

CHAPTER 7

THE HITTITES

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During the great migration of the Indo-European peoples from the Central Asian plains, a branch of the Indo-Iranian family shot out into Anatolia—modern Turkey—and founded an empire that would last half a millennium. The Hittites reflected the Nordo-Germanic culture of which they were a part, while also influencing the development of Classical Greek, and thus Western, civilization. Yet the culture of the Hittites was buried for millennia in the mountains of what today is central Turkey. Even since its discovery, it has been the subject of intense debate, with scholars intent on deconstructing the Indo-European migration hypothesis making it, like the Hurrians, the target of intense criticism and attacks, in an effort to keep Anatolia's amazing ancient Aryans obscure.

HITTITE HISTORY

The Hittites were certainly an Indo-European people, closely tied to the Indo-Iranian, and, thus, the Nordic culture. Among other evidence, the Hittite language – the oldest Indo-European written language, older even than Sanskrit—clearly shows their participation in the Indo-European cultural family.

Hittite history is divided, roughly, into three periods—the Old Kingdom, the interregnum, or Hurrian occupation, and the New Empire, or just imperial,

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period. The Old Kingdom begins in approximately the early 17th century B.C.,¹⁷⁵ but the Hittites almost certainly entered Asia Minor beforehand.¹⁷⁶ Two other Indo-European peoples, the Luwians and Palains, entered either just before or at the same time, and the differences that developed between their languages, as they diverged from their common root, have caused the extrapolation that all three must have been in Asia Minor at least 400 years before their written languages are known.

In particular, it is believed that the Luwian people entered Asia Minor over the Hellespont from the Balkans.¹⁷⁷ Early Anatolian culture, pre-Hittite Old Kingdom, has produced artifacts, including copper bull statues, that appear to be derivative or part of kurgan culture, which was the culture of the Aryans on the Eurasian steppes.¹⁷⁸ Tracing these artifacts has caused archaeologists to believe that the Luwians conquered the city of Troy, renaming it as Ilios, and initially spread along the west coast of Asia Minor into the south, either adopting or founding the culture of Minoan Crete.

While this theory accords with the mythical Greek histories, there are issues with it—particularly the fact that Minoan culture, prior to the Mycenaean conquest, does not appear to have been Indo-European in form. Further, if this was the case, then the Luwians adopted the culture of the Great Mother, discussed below, which was definitely not Indo-European in form. Also arguing against this interpretation is the fact that contemporaries separated the people of the civilization of the Great Mother ethnically from the Indo-Europeans in Anatolia. On the other hand, arguing somewhat in favor of this interpretation is the known relationship between the culture of the Etruscans and the cultures

¹⁷⁵This is debated, as there is a question whether to include the dynasty of Kattusas in the Hittite Old Kingdom.

¹⁷⁶Whether by sea, over the Caucasus, or over the Hellespont is debated.

¹⁷⁷Though, by the end of the Hittite period, the Luwians were established in southeast Anatolia.

¹⁷⁸Kurgan is one of the Indo-European cultures. The Indo-Europeans had already diverged into separate cultural groups prior to the development of kurgan culture.

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of Western Asia Minor, and the fact that one version of the Etruscan migration myth, that given in Herodotus, claiming descent from the Lydians, is a proto-version of the Germanic migration myth.¹⁷⁹

THE OLD KINGDOM - LIBERATION FROM SEMITIC MERCHANTS



Hittite Art

Prior to the Hittite Old Kingdom, a dynasty arose at Kattusas, and this dynasty is known to the modern world primarily through its contact with Assyrian merchants, who appear to have dominated the trade of this kingdom until the 19th century B.C. We know of these Semitic merchants through correspondence by

which their rights were asserted and protected by the early Assyrian emperors. Whether the northern Anatolian kingdom of Kattusas is Hittite, though, has been the subject of some debate, and it is generally excluded from the formally recognized Hittite kingdoms and empires.

The Hittites, who called themselves the “Neshites,” expanded from Kattusas and absorbed the culture of a people that preceded them, the Hatti, from which the name “Hittites” is derived. They also completely exterminated this people.¹⁸⁰ The identity of the Hatti is unclear, but they appear to have had some relationship to the Sumerians.¹⁸¹ One of the peoples that the Hittites displaced, however, appears to be the people that was known to the Greeks as the Pelasgians, and who migrated into the Peloponnese perhaps 22 centuries before Christ. And effort has been made to identify these people with the

¹⁷⁹See Chapter 6. Accepting this interpretation requires one to invert what is suggested in that chapter – to see the Etruscan myth as derived from the Nordic, rather than the Nordic myth as derived from the Etruscan.

¹⁸⁰Or at least claim to have done so in their histories.

¹⁸¹Though that identification has been challenged, and the evidence either way is unclear because so little is known of the Hatti people.

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Luwians and the kingdom of Arzawa or Azzawa as well, though this almost certainly incorrect.¹⁸²

The Hittites faced several major rivals in Asia Minor. One was the culture of the Great Mother, which was centered in Crete, and which profoundly influenced the development of Greek, Roman, and Semitic culture. Like the Hatti, the culture of the Great Mother is obscure, and known to us primarily through its remnants in Greece, and through the influence it had on the worship of Isis- Ishtar- Asherah and its integration with the Indo-European myth of Gaia and the great cow.¹⁸³ Attempts have been made to link it to the Indo-European Luwians, though its serpent worship and the predominance of the female god makes it non-Indo-European in form.¹⁸⁴

Despite these encounters, the first major rivals of the Hittites were their fellow Anatolian Indo-Europeans, whom the Hittites conquered and absorbed in their formation of the “Old Kingdom” of central, southern and southeastern Anatolia by the early 18th century. They then expanded west and vassalized the kingdom of Arzawa—who, many believe, gave Asia its name—and conducted relations with the city of Troy, known to them as “Wilusa”, a form of “Ilios”.

THE EMPIRE – BORN OF CONFLICT WITH THE HURRIANS

In the east, the Hittites were rivaled by the Hurrians, and, eventually, the Hurrian kingdom of Mittani. The rise of the Hurrians seems to have broken the links between the pre-Old-Kingdom Hittites and the Assyrians, freeing the early Hittites of dominance by Semitic mercantile interests and allowing them to claim their independence. The Hurrians also conquered and established

¹⁸²As is any identification between the Luwians and Azzawa. The discovery of the Luwians and Azzawa is relatively new and obscure, and, like all new and obscure things, they are the subject of all sorts of speculation. Again, missing the piece of the puzzle we need, man tries to force in the pieces he has.

¹⁸³See Chapter 9.

¹⁸⁴Note the pattern: “Scholars” have a new piece, and they have made an effort to fit it everywhere. This is how human knowledge advances – trial and error.

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a dynasty over what had been Assyrian territory in northern Mesopotamia¹⁸⁵ where Indo-European names come to predominate at several points in different areas during the second millennium B.C. Ironically, these dynasties would eventually be overcome by the Hittites that the Hurrian ascension had freed.

Like the Hittites, the Hurrians have been the target of an intense effort by communist and Soviet pseudo-scholars to deconstruct their Indo-European heritage, part of a broader Jewish attack on the Indo-European migration theory. The Hurrians appear to be an Armenian¹⁸⁶ people who were conquered and governed by an Indo-Iranian minority, possibly one that drove them over the Caucasus Mountains and then subjugated them¹⁸⁷. The Hurrian religious form is firmly Indo-Iranian, and likely a close cognate of the Vedas and *Zend Avesta*, and a Mittani horsemanship manual used by the Hurrian governing caste further cements that relationship.¹⁸⁸ But the language of the common Hurrian people is an isolate, related only to Urartian, the language of their successor state, Urartu. However, language isolates and the adoption of the language of the Near and Middle Eastern masses by the Indo-European invaders are common, and the fact that the Indo-Iranian language of the Hurrians may have been restricted to the upper castes is nowhere near as decisive as Soviet scholars have made it to be.¹⁸⁹

The Hurrians overran the Hittites in the 16th century, and subjugated

¹⁸⁵And possibly southern Mesopotamia as well.

¹⁸⁶As the editor of TBR, John Tiffany, has pointed out to me, the Armenians speak an Indo-European language, though they are from a distant branch of the Indo-European family.

¹⁸⁷An alternative theory makes these Indo-Iranian people related to the Medes, and thus approaching the Hurrians from the west and northwest.

¹⁸⁸The Soviet argument is that only the ruling caste of the Hurrians participated in Indo-Iranian culture, and that the masses of the people were ethnically distinct. This is possible – but does not change many of the racial arguments that have been made about peoples, such as the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaton, who have Hurrian-Mitanni admixture.

¹⁸⁹Because the Indo-Europeans still invaded – even if they only constituted the governing majority of the population, they still invaded and conquered the broader strata. However, these scholars will boldly declare the Hurrians “non-Indo-European” and thus say “the Indo-European invasion is a racist construct,” knowing that few can understand the argument and see the non sequitur.

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them for several decades, until Tudhaliyas I or his son Hattusilis II, having overthrown Hurrian domination in his sub-kingdom of Kizzuwatna, was able to lead a revolution against the Hurrian empire and overthrow its dominance, uniting the other vassal kingdoms of the Hittites under him, and eventually creating the Hittite empire. This empire expanded to the Aegean in the west, southern Palestine in the south, and Assyria in the east.¹⁹⁰

Regardless of his personal origins, his dynasty was certainly heavily intermarried with the Aryan strata of the Hurrians. This Hittite Empire confronted the forces of the Pharaoh Akhenaton in the 14th century, and that brought the Apiru—the Hebrews—into what became the kingdoms of Judaea and Samaria.¹⁹¹ It is also this empire that eventually smashed the Indo-European kingdom of the Mittani and blocked the expansion of the Assyrians back to the west for 200 years.¹⁹²

The Hittites battled the forces of Egypt in the 13th and into the 12th century, when an invasion from an unknown source smashed their empire and fractured it into component ethnic kingdoms.¹⁹³ These kingdoms persisted in Anatolia until their conquest by Assyria and / or Persia at various points in the first half of the first millennium before Christ. It is believed that the Hittite empire was smashed by the Sea Peoples—the victorious Greeks departing from Troy—but the best evidence of that is a description given by the later Assyrian conquerors of Asia Minor in which they describe the defeat of the Mushki people—who are believed to be a Sea People and the Mysians, relatives of the

¹⁹⁰An alternate version of this history makes Tudhaliyas I of Hurrian descent himself, and one of several Hurrian kings of the fractured Hittite lands, who rose to prominence by uniting the Hurrian kinglets.

¹⁹¹See Chapter 10, below.

¹⁹²Apparently the Hittites never forgot their experiences with the Semites, much as the Romans and Etruscans with the Carthaginians, as detailed in Chapter 6.

¹⁹³Though the Hittite empire was in decline after its defeat or stalemate at the battle of Kadesh in the early 13th century BC. Both Egypt and the Hittites claimed victory. Though the Hittite kingdoms were ruled by ethnic Hittites or Hurrians, the majority of the population in many areas remained non-Hittite and non-Hurrian, though this substrata was often also Indo-European.

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Phrygians that were later known to the Greeks.¹⁹⁴ Another theory states that, though the Sea Peoples weakened the Hittites, ultimately, the Armenoid hill peoples on the northeast fringes of the Hittite empire – the Caska or Gasga peoples – delivered the final death blow.

HITTITE LANGUAGE

In the early 20th Century, the Hittite language was proven to be Indo-European. This proof was strongly resisted by both communist and Christian scholars, who had wanted the Hittites to be independent of the Indo-Europeans, and who brutally ridiculed and drove out of academic circles the first scholar to propose such a thing – until a second scholar, Bedrich Hrozný, emerged a decade later and gave definitive proof. Even so, the academic community never forgave Hrozný for proving them wrong, and his later career was marked by academic persecution at several universities.

The Hittite language is largely an absorption of its geographic predecessor, Hatti, though there are eight component tongues which are believed to have influenced its development. The Hittites are the first Indo-European peoples of the c. 2000 B.C. migration to have developed a written language or hieroglyphics, but they largely abandoned this in favor of a variant of Akkadian¹⁹⁵ cuneiform.

However, the method by which the Hittites adopted their language to the Semitic syllabary is revealing, and useful for linguistic analysis of proper names in adopted from the Indo-European by Semitic languages, such as Hebrew. Semitic syllabary is often in the form of consonant-vowel,¹⁹⁶ or vowel-consonant, though sometimes the vowels stand alone—much like in

¹⁹⁴A problem with this is that several of the Sea Peoples seem to have originated within the Hittite Empire or on its southern and western fringes. See the discussion of Genesis 10 in Chapter 4.

¹⁹⁵A Semitic language of central Mesopotamia that became the standard language of diplomacy in the second millennium B.C.

¹⁹⁶Particularly in northern Mesopotamia. By the early first century B.C., Assyrian was standardized on a set of eighty-some vowel or consonant-vowel symbols.

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the phonograms of the Egyptian and Sumerian languages. Thus a name in the Indo-European form of, say “IOVE,” or Jove, might appear in Semitic transliteration as Ia-ho-va-ah, or “Jehovah”—which is precisely where the Jews derived the name of the God they call YHWH, or Yahweh-Jehovah.¹⁹⁷

THE TROJAN WAR

The adoption of Indo-European names by the Semitic languages in use in the Hittite empire has been of particular interest because of the number of references to the peoples and places of the Trojan War that appear in Hittite texts. In the archives of Arnuwandas I appear references to the Ahhiyawas or Ahhiyas, and to an Attarissiyas of Ahhiya who attacks a king of the “mountain land of Zippasala” named Madduwattas. These Ahhiyawas found the city of Millawanda, which later, under the reign of Mursilis II, wars with the Hittites. Even later, the Ahhiyawa are named, along with Egypt, Babylon and Assyria, as one of the great powers of the Near East. And a later king of Millawanda has a brother named Tawagalawas, who assists the people of Lukka Land (the Lycians) against raiders. In these records we find the Achaeans under the name of the Ahhiyawa (from a hypothetical form Achaiwa), and city of Miletus under the name of Millawanda. While some have argued that the Achaeans should be Ahhiyawia, and thus could not be the Ahhiyawa, this is the kind of argument that philologists love and no human being can rationally understand—to accept it, one has to create a second people with almost exactly the same name as the Achaeans, almost the same characteristics, and in almost exactly the same place—an irrationality that is discarded by Occam’s Razor.¹⁹⁸ Some have

¹⁹⁷This equation, which is strongly resisted by Christian and Jewish scholars, is discussed in very thorough detail in Chapter 8.

¹⁹⁸A very good discussion of the application of Occam’s Razor to mythical studies is in Volume II of Viktor Rydberg’s *Teutonic Mythology*, where he debunks the theory of the “two Groas.” Similarly, theories of “two Hebrews” and “two Ahhiyawas” have to be discarded if there is no evidence supporting a separate identity. Nothing more than great similarity is needed for the preponderance of the evidence to weigh in favor of identity.

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also argued that Tawagalawas is the Greek Eteocles (Eteuoclewes).

Similarly, the issue of whether the city of Taruisa in the land of Uilusiia—Troisha in Wilosa—is Troy, has been debated, but the same problem—the problem of hypothesizing two identical cities with identical traits and similar names in the same place—arises. That the king of Wilusa in the reign of Muwatallis is Alaksandus—Alexander, or Paris—poses a similar problem. Obviously, these ancient Hittite records refer to Troy.

The Hittites also, though, adopted a number of grammatical conventions from the Hatti people which preceded them, particularly the use of the enclitics *assa-* and *nytha-*, which also appear in Greece, particularly in place names, and let us definitely establish the link between the people of Asia Minor and the people of the Peloponessus.¹⁹⁹

The culture that invaded the Peloponessus from Anatolia engaged in bull-worship, and thus some have suggested a link linked to the kurgan-derived culture of the Luwians. However, the bull also played a role in the worship of the Great Mother, which seemed alien to the later Mykenaeen Greeks.²⁰⁰ Until the decipherment of Minoan Linear A and the discovery of the archives of the peoples the Hittites conquered, the true identities of the pre-Mycenaean Greeks may remain an open question.

HITTITE RELIGION

Perhaps the strongest evidence that the Hittites were truly of Indo-European origin, though, lies in their religious forms, which are cognate derivatives of the story known in the Nordic-Germanic tradition as the epic cycle of the Winter War, and in the Indo-Iranian cycle as the withdrawal of the smiths.

Among Indo-European peoples, there is an ur-myth, or original story of the gods, in which the plants and animals of the universe were shaped by a group of divine smiths. These smiths at some point withdrew from the world,

¹⁹⁹See the discussion in Chapter 5.

²⁰⁰See Chapters 4 and 9.

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and their withdrawal brought about the first winter. In the Indo-Iranian cycle, they become reconciled to the gods. In the Nordic-Germanic cycle, their withdrawal starts the decline of man into the death age.

The smiths in the Indo-Iranian cycle are known as the Ribhus, but in the Nordic Eddas, they are known as the Alfs, or elves. Their leader, Ivaldi, and his sons, have a mythical contest with the sons of Sindre—the giant Mimir—and are challenged to produce the greatest treasures for the gods. Loki persuades them to enter into the contest, and unfairly influences it; because of his cheating, the elves demand his head and end up injuring his lip, sewing his mouth shut to stop his lies. But because of the unfair judgment that is passed upon their work, the gods known as Volund or Thiassi, his brother Egil-Orvandil, and their brother Giuki, withdraw into the Wolfdales, where Volund forges a terrible sword that is destined to slay the god Frey at Ragnarok.²⁰¹ Volund is, in many aspects, a storm god, or a god of the winds and the air—and he is one of the multi-faceted aspects of the storm god that were understood by the Norse.²⁰²

Hittite religion has been attacked as non-Indo-European because, in the late period, it was heavily influenced by the Hurrians, who adopted their religion from the Indo-Iranian cycles. Teshub, the storm god of the Hittites from the inter-regnal period onwards, is definitely a borrowing from their Eastern neighbors. But there is a cycle of Hittite myths known as “old Hittite myths,” and these involve Telipinu, the “son of the storm god,” who brings about the first winter by withdrawing from the world and ceasing his efforts in the preservation of life and its cycles. This deity, which may have been perverted in Semitic cultures into the god of resurrection,²⁰³ is likely an early cognate of the storm-god figure which became Volund, and hints at an original unity between the Indo-European storm god and the Near Eastern god of resurrection.

In the Hurrian and post-Hurrian period, there is also a theme that

²⁰¹Egil and Giuki go chasing after women who leave them after nine years.

²⁰²Rydberg discusses the multiple aspects of the Gods in Volume I of his *Teutonic Mythology*, in his chapter on Agni, the fire god, and Heimdal.

²⁰³Discussed somewhat in Chapters 9 and 13.

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develops which is cognate with a theme found in the semi-mythical northern histories. This theme is the brotherhood of the storm and the sun gods,²⁰⁴ and their relationships to the great mother and the Sun goddesses. In the mythical history of Saxo Grammaticus, for instance, one often finds Halfdan²⁰⁵ and a figure related to the Indo-European fire god Agni paired—much as Belinus, as a storm god, and Brennus are paired in the history of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Halfdan and Agni relate in many ways to Magni and Heimdal and reflect a legendary euhemerization of the dyad of the storm god and the sun god.

There is also a myth from the Hurrian period of the Great Mother seducing a serpent god, a child of Kumarbi, the prototype of the Greek Cronus, in her garden,²⁰⁶ and this story may have been a prototype borrowed by the Hebrews in their story of the seduction of Eve by the serpent. Similarly, there is a rock god created by Kumarbi to destroy Teshub, the storm-god, which resembles the story of Mokkikalfir in the Eddas, and of the giant with the feet of clay in the Bible.

The Hurrian period is most notable, though, for the character of Kumarbi himself, who castrates his father and then eats the children of Anu in order to prevent their usurpation of his throne, and thus inspired the stories of both Cronus and Uranus, and Cronus and Rhea and the birth of Zeus.

In the Hittite imperial period, the Hittite religion was heavily influenced by Egypt, and the Sun god came to supplant the storm god as the central deity of the Hittite religion. The Hittite emperor, at this time, adopted the title of “son of the Sun” and altered his name in Hittite writing to reflect the Egyptian style of displaying the sun in the king’s royal name. Very late Hittite religious

²⁰⁴Arguably a fire god, which could change the equation. The elevation of the Sun god to equality with the storm god is found in formulations like Horus-Re, but it is my opinion that whether this parallel has more than surface similarities with the pairing of Magni-Heimdal in the tales preserved in Saxo and other sagas deserves rigorous investigation. I hope to do this investigation when and if I have the time.

²⁰⁵A name for Magni, son of Thor and a giantess. See my essay, to be published in *Northern Traditions II*, by Numen Books, on the subject.

²⁰⁶This is probably a core myth of the religion of the Great Mother. See Chapter 9.

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writings show an even heavier syncretization with Egyptian myth.

CONCLUSION

The Hittites were an Indo-European people who achieved pre-eminence among the Indo-European invaders of Asia Minor and founded an empire that spanned almost a millennium. Their language and religion tie them firmly into both the conquerors of Iran and India, and into the Nordic-Germanic stock in which those conquerors found their roots. Though communist and Soviet scholars attacked the origins of the Hittites in an effort to dilute and obscure the Indo-European origin of all society and culture, even a surface analysis of the Hittite culture shows it was one of the many expressions which the Aryan creative spirit found in the early portion of recorded history.