

# THE HITTITE DICTIONARY PROJECT

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The Hittite language, written in the cuneiform script on clay tablets, was deciphered as recently as 1915, over a half century after the Egyptian hieroglyphs and the Assyro-Babylonian cuneiform script were solved. Since in 1915 the cuneiform script could be read, it was not the script of the Hittite tablets which needed to be solved, but the language itself. The credit for that achievement belongs to the Czech Assyriologist Bedřich Hrozný, who demonstrated that the grammatical structure of the Hittite language was fundamentally the same as that of the older forms of the Indo-European languages such as Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit.

Soon after Hrozný's pioneer publication a number of German Assyriologists and Indo-Europeanists advanced the understanding of the language by applying a strict methodology: no Hittite word would be interpreted on the basis of alleged cognates in other Indo-European languages alone. The meanings of words would first be established from a study of their uses in various contexts. For this purpose each scholar prepared his own card file of Hittite words. Soon the more important texts were published in editions, which consisted of transliteration of the Hittite text in the Roman alphabet, connected translation of the text, line by line grammatical and philological commentary, and a complete glossary of Hittite words appearing in the text under study. The glossaries in these editions served scholars and students alike. It was felt then that the task of writing a Hittite dictionary would have to wait until more texts were published and analyzed.

In the United States, Edgar H. Sturtevant, Professor of Linguistics at Yale University, was the first to study and contribute to the understanding of Hittite. In 1931 he published the first *Hittite Glossary*, a modest booklet which listed all the words which until then had been discussed in scholarly literature and whose meanings had been determined more or less satisfactorily. Since Sturtevant cited after the translation the book or article in which the word was studied, his Glossary was an index to lexicographical studies. Five years later a new edition was necessary, and this *Hittite Glossary* of 1936 (together with a supplement of 1939) remained the indispensable tool for a generation of students. It was even translated into Turkish! Although Sturtevant continued to collect new references—as far as possible

despite the war—he never published a new edition after 1939.

Right after the end of the Second World War Johannes Friedrich, one of the first group of German Hittitologists of the 1920's and 30's, began compiling a glossary in German which appeared in installments between 1952 and 1954. Despite its title, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch* ("Hittite Dictionary"), chosen because the book was to form part of a series of "dictionaries" published by the Carl Winter Universitätsverlag in Heidelberg, Friedrich's subtitle (in English: "a concise critical collection of meanings of Hittite words") clearly indicated that it was not intended as a dictionary in the full sense of the word, but served as a successor to Sturtevant's glossary, using a slightly expanded format. Friedrich too added supplements to his *Wörterbuch* in 1957, 1961, and 1966, but by now his book is out of print.

A completely new edition of Friedrich's work is now being prepared by Annelies Kammenhuber of Munich, the first installment of which appeared in 1975. In contrast to Friedrich's this work includes words of unknown meaning and gives fuller references to original sources. Hence, it is a real dictionary.

Why, then, have a Hittite Dictionary Project at the Oriental Institute? The best answer is: we need a real Hittite dictionary in English. Sturtevant's *Glossary* is by now completely antiquated. A similar project to produce a Hittite dictionary initiated by the late Albrecht Goetze of Yale University unfortunately was never carried out. Experience has shown that the "language barrier" is very real. Misunderstandings of German renderings of Hittite words in the literature even crept into the first edition of Sturtevant's *Glossary*. The difficulty of understanding what exactly was meant by Friedrich has frustrated students all the time. The first installment of Kammenhuber's work is written in a style which is very difficult to understand. And then in a discipline so young and dynamic as Hittitology there are always differing views on the translation of important words. Not only the English-speaking world of scholarship can profit from our "Chicago approach."

The dictionary which we plan will include all known Hittite words as well as those Sumerian and Babylonian words which in Hittite texts serve as "logograms," i.e., written symbols intended to evoke native Hittite equivalents. Even words for which we are presently unable to propose a translation will be included and their locations in texts indicated. The dictionary will be based upon a file collection which will cover the entire corpus of published texts. The dictionary articles will not list all occurrences of every word, but rather offer characteristic examples for various usages or nuances of meaning.

A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities now has put the project on a safe financial basis. The co-directors (or Principal Investigators) are Hans Güterbock and Harry Hoffner. The project employs a Research Associate (currently Howard Berman) and three Student Assistants (currently Richard Beal, Barbara Knowles, and George Moore). The first stage calls for the completion of the card file. It is estimated that this process has been carried through to 70% of completion already during the past ten years. The main files of the project now contain approximately 300,000 cards. In our application to the National Endowment for the Humanities we estimated ten years for the completion of the dictionary. The present grant covers the first three of these. It is hoped that the dictionary will appear in annual fascicles, the first to appear at the end of 1977.

The Chicago Hittite Dictionary will be much more modest in size than the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, and hence, we hope, will take much less time to complete. The corpus of Hittite texts is only a fraction of the size of the corpus of Akkadian texts, just as it covers only one-sixth of the latter's time span. And, while the CAD offers extensive examples of each meaning of an Akkadian word with contexts quoted in transliterated Akkadian and English translation, the CHD will offer a more restricted sampling of examples and not cited in both transliteration and English translation. For those familiar with both the CAD and Professor Wolfram von Soden's German counterpart, the CHD aims at a format intermediate between the two: slightly fuller than von Soden, somewhat more concise than the CAD. We expect, of course, that once we begin the actual drafting of articles for the dictionary certain principles of procedure will need adjustment. But the preceding remarks will convey the heart of our plan.