

ROGER D. WOODARD, Ed. *The ancient languages of Asia Minor*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. xviii, 185.

This is one of several volumes derived from the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages* (2006), from the same editor and publisher. The twelve chapters, prepared by noted specialists, are supplemented by two figures, 16 tables, and a map. The contents are indexed separately for subject, grammatical and linguistic terms, languages, and establish laws and principles referred to in the text, e.g., *Čop's Law*, *Siever's Law*. The first appendix (166 – 172) consists of a complete table for the cuneiform script, which has served so prominently in writing systems adapted in many languages through many centuries across a broad region. The second appendix offers the TOC of the *Encyclopedia* and of the other volumes in the present series.

We certainly agree with the remark in the Preface, “An ancient language is indeed a thing of wonder — but so is every other language” (1). Since the capacity for language is the faculty that distinguishes the category *human*, the breadth and scope of the diversity of manifestations of that faculty, along with the means to record it and extend it in space and through time, count as the supreme wonders of existence. The designation *ancient* herein is determined to be delimited by the invention of orthography, at the early end of the spectrum, to the end of the fifth century, although this admittedly somewhat arbitrary margin shifts this way and that according the facts of a variety of the languages discussed in these volumes.

The twelve chapters are as follows:

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| 1. Language in Ancient Asia Minor: An Introduction | ROGER D. WOODARD  |
| 2. Hittite   | CALVERT WATKINS   |
| 3. Luvian  | H. CRAIG MELCHERT |
| 4. Palaic  | H. CRAIG MELCHERT |
| 5. Lycian  | H. CRAIG MELCHERT |

6. Lydian	H. CRAIG MELCHERT
7. Carian	H. CRAIG MELCHERT
8. Phrygian	CLAUDE BRIXHE
9. Hurrian	GERNOT WILHELM
10. Urartian	GERNOT WILHELM
11. Classical Armenian	JAMES P. T. CLACKSON
12. Early Georgian	KEVIN TUIITE

With the exception of Hurrian and Urartian (Chs. 9, 10), which bear features observed in more than one family but have not been definitively associated with an established language family, and Georgian, a Caucasian tongue, the languages reported on in these articles are of the Indo-European taxon, which reflects the degree and extent of prominence of societies who spoke IE languages during the time period recorded.

The articles in this volume discuss the expected and necessary background and history of the languages and their speakers, the orthographic records on which study is based, and a summary of the history of scholarship on the languages. Of particular importance is the attention paid to the orthographic systems employed for these languages, on which we depend for all of our knowledge of them. While it is theoretically possible that any writing system can record any language, the inevitable and substantial inconveniences produced when a poor fit of the system to the language obtains, as among others in the case of using *Hanzi* ‘Chinese characters’ for writing Korean, leads to revision or adoption of a different system. Thus early Western Semitic writing became alphabetic, and in the hands of the Greeks and later the Romans was arranged to represent vowels. Such changes are made to accommodate the realities of the language — its phonetics, its morphology, and its typology. Thus, when looking backward at an extinct language through the inverted telescope of its orthographic record, we are guided by the nature of that system in our discovery.

The contents of these articles exceed the sets of facts expected in a language encyclopedia, and provide comprehensive information about the aforementioned aspects of study, along with features of the phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon of the languages. Any student of language, anthropology, or any discipline that crosses into the history of language and culture in the region will enrich their knowledge by reference to this volume.

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