

Give the
paragraph a
title

Structured Reading—The Hittites

Summarise the
paragraph into a
sentence

Highlight the key information in the paragraph—never highlight more than 6 words at a time

The Hittites lived in the ancient region of Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) from around 1700BCE. They developed a culture and expanded their territories into an empire which rivalled, and threatened, the established nation of Egypt.

The Hittite Empire reached its peak between under the reign of King Suppiluliuma I (c.1344-1322 BCE) and his son Mursilli II (c.1321-1295 BCE) after which it declined and, after repeated attacks by the Sea Peoples and the Kaska tribe, it fell to the Assyrians.

The history of the Hittites was at its best with the so-called New Kingdom (1400-1200 BCE), also known as the Hittite Empire. Although there were Hittite kings before him (such as Tudhaliya I and Tudhaliya II), this history really begins with King Suppiluliuma I who took the throne c. 1344 BCE.

Under Suppiluliumas I (c. 1380–c. 1346 BCE), the empire reached its height. Except for a successful campaign against the Arzawa tribe, Suppiluliumas' military career was devoted to fighting against the kingdom of Mitanni to the southeast. He also worked to establish a strong base for the empire in Syria.

Under Muwatallis (c. 1320–c. 1294 BCE) a struggle for the domination of Syria against a stronger Egypt (under Pharaohs Seti I and Ramses II) led to one of the greatest battles of the ancient world, which took place at Kadesh on the Orontes in 1299 BCE. Though Ramses claimed a great victory, the result was probably indecisive, and 16 years later, under Hattusilis III (c. 1275–c. 1250 BCE), a peace treaty, mutual defense pact, and dynastic marriage were agreed between the Hittites and the Egyptians.

The fall of the Hittite empire (c. 1193 BCE) was sudden and may be caused by the large-scale migrations that included the Sea Peoples. While the heartland of the empire was swamped by the Phrygians, some of the Cilician and Syrian areas retained their Hittite identity for another five centuries, evolving politically into a multitude of small independent principalities and city-states, which were gradually incorporated by Assyria until by 710 BCE the last vestiges of Hittite independence had been obliterated.