

dynasty ; he reigned very long (sixty-seven years), and he left many more monumental traces in the country than any other king. Not because he was the greatest or the most powerful, or because his reign was marked by very glorious achievements ; from all we know of his character he was vain and boastful, desirous to dazzle his contemporaries and future generations ; his chief ambition seems to have been to inscribe his name everywhere, on the monuments he raised himself as well as on those of his predecessors, whose works he liked to usurp, setting thus an example which afterwards proved sometimes detrimental to his own monuments.

The history of his reign is among the best known to us. When he was still a child his father Seti I. granted him exceptional honours, and gave him titles which might induce us to think that he was associated to the throne ; however, it was not the case. Quite young he took part in the wars which his father made during the last years of his reign against the Arabs and against the western enemies of the kingdom, the Libyans. Rameses must have been more than thirty years old when he succeeded to his father, and he very soon turned his weapons against the eastern nations, the *Khetas*, or *Hittites* of Scripture. Seti I. had already fought those formidable adversaries, the history of whom begins to be better known, and who, in those remote epochs, had an importance which until lately we did not even suspect. They originated from the Amanus, the range of mountains which separates Syria from Asia Minor. They had a well-marked Caucasian type, a fair complexion, with black hair. Their first expeditions seem to have been directed towards Asia Minor, where they extended very far north and west. Afterwards, when the kings of the XVIIIth dynasty were already reigning in Egypt, they marched south of the Amanus, and began their conquests in the north of Syria, and in Mesopotamia, where they subdued the populations whose land they had invaded.

Lately a great number of Hittite monuments have been discovered either in Syria or in Asia Minor. They consist of sculptures and inscriptions written in hieroglyphs which have