occurring in some Hittite texts refers to Mycenaean Greeks or Akhaeans. The problem has been debated ever since 1924, when Emil Forrer first claimed to have found “Homeric Greeks” in the Boghazköy texts. Most influential among his critics was Ferdinand Sommer who, in a monumental work of 1932, carefully reinterpreted all the sources with the result that none of Forrer’s arguments was conclusive, and that therefore the whole theory had to be rejected. While much was written since then, both *pro* and *contra*, Sommer’s philological interpretations have only rarely been challenged. A fresh look at the sources led Professor Güterbock to different interpretations of some passages; the most important

point is that a Hittite king of the early thirteenth century B.C. indeed called the king of Ahhiyawa “Great King, my equal,” contrary to Sommer’s interpretation of the same source. The paper, read before the AIA at its meeting of December, 1981, will be published in the *American Journal of Archaeology*.

Participation in a different kind of controversy was thrust upon Professor Güterbock from the outside. The Hittite rock sanctuary of Yazilikaya near the capital, Boghazköy-Hattusa, was the object of intensive work by the German expedition of which he was a member for many years. This work culminated in a monumental publication of 1975 (K. Bittel *et al.*, *Das hethitische Felsheiligtum Yazilikaya*) in which he wrote the chapter on the hieroglyphic label inscriptions accompanying the individual reliefs of gods and goddesses. In the spring of 1981 there appeared a monograph, published in an official French series, in which the author claims that she read about fifty names instead of the twenty-two which her predecessors had identified (Emilia Masson, *Le panthéon*

de Yazilikaya: nouvelles lectures. Recherche sur les grandes civilisations, Synthèse no. 3. Institut Français d'études anatoliennes. Editions ADPF, Paris, 1981). The claim of having added 28 new or improved readings to those known before had to be carefully investigated. For this purpose Güterbock used the occasion of the Turkish

History Congress, held in Ankara in September 1981, to revisit the site and to compare all the proposed readings with the originals. The results of his investigation are being published in the same French series. Two or three of the new readings stand the test, but all others turned out to be unusable.