The Hittites and sea peoples

Chaos in the Near East
Basic Outline

- Sumer 2900-2600
- Akkad:
  - Hittites 1800-1200 BC
- Old Babylon and Second Intermediate Period 1800-1600 BC
- New Kingdom of Egypt 1600-1200 BC
- Kassites ruled Mesopotamia 1600-1200 BC
- Mitanni-Hurrian Empire 1500-1300 BC
Early Assyria
2300-911 BC

• City of Assur existed by 2,300 BC
• (2350 BC-2000 BC) Ruled by Akkad and 3rd Dynasty of Ur
• By 2,000 Assyria fairly independent
  • Established major trade posts in Asia Minor.
• (1760-1365 BC) Taken over by the Amorites and then by the Old Babylonians, Kassites, and Mitanni Empires
• (1365-1200)King Assur-uballit I: freed Assyria from Kassites for a few years and
  • Collapsed with Mesopotamia in 1200
Hurrian-Mitanni Empire

- Indo-European people, from Anatolia, who joined a confederation, by 2200 BC, with the Mitanni (another Indo-European people)
- During the Akkadian Empire, they became a force in Anatolia and will conflict with the Hittites, Egyptians, and Assyrians.
- In 1600 BC, The Hittites will try to check them and ally with Kassites to weaken the Mitanni and the Babylonians.
  - Successful in destroying the (Old) Babylonians
  - The Mitanni invade and weaken the Hittites
- By 1500, most powerful in Western Asia (Syria, Assyria, Northern Levantine Coast) but sandwiched between the Hittites and Egypt
- After Egypt had expelled the Hyksos, they went on the offense. Came into conflict with the Mitanni and the Hittites in the Levant area.
  - Thutmose I and Thutmose III and Amenhotep II waged battles against the Mitanni.
  - Made treaties with the Mitanni, but during the reign of Akhenaton, the Mitanni Empire collapsed when the Hittites invaded
Who were the Hittites?

- Indo-Europeans who settle in the Anatolia region possibly during 2200 BC (end of Akkad and Old Kingdom).
- Nesites who conquered Hatti
Early History

- Lived in Anatolia
- Civilization began during the Babylonian time and the Second Intermediate Period of Egypt
- Destroys Babylon by putting the Kassites on the throne around 1595 BC-1200
- Plan backfires-Hittites weaken
Kassites

- First people to completely unite Mesopotamia.
- Longest rulers in Mesopotamia.
- Same culture as Babylon
  - Enuma Elish and the Epic of Gilgamesh are created into their final forms
- Inventions:
  - Years were counted
  - Light War Chariot: development and enhancement
Society

- Based on rural agriculture
- Some natural wealth (silver, copper, lead, tin)
- Didn’t perfect iron smelting
- Patriarchal
- Law codes similar to the Near East (i.e. situational)
- Self-government co-existed with the King
- King highest Authority and deified upon death
- Early Scriptures give us the Hittite Vassal treaties in covenant agreements
Religion

- Religious toleration
- No Integration or syncretism until around 1600 BC
- Arianna the Sun Goddess
  - Goddess of fertility and government
- Weather God of Hatti (Heaven)
  - Most emphasized
  - Associated with the bull
- King is High Priest
- Similar divination as the Mesopotamians
- Scapegoat rituals
Literature

- Written in Hittite and Akkadian
- Literary conventions borrowed from Mesopotamia
  - Epics, myth, legends
  - Epic of Gilgamesh and legend of Sargon
  - Influenced Greek mythology, mathematics, and time-keeping
- Historical accounts
  - Viewed history from a religious and non-religious viewpoint
  - Contenders with the Greek and Hebrews for first historians
The End of an Age

• Around 1150 BC, a city was attacked in Asia Minor.
• The battle decimated the city though it did later rebuild.
• At this same time the WHOLE Mediterranean collapsed: Egypt, Middle East, Greece, Asia Minor...
• Called the Dark Age
Invasions and migrations c. 1200 BC

- **Destroyed city**
- **Myceanean Greece**
- **Hittite Empire**
- **New Kingdom Egypt**
- **Area of conflict between Hittite and Egypt**

- Sea peoples including Lukka, Sherden, Weshesh attacked unsuccessfully Egypt
- Sea peoples including Peleset, Shekeleosh, Denyen attacked unsuccessfully Egypt
- Sea peoples destroyed settlements in Syria and Cyprus
- Possibly Teresh movement to Etruria & Shekeleosh to Sardinia
- Myceanean Greece subjected to widespread destruction
- Troy and Hittite cities destroyed possibly by populations coming from Europe (Phrygians?)
The Collapse of the Near East: Egypt

- What happened?
- Rameses II settled people into his army
- Merneptah sent help to the Hittites
- Rameses III resettled people into the Levant
- Inflation and shortages probably led to corruption, thievery and loss of property.
  - Nubia revolted and Libya revolted
- By 1070 BC, Upper Egypt was ruled by the Libyans
The Collapse of the Near East: The Hittites, Greece, and Mesopotamia

- Hittites experienced famine
  - Their vassals all rebelled
- Sea Peoples moved in
- Greece had Mycenaean cities burned.
  - They began to put up lots of walls around their cities which get burned
- Troy fell around 1150 BC
- Other groups such as the Arameans, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Elamites begin to invade.
- After ruling 400 years, the Kassites were ended by the Elamite.
  - The Old Amorite Babylonians tried to reassert power after 400 years but experienced too much famine.
- No one civilization asserted power until 900 (that’s 300 years of chaos)
What caused the collapse?

- Two major causes in 1200 BC
  - People migrations and environmental issues
- Which came first the droughts and famines? OR the people migrations?
  - Probably famine.
  - Severe droughts and famine is recorded in the Hittite lands, Egypt and Mesopotamia.
- Massive inflation, thievery, pleas for help
The Sea Peoples

- Egypt wrote about many of them
- Five groups of probable Aegean origin
  - Depicted wearing Aegean (Mycenaean clothes)
  - Ships are Aegean
- Peleset: Philistines
  - Came from Biblical Kaphtor or Crete
  - Archaeological artifacts also belong to Aegean civilization
- Others seem to be Aegean people who settled on the coast of Anatolia
  - Lukka (Lycinians), Tursha (Troy), Weshesh (Wilusa/Ilium)
- Greek Mainland:
  - Akawasha (Achaeans), Denyen (Danaans)
Facts or Myths?

• When were the myths, the Minotaur and Trojan War, created?
  • During the Dark Ages of Greece
  • Minoans: 1900 BC-1500 BC, Mycenaean Peoples: 1600-1200 BC
  • Dark Ages 1200-700 BC

• It was during the Dark Ages that the Greeks would look back on the past with nostalgia and mystify their past. So they created the Minotaur and the Trojan War. Based on some facts, but largely turned into mythology.
Trojans: Hittite Allies?

- Allies with the Wilusa and Taruisa both located on the coast of Anatolia. Texts refer to the Dardanoi as inhabitants and Alakandus the King.
  - Wilusa (Ilium)
  - Dardanoi (mentioned in Homer)
  - Alakandus (Alexander/Paris)

- Wilusa has conflict with the Ahhiya and their King Attarsiyas.
  - Ahhiya (Achaeans)
  - Attarsiyas (Atreus)
Anatolia: Phrygians and Cimmerians

• Review:
  • Sea Peoples brought the collapse of the Hittites

• Phrygians:
  • Came from southeast Europe (Thrace) and settled into northwest Anatolia
  • Legend of Midas

• Cimmerians
  • From southern Russia and destroyed the Phrygian kingdom
  • Eventually defeated by the Kingdom of Lydia to the West and were absorbed into Anatolian populations
Anatolia: Neo-Hittites and Urartians

• Neo-Hittites 1180-750 BC:
  • Remaining tribes in Anatolia who formed independent city-states and lasted for 400 years
  • Eventually undermined by: Arameans and Assyrians

• Kingdom of Uratu 850-600 BC
  • Lake Van area
  • Language related to Hurrians
  • Assyrians vied for power
  • Persians took out around 600 BC after Assyria’s demise