

here detail their methods or results, but only state that by comparing certain characters with Cypriote signs, and observing the situation of other signs, it is plausibly concluded that certain characters are ideographs meaning king and country, and that certain others have probable syllabic value; but Professor Sayce would not venture—and no scholar is more venturesome—to translate a connected inscription (and many of considerable length are now known), or to decide even from the words deciphered what was their language. We may, then, say that the great riddle of decipherment is yet unsolved.

Nor is there any agreement yet as to the race and language of the Hittites, although the latter is no sure index of the former. They may have been Turanian, or Aryan, or Semitic, for aught any one yet certainly knows. The biblical Hittites had Semitic names; but they lived in a Semite country, and would have adopted Semite speech. There are long Semitic inscriptions, almost pure Hebrew, found in Zinjerle, in Cilicia, right among characteristically Hittite remains; but the Armenians also were dominant in this region. When we come to examine the names of their kings that have come down to us, they resist certain analysis, so that we are by no means sure of their linguistic relations, a fact which seems to shut out the Semitic and to suggest a Turanian or Mongolian race, or possibly Aryan. As pictured on the Egyptian monuments, they might very well be Mongolian, but some of their own sculptures are of a marked Jewish type.

We may say that the predominance of evidence points to their being of a Mongolian origin. In the sixteenth century before our era the Egyptians knew of a people called the Kheta, or Hittites, in North Syria. During the following centuries they spread south, reaching Aleppo, Hamath, and Kadesh, where Rameses III. found them, new, in the height of their power, and where he engaged in battles with them at their southern outpost of Kadesh. They now ruled to the banks of the Euphrates, over Cilicia, and a considerable part of Asia Minor. Afterward they were broken up into a number of separate kingdoms, which were separately conquered by the Assyrians, and their political existence came to an end about 720 B. C.

The Hittites probably originated in that part of Armenia where the western Euphrates, the Halys, and the Lycus approach each other. They followed the Euphrates down to Carchemish, while the Halys Valley took them down to Cappadocia. Those that followed the Euphrates came under the influence of both the Babylonian and the Egyptian civilization, while in Cappadocia they were less affected. As the former entered the region between the Euphrates and the upper Phœnician coast, they merged with a previously existing Canaanite people, who used a Semitic language and had a considerable culture, among whom they and their language were at last lost, just as the Hittites in Canaan were regarded as sons of Canaan in the time of Joshua.

The great advance of the Hittites into Syria is explained by the devastation of that country by the Egyptians under Thothmes and his successors. The fall of the kingdoms of Mitani and Naharina, on the Euphrates, was another element in their favor. At the time of Rameses III. they occupied Naharina, Arvad, Aleppo, Kadesh, Carchemish, Gozan, Cilicia, Commagene, and the land of the Homeric Dardanians, Mysians, and Mæonians. Their king, Khita-sar, or King of the Hittites, had rallied to his help his followers from Asia Minor as well as Syria. Where was their chief capital has not yet been discovered—not at Kadesh or Carchemish, but perhaps in Cappadocia or Cilicia. While the battle of Kadesh limited their movement south, they probably continued their progress in Asia, and have left their monuments as far as Smyrna.

The Hittites are still a puzzle. The probability is that they were a Mongolian people, who accepted Babylonian and Egyptian art and mythology, and served, with the Phœnicians, as the intermediaries from whom the Greeks received the influence of those two oldest civilizations. The Bible presented them simply as a *nomina umbra*; the monuments show them, as yet, but as a great ghostly presence, visible enough, but which escapes the hand that would grasp it.