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Conference on Middle Hittite Documentation and Chronology

In June 2004 Italian and German scholars attended a seminar on the Hittite Middle Kingdom at the University of Trieste. The seminar was the conclusion to a first cycle of research into the problem of cataloguing, dating and editing Hittite texts. This research, directed by Professor O. Carruba and carried out in collaboration with the Universities of Pavia, Florence and Trieste was funded by the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research (funds 40%).

The objective of the Trieste meeting was to enable scholars to compare their different research experiences whether they had dealt with the documentation of texts or the historical and cultural problems relating to the Hittite Middle Kingdom.

Although it has been the subject of much research in the past, this period in Hittite history continues to be at the centre of scientific debate due to the fact that documents have recently come to light (re-opening a series of problems) as well as the fact that agreement has not yet been reached upon a number of topics, one of which being the correct reconstruction of the succession of sovereigns.

First of all it was decided to re-define the very definition of "Middle Kingdom" and, therefore, the subdivision of Hittite history into three periods. As can be seen from some of the articles collected here, the eventuality of a substantial continuity, on an administrative and political level, between the reigns of Tuthaliya I/II, Arnuwanda I, Tuthaliya III and the imperial age with Šuppiluliuma I has been suggested.

Certain aspects of political history have been dealt with, therefore, like the succession of the Hittite Middle Kingdom sovereigns and issues related to culture and religion. Other essays concern groups of Hittite documents like letters, grants of land, instructions etc. For each one of these text categories new elements have been shown resulting from discoveries made in the last few years. This has enabled a more complete and up-dated picture to be presented.

For economic reasons in the organisation of the seminar the number of participants has been limited to only a few scholars from Italian and German centres having close ties (regarding scientific and didactic collaboration and cooperation) with the University of Trieste. Unfortunately, we regret having had to exclude American and Turkish colleagues who would have been more than able to make a valid contribution to the seminar.

Stefano de Martino
Organisation of the seminar

Jörg Klinger
Editing of the volume

