THE DUCTUS OF THE ALALAḪ VII TEXTS AND THE ORIGIN OF THE HITTITE CUNEIFORM

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Introduction

Until 1952 it was widely held that the preserved Hittite text corpus was the product of about one century of scribal activity: the cuneiform, so it was thought, showed no obvious diachronic development, the scribal names mentioned in the texts seemed to be concentrated in the later 13th century, and the corpus at large was found in an archaeological stratum that had come to an end around 1200 BC. Then, in 1952, for the first time a fragment was found in a clear pre-13th century level. Known as the Zukraši-text, so-called after an army commander in the service of the king of Yamḫad and known from the Alalaḫ-Level VII records, it tells of events that fit well into the Syrian campaigns of the Hittite king Ḫattušili I of around 1650 BC.[1] It was therefore declared an "original" from the days of Ḫattušili "da geschichtliches Ereignis und Niederschrift nicht zu weit auseinander liegen dürften."[2] The general aspect of the fragment showed dense writing with few word spaces, a slightly right slant, especially in the heads of the vertical wedges, and narrow intercolumnia. Fragments with those same characteristics were then identified in the corpus of texts that were previously thought to have all been written down in the 13th century. As a consequence, the time depth of the Hittite corpus suddenly went from a single century, that is, the 13th century, to three or four. The Hittite corpus now covered a period from around 1650 to about 1200 BC! Apparently the Hittites had been writing for many more centuries and had also stored tablets for a much longer time than previously thought.

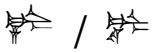
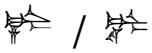
In spite of the characteristic traits in the aspect of the old fragments, that is, the density, the slant, and the narrow intercolumnia, it was still thought that the ductus of the script did not deviate in any essential way from that of the 13th century documents and that no significant development could be traced. This began to change in 1969. During the 1970's and early 1980's a detailed paleographic dating model was developed by which almost any fragment that contained a reasonable number of signs could be dated in absolute terms. That is, the date a particular fragment was inscribed could be determined in periods of about 50 years. Of course, the composition contained in the fragment could be much older. Compare, for instance, the model as given by Frank Starke in his book *Die keilschrift-luwischen Texte im Umschrift* (= StBoT 30):[3]

heth. Sprachstufen	Jahrhundertzählung	Duktustypen	
Altheth.	16. Jh.	Ia	OS
	E. 16. Jh.	Ib	OS

[1] Ed. de Martino 2003, 91-125.
[2] Otten/Souček 1969, 42.
[3] Starke 1985, 27.

Mittelheth.	A. 15. Jh.	IIa	MS
	E. 15. Jh.	IIb	MS
	A. 14. Jh.	IIc	MS
Jungheth.	E. 14. Jh.	IIIa	NS
	13. Jh.	IIIb	NS

This dating method uses a range of diagnostic sign shapes that show a distinct development over the centuries. Compare the following table with examples of some of the relevant signs:

Cuneiform sign	***Old Script***	***Middle Script***	***New Script***
ak			
az/uk			
da			
e			
ha			
ik			
it			
li			

This dating method was to be applied quite mechanically. Whereas the older sign shapes continued to be used, albeit with decreasing frequency, it is the latest form that determines the date a fragment was written. As Starke put it already in 1977[4]: "Ein einziges negatives Indiz reicht aus, um dem zu untersuchenden Text das Prädikat "Althethitisch" abzusprechen; die Summe der positiven Indizien (ohne Ausnahme!) erweist den betreffenden Text als original althethitisch." He repeated this in 1985: "Die Häufigkeit ihres Vorkommens spielt in diesem Zusammenhang keine Rolle, vielmehr kann, wenn die Zeichenform charakteristisch genug ist, ein einziger Beleg ausreichen, was vor allem für die Datierung kleinerer Fragmente von Bedeutung ist."[5] This principle has gone largely uncontested and OS was supposed to be this clean and pure phase free of any "later" intrusions. It means, that a fragment containing almost exclusively older sign shapes, but, for example, a single late LI or IK, immediately betrays itself as having been written much later than all other signs suggested at first. Although, as Starke says, this gives us the

[4] Starke 1977, ***
[5] Starke 1985, 21.

possibility to date even the smallest fragment, as long as it contains one of the characteristic late sign shapes, it also implies a basic uncertainty: only with fully preserved tablets in pristine condition can one ever achieve absolute certainty. But this, as we all know, is a very rare situation. Already when working with a well preserved text with only few parts missing or damaged and containing only older signs, we are faced with the inevitable question: how can we be certain that there was not in its lost parts a single late sign, completely overturning the older date that we now assign it on the basis of all the preserved older signs?

But there are two more problems with this approach. First of all, how realistic is this principle from a scribal point of view? Handwriting changes over the generations, but writing itself is a largely unconscious action. Unless we are talking about deliberate copying, be it calligraphy or plain forgery, this is not something we expect Hittite scribes to have particularly valued. The goal was to copy content, not sign shapes, and the very fact of a diachronic development as the basis of our dating method, presupposes that natural development.[6] So, is it really realistic to assume that a 13th century scribe, when copying an Old Script text, would meticulously copy all the older sign shapes, even down to things like lack of wordspace, and then, having gotten tired perhaps towards column iv, would commit a *lapsus calami* by inadvertently writing a shape that otherwise he would use on a daily basis when writing contemporary texts?

The second problem is, that we have not been consistent in applying this principle. In the introduction to his edition of all Old Script (OS) ritual texts, Erich Neu described two types of OS ductus, the so-called Typ I, the oldest one, and Typ II, that already foreshadowed the later Middle Script (MS). For each of the two he included a photo in the back of his book and handcopies were published in KBo 25. His example for the oldest variant, Typ I, was KBo 25.112, but the handcopy by Heinrich Otten shows a clear late IK (i 5). Collation of the original in Ankara confirms the correctness of the copy. The fragment is still listed in the Konkordanz as "ah." In 1990 Jörg Klinger and Erich Neu acknowledged the appearance of a late IK in KUB 36.127 rev. 16, without letting it overturn the overall characterization of the manuscript as MS .[7] Similarly, compare the following later shapes in texts that are listed as written in OS: AL in KBo 17.1 ii 19 and 36,[8] SAR ibid. ii 7, AZ in KBo 3.22, 61[9], URU in KBo 22.2 obv. 7 and 12, EN in KBo 22.1:24. The same forms are attested in MS manuscripts.[10]

In all these cases we are dealing with a single or just a few "later" forms among otherwise consistently "older" shapes. Yet these fragments are generally considered old. Personally, I too would be loath to date these texts down to the 13th century, just on account of a single or a few signs, but if we continue to accept these fragments as OS, we have to accept that

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[6] This not to claim that there may not have been occasional archaizing. This might well be the case with occurrences of the older variants of signs like ḪA, KÙ, and LI in certain manuscripts from the second half of the 13th century, when they are used in writing the royal names Ḫattušili (III), Tudḫaliya (IV), and Šuppiluliuma (II, Šuppiluliyama/KÙ.GA.PÚ), while the later shapes are attested elsewhere in the same text.

[7] Klinger/Neu 1990, 139, 155 n. 24.

[8] Thus already Heinhold-Krahmer et al. 1979, 99; see the handcopy and photo in the *Konkordanz*.

[9] Thus already Heinhold-Krahmer et al. 1979, 99.

[10] For AL, AZ/UK, SAR, TAR, URU see Heinhold-Krahmer et al. 1979, 100f.; late ḪA can be seen in IBoT 1.29 rev. 55, 57, see also the same late ḪA on seals of Šuppiluliuma I (RS 17.227, see Schaeffer 1956, 3 Fig. 2-3, Otten 1995, 24, 40 Abb. 37) and Muršili II (Bo 90/1135, see Otten 1995, 41 Abb. 39). Compare also the sign list in Alp 1991, 113-118.

these later forms apparently were already known but were somehow generally suppressed. How are we to explain this?

The Alalaḫ VII ductus from a Hittitologists's point of view

The answer, I believe, may be in the origin of the Hittite cuneiform. As I have laid out in more detail recently,[11] the possibility of a Syrian origin of the typically Hittite cuneiform variant had been considered a theoretical possibility already since 1922, but it did not become a realistic option until Wiseman published the Alalaḫ tablets in 1953. It was Hans-Gustav Güterbock who revived this hypothesis in 1954, pointing at the resemblance of the Alalaḫ and Ḫattusa *ductūs*. However, assuming that the cuneiform practiced at Alalaḫ was probably representative of a larger area, he did not insist that it should have been specifically that city.[12] This possibility of a Syrian origin was since then quoted a few times. Christel Rüster and Erich Neu in their *Hethitisches Zeichenlexikon* (1989) described the Hittite cuneiform as an "altbabylonische Kursive, wie sie im nordsyrischen Raum z.B. von frühen Texten aus Alalaḫ (= Tel Açana; Schicht VII) bekannt ist." Jörg Klinger likewise noted the similarities but also observed a clear gap between Hittite OS and the ductus of the Alalaḫ VII texts.[13] By this he probably referred to the appearance of many sign shapes that from a Hittite perspective we would call "late" or "later" forms. This led him to believe that the Hittite cuneiform went back to an Old Babylonian cursive that was older than the one used in northern Syria in the days of Ḫattušili I.[14] Hittite OS is supposed to be free of any "later" shapes as we saw. Most recently, Daniel Schwemer concluded that "Der genaue Zeitpunkt und die Umstände der Schrift-Adaption liegen nach wie vor im Dunkeln."[15]

The Alalaḫ ductus has never been the object of systematic paleographic study, it seems, neither by Assyriologists nor by Hittitologists. Therefore, in order to investigate the original claim by Güterbock, I decided to make a paleographic analysis of the Alalaḫ VII texts and the following remarks present a Hittitologist's view of its ductus. That is, I have looked at a selection of signs that are diagnostic for Hittite texts. For an Assyriologist they may be wholly uninteresting and their co-existence within a single corpus self-evident, but for the alleged relation between the *ductūs* of Alalaḫ VII and Old-Hittite Ḫattuša they are essential. To this end I have looked at the 278 handcopies of Alalaḫ VII texts, made available by Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Hans-Peter Schaudig in three recent issues of the journal *Ugarit-Forschungen* and in the dissertation by Frank Zeeb.[16] The signs selected are: AK, AL, AZ, EN, IK, KÙ, LI, QA, ŠAR, TAR, UK, UN, and URU. Besides these I kept an eye on signs like DA, E, ḪA, ḪAR, IT, NI, ŠA, and TA.

In order to explore the possibility of the Alalaḫ cuneiform as a forerunner of the Boğazköy script, I have not only compared the Alalaḫ VII signs with the for Hittitologists relevant selection of signs just mentioned, but also with two documents from the 17th century

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[11] van den Hout 2009a, 11-35.
[12] ***
[13] Klinger 1998, 371.
[14] Klinger 1998, 374.
[15] Schwemer 2005-2006, 220.
[16] Dietrich/Loretz 2004, Dietrich/Loretz 2007, Dietrich/Loretz 2008, and Zeeb 2001. All texts published by Dietrich/Loretz are quoted by the number given there; the text numbers as assigned in Zeeb 2001 are preceded by "Z."

Hittite kingdom written in Akkadian and in a non-yet-Hittite ductus. The first one of these is the letter written by a Labarna and addressed to Tunip-teššub, ruler of Tikunani, located in the northern Euphrates area.[17] The Labarna is generally accepted as being Ḫattušili I. Although the document is without exact provenance, it probably comes from the northern Euphrates area and its status as a true and legally authentic original makes it very important for the questions addressed here: it must be a document issued by Ḫattušili I during his reign. The other text is the so-called Uršu-Text, KBo 1.11. Although its absolute date cannot be verified at the moment, all Hittitologists seem to agree that its contents place the text in the period of the first two Hittite kings, Ḫattušili I and Muršili I. There seems to be fairly wide consensus, moreover, that the tablet itself is likely to be contemporaneous. Both texts form a *trait d'union* between Alalaḫ and Ḫattuša: the Alalaḫ corpus has nothing to do with the early Hittite kings, the Labarna-Letter was written by the Hittite king but written in Akkadian and in a Syrian ductus and found in the general north-Syrian area, the Uršu-Text is a Hittite product, written in Akkadian and in a Syrian ductus but found at Ḫattuša.

Finally, I also looked at the use of personal determinatives, certain ligatures, sound values, the inventory of Sumerograms, and on the use of what in Hittitology we call paragraph lines.

The Alalaḫ VII ductus

In general, there seems to be relatively little standardization of sign shapes in the Alalaḫ VII ductus. For some signs there even exists a bewildering variety of shapes: I counted 22 different varieties for the sign AK, 13 for LI, 10 for IK and KÙ, 9 for URU, and 8 for SAR. The signs ŠA and TA are attested with no verticals inscribed or with one, ŠA with three or two horizontal wedges, all these forms sometimes coexisting within a single text, and sometimes the same shape is to be read ŠA in one line, TA in another (cf. e.g. 20.02:6, 9). Likewise, NI comes with no, or with one or two inscribed verticals. The sign ŠE can be written with four or six Winkelhaken. It might be an interesting task for the future to see how internal textual diachrony maps unto the paleographical findings here. The overall very practical bookkeeping character of the collection at any rate points at a group of scribes for whom writing was first of all a means to an end, rather than a craft to be cultivated and there is no evidence for a wish to make very carefully executed engrossed copies.

Within the varieties just mentioned, what Hittitologists call "older" and "later" signs, indeed exist side by side within the same corpus, sometimes even within the same text (for the shapes see below). Although the variation between them within a single text is quite rare, it does make clear that the variant shapes could be used by and were known to the same scribe. Compare, for instance, for

AK 10.03:10, 23 vs. 8, 16

AZ/UK 10.03:17, 22 vs. 24

EN Z 7:12 vs. 3

IK 21.02:10 vs. 7; 22.01:13 vs. 27; 40.01:16 vs. 23, 27

QA 20.05:14? vs. 20; 22.06:25 vs. 8

[17] cf. Salvini 1994.

SAR 20.08:7 vs. 8; 23.03:22, 28 vs. 20, 25

TAR Z 35:51 vs. 55, 57

In general, the ratio between the "older" and "later" sign shapes in the corpus at large shows an unmistakable predilection for the "older" shapes. Compare the following table:

value	*"older"*	*"later"*	*total*	*"older" %*	*"later" %*
AL	36	16	52	69.2	30.8
AZ/UK	21	3	24	87.5	12.5
EN	10	30	40	25	75
IK	64	29	93	68.8	31.2
LI	110	7	117	94	6
QA	33	18	51	64.7	35.3
SAR	24	24	48	50	50
TAR	14	3	17	82.3	17.7
UN	40	10	50	80	20

The absolute numbers in the above table refer to texts in which the signs occur[18], not the total of attestations of each individual sign. As mentioned above, variations of distinct shapes of a single sign within the same tablet is relatively restricted in the corpus, and in most cases a text is internally consistent in the sign shapes it uses.

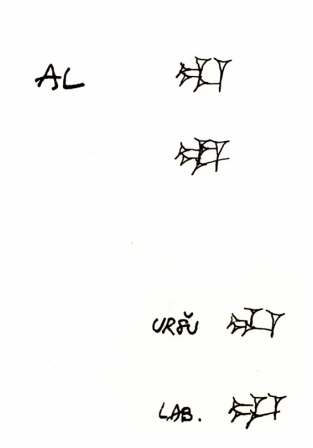
Remarks on individual signs[19]

AL: the two variants are the same ones we find in Hittite tablets ( ). Both Uršu-Text and Labarna Letter have the "older" shape () only.[20]

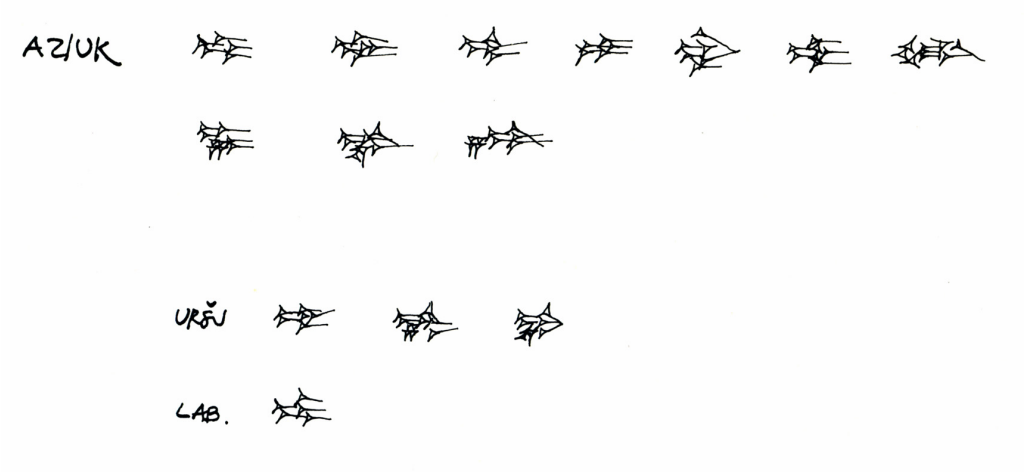
[18] The attestations can found in the footnotes below.

[19] In the following footnotes references will be given to the texts (not lines in the texts!) in which the variants occur. Plain numbers refer to the editions in Dietrich/Loretz 2004, 2006, 2007; "Z" to the texts in Zeeb 2001. If a text contains two or more variants its number is printed in **bold**. For the signs KÙ and URU only a selection of references is given.

[20] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants: (1) 11.01, 20.01, 20.07, 20.18, 21.04, 21.07, 22.04, 22.06, 22.11, 22.13, 23.01, 23.03, 30.05, 30.07, 31.01, 31.02, 31.05, 31.08, 31.09, 31.10, 31.14, 31.15, 32.01, 40.01, 42.01, 42.02, 43.04, 44.01, 44.05, Z 1, 3, 5, 24, 34, 46, 55; (2) 10.01, 10.03, 22.02, 22.09, 22.10, 30.04, 30.08, 30.10, 30.15, 31.03, 31.04, 31.13, 40.05, 40.09, 51.02, Z 17.



AZ/UK: the Uršu-Text likewise shows both variants ( vs. ), with and without subscript ZA and UD respectively, although the non-subscripted form () is attested only once.[21] The Labarna-Letter has the variant without subscript only.[22]



EN: is the only sign that shows a surprising deviation from the general Hittite tendency. The "later" shape () is clearly more frequent. The Uršu-Text also shows both variants, the "older" one appearing more often. The Labarna-Letter has no EN.[23]

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[21] cf. with subscript (AṢ not indicated) obv.! 5, 6, 15 (UK), 38, rev.! 11 (2x), 16, 26, without obv.! 20.
[22] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants: (1) 21.07, 30.06, 30.10, 30.11, 31.01, 31.06, 31.10, 60.02; (2) Z 2, 9, 11, 35, 48; (3) 20.13, 42.14, 51.01, Z 13; (4) **10.03**; (5) 20.12; (6) Z 17; (7) Z 28; (8) **10.03**, 20.09; (9) 21.03; (10) 22.05.
[23] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants: (1) 20.08, 22.04, 22.08, 22.11, 22.12, 22.13, 22.17, 30.04, 30.05, 31.09, 31.12, 31.13, 31.17, 32.01, 32.03, 40.01, 40.05, 42.01, 42.06, 42.12, 44.04, 60.01, Z **7**, 10, ***, 14, 21, 24, 28, 64, 67; (2) 30.15, 31.01, 40.08, 42.02, 42.03, 50.03, 50.04, 50.05, Z **7**, 9.

EN 

URŠU  

IK: the "older" variant from a Hittite point of view is the one with a single vertical (). In most of the "later" shapes the horizontals, except for the bottom one, have been supplanted by a vertical (). The Uršu-Text shows the "older" variant only. The Labarna-Letter has no IK.[24]

IK   

     

URŠU 

KÙ: in spite of its many varieties, it is clear that the "older" shape (), characterized by a range of either horizontals or slanted wedges on the left, is the most common one. The Uršu-Text and Labarna-Letter have the "older" variant only.[25]

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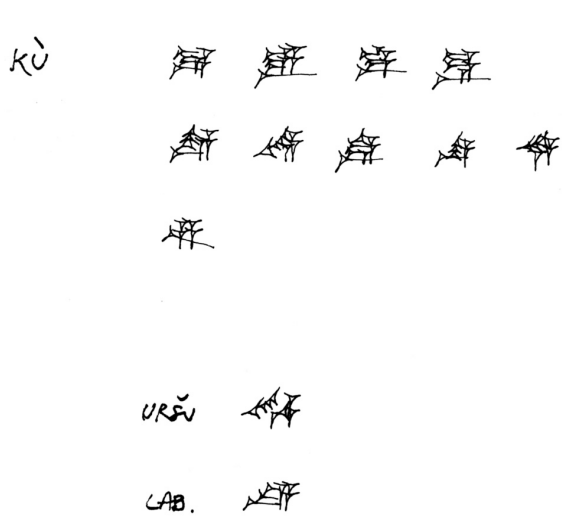
[24] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants: (1) 10.03, 20.01, 20.02, 20.03, 20.04, **20.07**, **20.08**, 20.09, 20.09A, 21.03, 22.02, 22.06, 22.13, 22.18, 31.08, 31.13, 40.13, 42.04, **42.12**, 42.14, 43.10, 44.01, 44.04, **44.05**, 51.04, 51.05, 60.01, Z 5, 6, 11, 15, 21, 46, 54, 58, 60, 69, 78; (2) 10.03, 21.01, 21.04, 22.06, 22.11, 23.03, 23.05, **30.05**, 30.06, 30.15, 31.10, **40.01**, 43.04, **44.05**, Z 4, 12, 17, 19, 34, 57; (3) **30.05**, **42.12**, Z 61; (4) **21.02**, **22.01**, 22.03, 22.04, Z 24; (5) **20.08**, 32.01; (6) **20.07**; (7) 31.12; (8) **21.02**; (9) 10.02, 20.11, **21.02**, **22.01**, 22.02A, 22.05, 22.08, 23.04, 30.12, 31.07, **40.01**, 40.04, 43.12, 51.01, 51.03, 51.10, Z 10, 34, 77, 93.

[25] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants (selection only): (1) 22.13, 32.01; (2) **20.02**; (3) **20.02**; (4) **20.02**, 23.03; (5) 50.01; (6) 20.05, 20.06; (7) **21.04**; (8) **21.04**; (9) 22.02, 50.02; (10) 10.02, 22.01, 22.10, 22.23, 22.24, 30.03, 30.14, 31.01, 32.03, 43.07, 43.08, 50.04, 51.07.

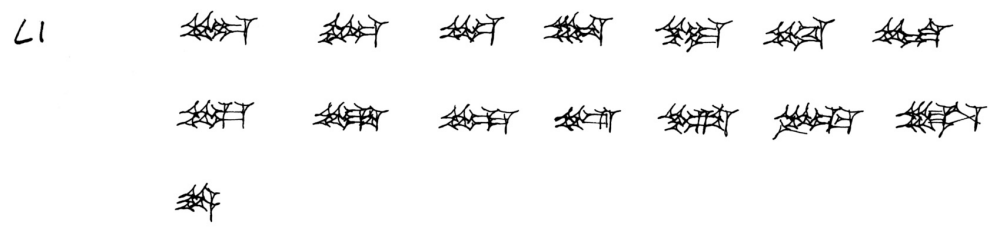


LI: for the "later" shape only those forms were counted that show two verticals, but the actual "later" Hittite shape, characteristic for the 13th century and consisting of four Winkelhaken on the left followed by a fifth and two verticals (𒀸𒋾), does not seem to be attested as such. In fact, the variants with two verticals mostly look like the "older" shape with just an extra vertical.[26] In the LI-variant in the Labarna-Letter the last two horizontals are written at a slight slant, a variant that is also known at Alalaḫ.[27] The variant most frequently seen in the Uršu-Text has the two verticals, just as in the Alalaḫ VII texts; interesting is one variant with five horizontals that has Alalaḫ VII parallels as well.[28]

[26] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants: (1) 10.02, 11.01, **20.01**, 20.02A, 20.03, 20.04, 20.05, 20.07, 20.08, 21.01, 21.02, 21.03, 21.04, 21.07, 22.01, 22.03, 22.04, 22.06, 22.08, 22.09(A), 22.13, 22.22, 22.24, 22.27, 22.28, 23.02, 23.03, 23.04, 23.05, 23.06A, **30.04**, 30.08, 30.12, 30.13, 30.15, 30.18, 31.01, 31.02, 31.03, 31.04, 31.07, 31.08, 31.09, 31.12, 31.13, 32.02, 32.03, 32.04, 40.01, 40.02, 40.05, 40.06, 40.13, 42.03, 42.04, 42.05, 42.07, 42.14, 43.06, 43.09, 43.12, 44.02, 44.03, 44.04, 44.05, 50.04, 50.08, 50.09, 51.02, 51.03, 51.09, 60.01, 60.02, **Z 2**, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 19, 20, 21, **23**, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 44, 45, 46, 54, 56, 57, 58, 62, 75, 77, 94; (2) **Z 2**; (3) 22.18; (4) 30.14, 43.08; (5) Z 4; (6) 40.04; (7) **Z 23**; (8) 10.03; (9) **20.01**; (10) 20.06, **30.04**(A); (11) Z 16; (12) 22.02, 22.05, 43.13; (13) 22.26; (14) 10.01; (15) Z 3?

[27] cf. Z 2.

[28] cf. Z 4:31.

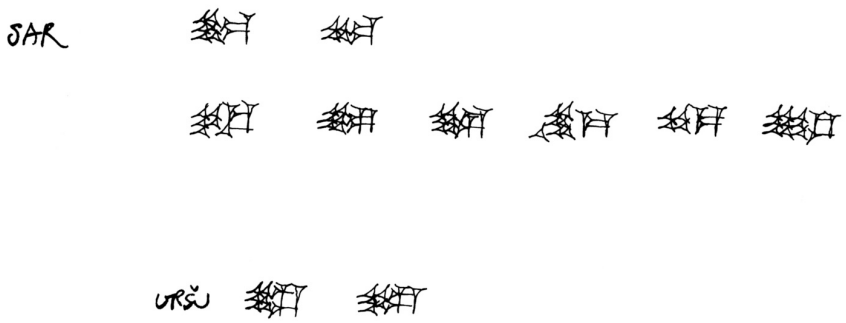


QA: the Uršu-Text shows the "older" form only, whereas the Labarna-Letter has the "later" shape ( ).[29]

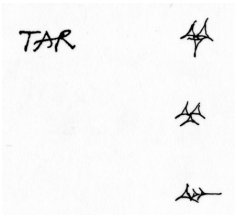
SAR: the Uršu-Text has only the "later" shape ( ) with the two verticals instead of just a single one. The Labarna-Letter has no SAR.[30]

[29] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants: (1) **20.05**, 21.07, 22.02, **22.06**, 22.10, 30.05, 30.18, 31.02, 31.13, 42.03, 42.05, 42.06, 42.08, 42.09, 42.10, 43.01, 43.07, 43.09, 44.01, 51.04, 51.09, 60.01, Z 4, 6, 9, 16, 21, 35, 45, 46, 68, 73; (2) 40.09, 51.03; (3) 10.01, 10.02, **20.05**, **22.06**; (4) 22.01, 22.14, 22.21, 32.03, 43.08, Z 12; (5) 22.08, 30.12, 31.03, 31.04, 40.08, 51.01, Z 2, 7.

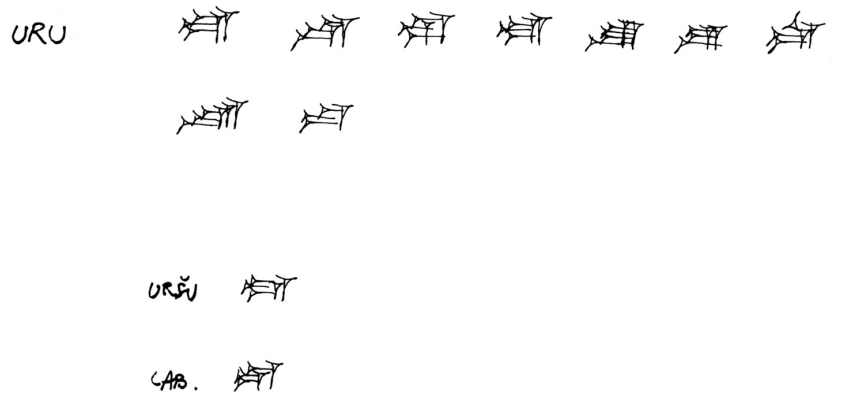
[30] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants: (1) **20.01**, 22.03, 22.04, 22.08, 22.12, **23.03**, 30.08, 30.15, 40.01, 42.01, 42.02, 42.06, 42.12, 50.07, 51.04, Z 12, 16, 53, 55, 92; (2) **20.01**, **20.08**, 22.23, 32.03; (3) **20.08**, 20.12, 23.04; (4) 21.01, 21.02, 21.04, 21.07, 22.01, 22.06, **23.03**, 30.06, 30.07, 31.16, 31.19, 40.05, Z 3, 46; (5) 31.06, 31.13, Z 17, 78; (6) 51.05; (7) 31.02; (8) 40.05.



TAR: is a relatively infrequent sign that is not attested in either the Uršu-Text or the Labarna-Letter.[31]



URU: is a very stable sign with few deviations, the most important of which is the variant with a single vertical instead of the regular two. In general the head of the first vertical is at the same level as the upper horizontal or just beneath it, as we see it also in the classic OS form. That same upper horizontal is at Alalaḫ VII very often somewhat indented vis-à-vis the lower two, that are usually more or less equally long. Sometimes, however, the middle one clearly protrudes. That same shape can be observed in the Hittite manuscript KBo 22.2 of the Zalpa-Tale (see already above).[32]



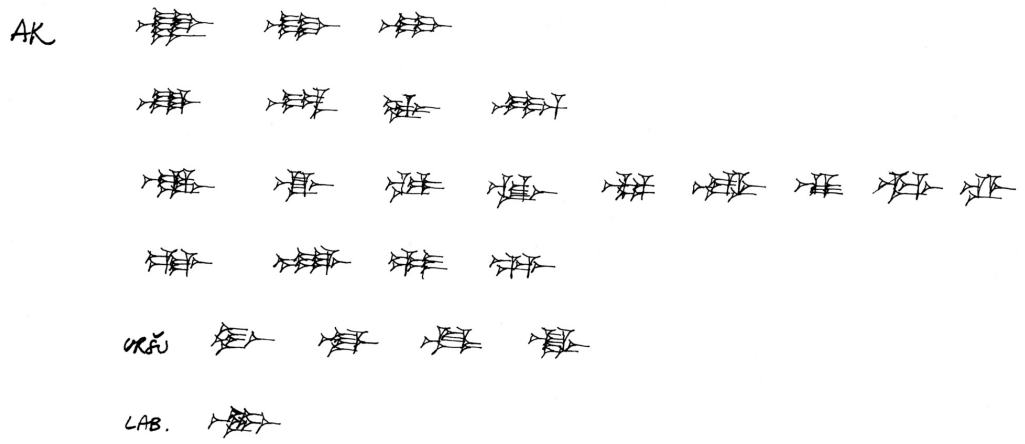
[31] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants: (1) 20.05, 21.12, 22.03, 22.04, 30.05, 42.16, 44.05, 60.01, Z 24, **35**, 60, 66, 75, 79; (2) 22.08, Z 2; (3) **Z 35**.

[32] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants (selection only): (5) 51.01; (6) 51.01; (7) 43.02, Z 44 (next to [1]), (8) 22.28; (9) 22.04, 22.24, 23.01, 23.04, 23.05, 30.12, 51.06, 60.03, 61.04.

Remarks on some other signs

AK: The "older" Hittite shape used as a point of comparison for the above table, is not listed under HZL no. 81, but is attested in KBo 25.184 ii 72 (and possibly ii 58).[33] It is closer to the Alalaḫ VII signs, in that it ends with a single horizontal, whereas most Hittite AK-signs end with two. The essential difference, however, between the "older" and "later" shapes is the many horizontals that are significantly reduced and partially replaced by vertical wedges in the "later" form. Seen from that perspective, the Alalaḫ VII signs mostly show the variant with the many horizontals, although the very reduced and simplified "later" shape is attested as well in at least six texts. Many other forms can be considered as transient between the two. Because of the enormous variety of shapes and the difficulty of finding exact matches for most of them with Hittite variants, AK is not included in the above list.[34] Note that with Klinger[35] the "later" AK already occurs in a text that Starke[36] dates to the end of the 14th century and which otherwise does not contain significant "later" shapes.[37]

The Uršu-Text shows four variants that are all attested at Alalaḫ VII as well; it does not show the "later" Hittite shape, though. The Labarna Letter has the variant with horizontals only which seems to be among the most frequent ones at Alalaḫ VII.



ANŠE: can have the shape regularly encountered at Boğazköy ("GÌRXTAB"), but very often has the shape defined as "GÌRXPA."

E: generally has the head of its first vertical wedge hovering around the upper horizontal, sometimes clearly below it as we find it in OS and MS texts (𒂊, cf. e.g. 20.02, 20.07 etc.).

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[33] The more regular shape is attested in KBo 25.184 ii 5.
[34] Attestations for Alalaḫ variants: (1) 10.02, **10.03**, 20.06, Z 75; (2) 22.28, 42.07, 43.07, Z 77; (3) 22.02, 22.05, 22.28, 30.07, 30.08, 42.06, 60.03, Z 35, **53**, 73; (4) 11.01, 40.03; (5) 22.04, Z 35; (6) 42.08; (7) Z 53; (8) 20.01, 20.02, 21.04; (9) **10.03**, 20.03, 20.04, 20.18, 22.01, 22.09; (10) **22.03**, 22.11, 22.13, **30.05**; (11) **22.03**, **30.05**; (12) 22.06, 30.11, 42.14, Z 4, 36, 46; (13) 22.15; (14) 42.19; (15) 23.04, 31.06, 42.01; (16) 21.07, 32.03; (17) 42.04; (18) **Z 53**; (19) 44.04; (20) 43.09; (21) 10.01.
[35] 1996, 35 n. 15; the text in question is KUB 25.37+ and the AK signs are attested in I 38 and iv 8.
[36] 1985, 302.
[37] noot over en in I 14 en Starke's en op p. 302?

A more rare variant has the sign starting with four instead of two horizontals (cf. 20.07 occurring next to the more regular shape).

DUMU: often shows the variant with an inscribed vertical ( , e.g., 32.02:6).

ḪA: almost always has its usual shape of ZA with two Winkelhaken, but there are a few instances of the variant with a single Winkelhaken (21.07:16, 31.03:19 [but with two ibid. 21, 22], Z 2:25).

ID/DA: comes both with the broken or double-headed middle horizontal (). Regularly, the bottom horizontal is protruding vis-à-vis the upper ones (cf. for ID 21.02:6, 16, 30.11:7, 31.01:13, 32.03:4, 32.04:9, 42.05:4, 42.14:7, Z. 74:2; for DA cf. 22.03:18, 22.28:3, 11).

NI: comes with no verticals inscribed (e.g. 20.09:6), with one (e.g. 21.01), or two (20.12:13, 22.18, et passim).

ŠA/TA: as already indicated above, TA can have no inscribed vertical (e.g. 20.07:1), one (e.g. 20.17:14, 30.04:8) or two (e.g. 20.09, 20.12:17). ŠA can also come with no vertical (e.g. 20.15 passim), or only a single one (20.02:6 [next to TA in the same shape], 20.05, 30.04:9 [next to TA in the same shape]; in 21.04 several different shapes of ŠA can be found next to one another.

Before we draw any conclusions, let us look at some other features of the Alalaḫ VII texts and see how they match up with Hittite OS.

Other OS features as found in the Alalaḫ VII texts

One such feature said to be typical of OS is the ligature-like (*ligaturartig*[38]) writing of combinations like A-NA, not just in the Akkadian preposition, but also in Hittite combinations. Of course, the preposition is present in practically every Alalaḫ VII text and shows the exact same ligature-like shape as in OS texts.

Likewise characteristic of OS is the occasional lack of a personal determinative. In fragments considered OS we find it in KBo 8.42 rev.? 12, as well as in what seem to be late copies of original OH compositions (KBo 3.34 i 22, ii 30, KUB 43.75 rev. 4 ([f]), KUB 31.4 obv. 1 (2x)). In the Alalaḫ VII texts this is very normal and we see it also in the Uršu-Text KBo 1.11 obv.! 3, rev.! 14.[39]

Also in sound values the Alalaḫ VII corpus shows great proximity to the Hittite texts. Polyphony is limited and we encounter the same range of values that we see in Hittite. Readings that are rare in Hittite and/or restricted to often very specific uses (e.g., LÍ[40], LIK, MIL[41]), are mostly likewise infrequent and/or restricted to specific contexts at Alalaḫ. Interesting is the rare use of ḪI as ṬÀ (e.g., 22.03:2) that also occurs in the Uršu-Text, KBo 1.11 obv.! 23, 30. This value is not listed under HZL 335 and might be an important argument to date the text in the immediate vicinity of the Alalaḫ corpus. As far as

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[38] cf. Neu 1980, xivf., Starke 1985, 22f.; for examples of *A-NA* see HZL no. 364.
[39] For the use of personal determinatives in general see Edzard, RlA 10 s.v. Personenkeil.
[40] cf. Catsanicos 1994, 310.
[41] cf. Catsanicos 1994, 311f.

Sumerograms or Sumerographic combinations are concerned, there is an overwhelming overlap between those attested in Hittite texts and those in the Alalaḫ VII texts: some 80%. What is more telling, though, is, if the overlap concerns a Sumerogram or Sumerographic combination that is characteristic for the Alalaḫ corpus. This seems to be the case for the LÚ.AZU/ÚZU "diviner, divination priest", or Akkadian *bārû*. Whereas *bārû* is Sumerographically rendered elsewhere in Mesopotamian texts as (LÚ.)MÁŠ.ŠU.GÍD.GÍD and LÚ.ḪAL (from MB onwards), the writing LÚ.AZU/ÚZU seems specific to Alalaḫ.[42] That same Sumerogram is very well attested since at least the late 15th century and is a normal term for "diviner" at Boğazköy.[43] ***ook OS?

Another link with Alalaḫ VII is the possible inspiration it might have given for the later formula (LUGAL.GAL *iššima ana* PN *ana* NÍG.BA-*šu iddin*) in the *Landschenkungsurkunden* as already observed by Kaspar Riemschneider back in 1958.[44]

Finally, a feature very typical for Hittite texts are the so-called paragraph lines. There is practically no Hittite text that does not have them (Willemijn). Scribes at Ḫattuša and elsewhere in the Hittite kingdom and empire structured their texts into meaningful sections by way of horizontal lines separating one section from the next. Transitioning to a completely different topic or composition (e.g., in *Sammeltafeln*), could be indicated by double paragraph lines. The corpora of Alalaḫ VII and the Hittite ones from Boğazköy and elsewhere are very different in character: the Alalaḫ texts are almost exclusively administrative, that is, predominantly bookkeeping in nature, whereas the Hittite texts are mostly narrative, be it historical prose, mythological, liturgical or otherwise. Yet horizontal lines are customarily used at Alalaḫ to separate a list of witnesses or a dating formula from the body of the record,[45] to set off a total sum of an entire text or part of a text.[46] Apart from the paragraph lines that mark coherent entities within a composition, Hittite scribes also employed the so-called *Randleisten*. These look like this:

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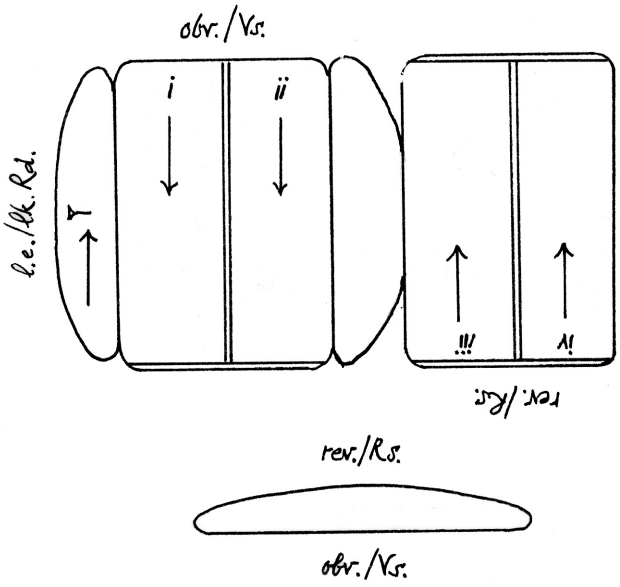
[42] cf. CAD B s.v. *bārû* 121a.

[43] For a listing (up to 1982) of attestations see Pecchioli Daddi 1982, 290-297; the (LÚ.)MÁŠ.ŠU.GÍD.GÍD is attested only in a single text, it seems, KBo 34.107(+ KBo 39.293) rev. 9 (omen, NS). The (LÚ.)MÁŠ.ŠU.GÍD.GÍD was not yet in HZL, but is mentioned in Rüster/Neu 1991, 54.

[44] cf. Riemschneider 1958, 331 w. n. 38, referring to ATT 41 = 20.06.

[45] cf. e.g. 20.01, 20.02, 20.07, 20.08, 20.13, 20.16, 20.18, 21.01, 21.03, 21.04, 21.07, 22.01, 22.03, 22.04, 22.06, 22.10, 22.11, 22.12, 22.13, 22.27, 23.02, 23.05 (double §§!), 30.07, 30.15, 31.01A, 31.08, 31.10, 31.11, 31.14, 44.02, 44.03, Z 6, 9, 20, 26, 53, 54, 59, 73, 77.

[46] cf. e.g. 40.05, 40.06, 42.01, 42.02, 42.04, 42.05, 42.06, 42.07, 42.08, 42.09, 42.12, 42.12, 42.19, 43.04, 43.07, 43.13, 44.01, 44.04, 44.05, Z 1, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 45, 47, 51, 54, 56, 57, 60, 67, 69.



Similarly, at Alalaḫ there are quite a few cases where the end of the text is marked by such a horizontal line, just like the later *Randleiste* of a Hittite tablet.[47] Sometimes, albeit rarely, there is a line marking the bottom of the obverse.[48] Although the Alalaḫ VII practice does not come close to the Hittite one — note that the difference in attested genres also plays an important role here — , it does show that the roots of what became standard in Anatolia were present at Alalaḫ. The Uršu-Text KBo 1.11 has clear paragraph divisions; for the Labarna-Letter this is difficult to say, since it is a ruled tablet.

Conclusions

Let me start with two methodologically inspired considerations. First of all, there is sometimes in our fields a regrettable tendency "to go it alone." The usage of the term "archive," for instance, in Ancient Near Eastern studies has very little to do with the definition of that term in general archival science. During the 1950's some attempts were made to establish a dialogue, but nothing came of it, and nowadays some Assyriologists even claim that general archival theory and its apparatus is not really applicable to our discipline. This is to be deplored, because the lack of a unified terminology stands in the way of a fruitful dialogue and prevents us from asking relevant questions of our material as well as from seeing possible solutions to certain problems that are obvious to archivists but not to us. Something similar seems to have happened in Hittitology reagarding paleography. We generally distinguish ductus and sign shapes (*Zeichenformen*). Ductus indicates such general features like the density of the writing due to a lack or minimum of word spaces, the width of intercolumnia, the lack or absence of margins on the left, in short, the general "look" of tablet. Sign shapes, on the other hand, concern the way an

[47] cf. e.g. 10.01, 21.02, 21.03, 22.12, 23.01, 30.14, 30.15, 31.01, 31.05, 31.06, 31.07, 31.08, 32.03, 40.03, 40.06, 42.02, 42.04, 42.08, 42.09, 42.10, 42.11, 42.12, 42.15, 43.02, 43.11, 43.13, 50.01, 50.04, 51.04, 51.05, 51.06, Z 14, 15, 22, 29, 38, 39, 48, 52, 56, 73, 74.
[48] cf. 42.04, 43.14 (3x §!), 51.07, Z 15, 28.

individual sign was made, that is, the order, number, and kind of strokes that make up a sign. General works on paleography, however, turn out to define ductus (in accordance with its Latin origins) as "the act of tracing strokes on the writing surface. A basic ductus determined the order and direction of the traces in the configurations required for the basic shapes of the letters in a particular script."[49] The general look, on the other hand, of a manuscript is covered by the obvious term aspect: "the general impression on the page made by a specimen of handwriting at first sight."[50] There is a lot we can learn from existing knowledge of scribal practices in, for instance, medieval scriptoria, where monks labored over copies of Classical authors, much in the same way as ancient Near Eastern scribes did.

My second methodological consideration concerns paleographic practice. A comparison of the 278 Alalaḫ records on the one hand, and the Uršu-Text and Labarna-Letter on the other makes it abundantly clear, how important it is to have a large sample when trying to describe the characteristics of a certain ductus. The cumulative picture resulting from the Alalaḫ-texts shows unity in diversity: although there are sometimes many variants, there also is an unmistakable overall tendency. If we had had only a single text, just as we do in the case of the Uršu-Text and the Labarna-Letter, we would inevitably extrapolate from there. One easily assumes the entire corpus, if there ever was one, to have behaved in the same way. The Alalaḫ VII corpus shows how dangerous such an assumption is.

Now back to the Alalaḫ material itself. As already stated above, it is very clear that, with the exception of the sign EN, and to a certain extent SAR, the scale clearly tips in favor of the "older" shapes. This means that in a situation of borrowing these shapes are the ones most likely to be adopted. That, in turn, makes it possible to see the Alalaḫ VII ductus as a serious candidate for the source of the Hittite cuneiform, and at the same time to explain the occasional early appearance of some of the "later" sign forms. If so, we have to assume a selection or fairly sharp reduction in the "later" variants, however, because the "later" variants occur in Alalaḫ VII — even if less frequent that their "older" counterparts — more often than they seem to do in OS manuscripts. Two scenarios are conceivable: either this was already done by the Syrian scribes or by the first generations of Hittite scribes learning the foreign script. The first can only be true, if in Alalaḫ VII one scribal hand favored the "older" shapes, while another exclusively showed "later" sign forms. If that had been the case, it would have sufficed to assume that one or more scribes with a preference for the "older" forms were the ones that got deported and that, as a consequence, what we call OS is the result of historical coincidence. What, in effect, we see, is that, for instance, the same Alalaḫ VII text that has "older" LI, also shows "later" IK or AK, or "older" SAR occurs next to "later" QA, etc. There is no systematic pattern here, and there cannot really be: the shapes that Hittitologists call "older" and "later" forms, often have an inverse relationship from the point of view of the history of cuneiform writing in general. "Older" SAR, for instance, is in the evolution of the sign actually the more recent shape. The same goes for the signs AL, AZ/UK, IK, LI, and QA. We thus have to assume that the Alalaḫ VII ductus must have been introduced along with its varieties of sign shapes in the ratios given above. This implies that if it was indeed in the course of and as a result of Ḫattušili I's (and Muršili I's) campaigns to Northern Syria that cuneiform writing finally found its way into Hittite society, a selection and reduction of the imported shapes must have taken place

[49] Parkes 2008, 151.
[50] Parkes 2008, 149.

between the moment of introduction and the moment where we can say that the typical Hittite cuneiform had established itself.

I do not see this as a problem: it seems quite a natural process for a society that formerly had no script, to reduce the number of needless variants, when it starts learning and using a newly acquired writing system. The incoming foreign scribes teach a first local generation and probably instruct them in the full inventory of signs as they have always used them. They are not the ones likely to simplify the system. It is the first local generations that will try to weed out variants they consider redundant among the hundreds they need to learn already. This selection was, as a consequence, not dictated from above — or at least not at first — but the choices were made individually and for convenience's sake. In general, the most frequently used forms will have won out over the less frequently used. However, in such a scenario the latter ones may still pop up here and there: one student will remember and memorize one variant and the other student another.

As just mentioned, this selection and reduction of shapes is likely to have taken place between the moment of introduction and the moment, where we can say that the typical Hittite cuneiform had established itself. Recently, I have suggested the middle of the 16th century as the *terminus ad* or *post quem* for the latter moment: this on account of the oldest datable attestation of the Hittite cuneiform, the ax of Ammuna, who must have reigned around that time.[51]

I have interpreted the fact that we have no true and legally authentic originals in the Hittite cuneiform from before the ax of Ammuna, as indicating a low volume in writing for internal purposes in the period of the introduction of the cuneiform script and its first appearance around 1550.[52] Historically speaking this not surprising. If we date the introduction to the reigns of Ḫattušili I and Muršili I, we see the script really taking off under Telipinu at the end of the 16th century. In between, the early kingdom fell victim, it seems, to internal strife and it lost most of what Ḫattušili and Muršili had ever gained. On the international diplomatic front there was little incentive for writing and the domestic situation we can only guess at, because of an almost complete lack of documents. Yet we may assume, and there is evidence, that there was indeed some activity.

As Güterbock already wrote, it must not necessarily and specifically have been the settlement of Alalaḫ that provided the unique inspiration for the Hittite ductus. Neither do we have to assume that the introduction of cuneiform in Hittite society must have been a one-time event. Both Ḫattušili and Muršili extensively campaigned in Syria: while Ḫattušili brought down Alalaḫ, the two were responsible for capture of Aleppo and the fall of the kingdom of Yamḫad. The Labarna-Letter and the Annals of Ḫattušili attest to contacts with towns other than just those two. They may also evince a finally perceived need of a script for both external and, more importantly, internal purposes. At last, during their reigns the Hittite ruling class seems to have been ready for writing and it may well have been a repeated exposure to written documents that brought them to this realization. The script that offered itself came from northern Syria, and Alalaḫ VII is our only real substantial example. The time gap between Ḫattušili/Muršili and Ammuna amounts to little over 50 years which seems more than enough to bridge the altogether not very large gap between the ductus as exemplified by the Alalaḫ VII texts on the one hand, and the ax of

[51] cf. van den Hout 2009a and b.
[52] cf. van den Hout 2009***

Ammuna and the somewhat later *Landschenkungsurkunden* of Telipinu on the other. It is interesting to see how the thus far very first document, that can be said to have been written in the typical Hittite cuneiform variant, the ax of Ammuna, still has the ŠA without any inscribed verticals.

first Hittite in KBo 1.11

check KBo 22.1, KUB 13.3?, KBo 18.151 ***, KBo 10.1??

Given the clear propensity of Alalaḫ VII scribes towards the "older" shapes, it seems no longer realistic to disqualify the ductus they used as a forerunner of the Hittite ductus, because of the presence of "later" sign shapes. If we were to adopt the principle that a single "later" shape of a diagnostic sign automatically betrays a manuscript as having been written in, say, the 13th century, and if we were to describe OS as this pure, unadulterated script phase, solely consisting of a single set of shapes, then the number of possible forerunners of the typical Hittite cuneiform would be severely limited. Any type of cuneiform that used "later" shapes would be immediately disqualified. However, as we saw, we have tacitly accepted the appearance of "later" shapes in manuscripts that are classified as OS: there are examples of AL, AZ/UK, EN, IK, SAR, and URU. MS manuscripts routinely contain "later" AZ/UK and SAR (next to the "older" shapes), as well as AL, EN, IK, and URU. All these new shapes are the familiar Mesopotamian ones. Therefore, they have to be due to external influence again, although it is not quite exactly when and how. The apparently more gradual increase of the "later" shapes in OS and MS — as opposed to the traditionally advocated quite abrupt change around 1250 BC[53] — may throw a new light on the origins of the signs that have always been considered characteristic of what we call New Script (NS). The evidence suggests that they were always there, albeit dormant most of the time. Having been weeded out mostly by the earliest generations of native Hittite scribes, they only occasionally make an appearance. But just as any script over time allows for more variants, just so the shapes that were less favored initially, gradually took on a second life and even became the predominant variants in the 13th century. Clearly, this suggestion needs more research, but giving up the principle of paleographic purity of OS, makes this a viable option. Returning to the topic of this paper, we may no longer want to see the "later" shapes in OS manuscripts as betraying a 13th century hand. Instead, I suggest, we take it as betraying the origins of the Hittite cuneiform from a forerunner that showed a similar mix but with specific preferences for one or the other variant. The cuneiform of the Alalah VII texts seems to be exactly the kind of script we should be looking for.

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[53] cf. Klinger 1998, 368.

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