

Topic Page: [Hittites](#)

Definition: **Hittites** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

People of Asia Minor who controlled a powerful empire in the 15th-13th centuries bc. They founded a kingdom in Anatolia (Turkey) in the 18th century bc; their capital was Hattusas (Bogazköy). They expanded E and S in the 15th century bc and conquered N Syria before being checked by the Egyptians under Ramses II. Under attack from Assyria, the Hittite Empire disintegrated in c.1200 bc.



Image from: [Lebanon in Philip's Encyclopedia](#)

Summary Article: **Hittites**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(hīt'īts), ancient people of Asia Minor and Syria, who flourished from 1600 to 1200 B.C. The Hittites, a people of Indo-European connection, were supposed to have entered Cappadocia c.1800 B.C. To the southwest, in the Taurus and Cilicia, were the Luites, relatives of the Hittites; to the southeast, in the Upper Euphrates, the Hurrians (Khurrites). In the country the Hittites then occupied, the aboriginal inhabitants were apparently the Khatti, or Hatti.

Hittite names appear c.1800 B.C. on the tablets written by Assyrian colonists (see Assyria) at Kültepe (Kanesh) in Cappadocia. However, real evidence of Hittite existence does not occur until the Old Hittite Kingdom (1600–1400 B.C.). This kingdom, which was centered in Cappadocia, was opposed by the Syrians. The Hittites tried to invade Babylonia but were halted by Egypt and Mitanni.

The Hittite Empire that followed the Old Kingdom, with its capital at Boğazköy (also called Hattusas), was the chief power and cultural force in W Asia from 1400 to 1200 B.C. The famous Hittite rulers date from this period. Among these are Suppiluliumash (fl. 1380 B.C.), who is mentioned in the Tell el Amarna letters; Mursilish II (fl. 1335 B.C.); and Hattusilish III (fl. 1300 B.C.). The Hittite Empire was a loose confederation that broke up under the invasions of the Thracians, Phrygians, and Assyrians c.1200 B.C. Several small states arose, with Carchemish becoming an outstanding city. The Neo-Hittite kingdom (c.1050–c.700 B.C.) was conquered by the Assyrians, who installed Hittite princes as vassals to their throne.

The artistic work of the Hittites, as in reliefs, round sculptures, and seals, shows a high state of culture and considerable Babylonian and Assyrian influence. A great number of inscriptions have been uncovered in the Hittite area; these are for the most part in cuneiform. Besides the Babylonian inscriptions, there are many in Hittite hieroglyphs, or Kanesian. The Hittite language is Indo-European. There are several other languages meagerly represented in the Hittite archives: the so-called Luwian (similar to Hittite), and Khattian and Hurrian (both non-Indo-European and apparently unrelated to one another). There is also a hieroglyphic alphabet (or syllabary) liberally represented; the deciphering of this script was aided by the bilingual texts found at Karatepe and was published by H. T. Bossert. The Hittite civilization clearly had many foreign elements, notably from Mesopotamia; its pantheism borrowed most of its concepts from Babylonian, Assyrian, and Hurrian sources. The Hittite law codes are interesting partly because they are to some extent independent of the Babylonian. The Hittites were one of the first peoples to smelt iron successfully.

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