

# Hittite

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Hit'tite, or rather Chethite (Heb. *Chitti'*, חִתִּי, usually in the plur. חִתִּים, Sept. Χετῳοι; also בני חת, "children of Heth;" fem. חִתִּית, [Eze 16:3](#); plur. 1, בנות חת, [Ki 11:1](#); also בתות חת, "daughters of Heth," [Ge 27:46](#)), the designation of the descendants of Heth, and one of the nations of Canaan (q.v.).

## I. Biblical Notices. —

(1.) With five exceptions, noticed below, the word is חִתִּי = "the Chittite;" in the singular number, according to the common Hebrew idiom.. It is occasionally rendered in the A.V. in the singular number, "the Hittite" ([Ex 23:28](#); [Ex 33:2](#); [Ex 34:11](#); [Jos 9:1](#); [Jos 11:3](#)), but elsewhere as a plur. ([Ge 15:20](#); [Ex 3:8,17](#); [Ex 13:5](#); [Ex 23:23](#); [Nu 13:29](#); [De 7:1](#); [De 20:17](#); [Jos 3:10](#); [Jos 12:8](#); [Jos 24:11](#); [Jg 3:5](#); [1Ki 9:20](#); [2Ch 8:7](#); [Ezr 9:1](#); [Ne 9:8](#); [Ne 1 Esdr. 8:69](#), Χετῳοι).

(2.) The plural form of the word is חִתִּים = the Chittim, or Hittites ([Jos 1:4](#); [Jg 1:26](#); [1Ki 10:29](#); [2Ki 7:6](#); [2Ch 1](#); [2Ch 17](#)).

(3.) "A Hittite [woman]" is חִתִּית ([Eze 16:3,45](#)). In [1Ki 11:1](#), the same word is rendered "Hittites." In the list of the descendants of Noah, Heth occupies the second place among the children of Canaan. It is to be observed that the first and second names, Sidoli and Heth, are not gentile nouns, and that all the names following are gentile nouns in the sing. Sidon is called the first-born of Canaan, though the name of the town is probably put for that of its founder, or eponym, "the fisherman," Ἀλιεύς, of Philo of Byblus. It is therefore probable, as we find no city Heth, that this is the name of the ancestor of the nation, and the gentile noun, children of Heth,

makes this almost certain. After the enumeration of the nations sprung from Canaan, it is added, "And afterwards were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad" (Ge 10:18). This passage will be illustrated by the evidence that there were Hittites and Amorites beyond Canaan, and also beyond the wider territory that must be allowed for the placing of the Hamathites, who, it may be added, perhaps had not migrated from Canaan at the date to which the list of Noah's descendants mainly refers (see verse 19). *SEE CANAANITE.*

1. Our first introduction to the Hittites is in the time of Abraham, when they are mentioned among the inhabitants of the Promised Land (Ge 15:20). Abraham bought from the Bene-Chethe" Children of Heth" such was then their title — the field and the cave of Machpelah, belonging to Ephron the Hittite (Ge 23:3-18). They were then settled at the town which was afterwards, under its new name of Hebron, to become one of the most famous cities of Palestine, then bearing the name of Kirjath-arba, and perhaps also of Mamre (Ge 23:19; Ge 25:9). The propensities of the tribe appear at that time to have been rather commercial than military. The "money current with the merchant," and the process of weighing it, were familiar to them; the peaceful assembly "in the gate of the city" was their manner of receiving the stranger who was desirous of having a "possession" "secured" to him among them. The dignity and courtesy of their demeanor also come out strongly in this narrative. As Ewald well says, Abraham chose his allies in warfare from the Amorites, but he goes to the Hittites for his grave. But the tribe was evidently as yet but small, not important enough to be noticed beside "the Canaanite and the Perizzite," who shared the bulk of the land between them (Ge 12:6; Ge 13:7). In the southern part of the country they remained for a considerable period after this, possibly extending as far as Gerar and Beersheba, a good way

below Hebron ([Ge 26:17](#); [Ge 28:10](#)). From their families Esau married his first two wives ([Ge 26:34](#); [Ge 36:2 sq.](#)), and the fear lest Jacob should take the same course is the motive given by Rebekah for sending Jacob away to Haran. It was the same feeling that had urged Abram to send to Mesopotamia for a wife for Isaac. The descendant of Shem could not wed with Hamites, with the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell... wherein I am a stranger," but "go to my country and thy kindred" is his father's command, "to the house of thy mother's father, and take thee a wife from thence" ([Ge 28:2](#); [Ge 24:4](#)). *SEE [HIVITE](#)*.

From several of the above notices we learn that the original seat of the Hittites, the city of Hebron, was founded by one Arba of the Anakim, whence its earlier name, and had inhabitants of that giant race as late as Joshua's time. It is also connected with Zoan in Egypt, and is said to have been built seven years before that city ([Nu 13:22](#)). Zoan or Avaris was built or rebuilt, and no doubt received its Hebrew or Shemitic name, Zoan, the translation of its Egyptian name HA-AWVAR, in the time of the first Shepherd-king of Egypt, who was of Phoenician or kindred race. It is also to be noted that, in Abraham's time, the Amorites, connected with the giant race in the case of the Rephaim whom Chedorlaomer smote in Ashteroth Karnaim ([Ge 14:5](#)), where the Rephaite Og afterwards ruled, dwelt close to Hebron (ver. 13). The Hittites and Amorites, we shall see, were later settled together in the Orontes valley. Thus at this period there was a settlement of the two nations in the south of Palestine, and the Hittites were mixed with the Rephaite Anakim. *SEE [HEBRON](#)*.

**2.** Throughout the period of the settlement in Palestine, the name of the Hittites occurs only in the usual formula for the occupants of the Promised Land. Changes occur in the mode of stating this formula, but the Hittites are never omitted (see

**Ex 23:28**). In the enumeration of the six or seven nations of Canaan, the first names, in four phrases, are the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites; in two, which make no mention of the Canaanites, the Hittites and Amorites; and in three, the former three names, with the addition of another nation. In but two phrases are these three nations further separated. It is also to be remarked that the Hittites and Amorites are mentioned together in a bare majority of the forms of the enumeration, but in a great majority of passages. The importance thus given to the Hittites is perhaps equally evident in the place of Heth in the list of the descendants of Noah, in the place of the tribe in the list in the promise to Abraham, where it is first of the known descendants of Canaan (**Ex 15:20**), and certainly in the term "all the land of the Hittites," as a (designation of the Promised Land in its full extent, from Euphrates to the Mediterranean, and from Lebanon to the desert (**Jos 1:4**). The close relation of the Hittites and Amnorites seems to be indicated by the prophet Ezekiel, where he speaks of Jerusalem as daughter of an Amnorite father and a Hittite mother (**Eze 16:3,45**). Indeed the Hittites and Amorites seem, in these last-cited passages, to be named for the Canaanites in general.

When the spies examined Canaan they found "the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites" dwelling "in the mountains" (**Nu 13:29**), that is, in the high tracts that afterwards formed the refuges and rallying points of the Israelites during the troubled period of the judges. There is, however, no distinct statement as to the exact position of the Hittites in Palestine. We may draw an inference from their connection with Jerusalem and the Amorites, and their inhabiting the mountains, and suppose that they were probably seated chiefly in the high region of the tribe of Judah.' Of their territory beyond Palestine there are some

indications in Scripture. The most important of these is the designation of the Promised Land in its full extent as "all the land of the Hittites" already mentioned, with which the notices of Hittite kings out of Canaan must be compared. Whatever temporary circumstances may have originally attracted them so far to the south as Beersheba, a people having the quiet commercial tastes of Ephron the Hittite and his companions can have had no call for the roving, skirmishing life of the country bordering on the desert; and thus, during the sojourn of Israel in Egypt, they had withdrawn themselves from in those districts, retiring before Amalek ([Nu 13:29](#)) to the more secure mountain country in the center of the land. Perhaps the words of Ezekiel ([Eze 16:3,45](#)) may simply that they helped to found the city of Jebus.

From this time, however, their quiet habits vanish, and they take their part against the invader, in equal alliance with the other Canaanitish tribes ([Jos 9](#); [Jos 11:3](#), etc.).

**3.** Henceforward the notices of the Hittites are very few and faint. We meet with two individuals, both attached to the person of David.

**(1.)** "Ahimelech the Hittite," who was with him in the hill of Hachilah, and with Abishai accompanied him by night to the tent of Saul ([1Sa 26:6](#)). He is nowhere else mentioned, and was possibly killed in one of David's expeditions, before the list in 2 Samuel 23 was drawn up.

**(2.)** "Uriah the Hittite," one of "the thirty" of David's body-guard ([2Sa 23:39](#); [1Ch 11:41](#)), the deep tragedy of whose wrongs forms the one blot in the life of his master. In both these persons, though warriors; by profession, we can perhaps detect traces of those qualities which we have noticed as characteristics of the tribe. In the case of the first, it was Abishai, the practical, unscrupulous "son of Zeruah," who

pressed David. to allow him to kill the sleeping king: Ahimelech is clear from that stain. In the case of Uriah, the absence from suspicion and the generous self-denial, which he displayed, are too well known to need more than a reference (2Sa 11:11-12). He was doubtless a proselyte, and probably descended from several generations of proselytes; but the fact shows that Canaanitish blood was in itself no bar to advancement in the court and army of David.

Solomon subjected the remaining Hittites to the same tribute of bond- service as the other remnants of the Canaanitish nations (1Ki 9:20). Of all these the Hittites appear to have been the most important, and to have been under a king of their own; for "the kings of the Hittites" are, in 1Ki 10:29, coupled with the kings of Syria as purchasers of the chariots which Solomon imported from Egypt. It appears that this was some different division of the Hittite family living far away somewhere in the north; although, from their connection in 2Ki 7:6, with the Egyptians, others have inferred that the noise came from the south, from which quarter it seems they and the Egyptians were the only people who could be expected to make an attack with chariots. This would identify them with the southern Hivites, who were subject to the scepter of Judah, and show also that it was they who purchased Egyptian chariots from the factors of Solomon. It is evident in any case, however, that they were a distinct and independent body, apparently outside the bounds of Palestine. The Hittites were still present in Palestine as a distinct people after the Exile, and are named among the alien tribes with whom the returned Israelites contracted those marriages which Ezra urged and Nehemiah compelled them to dissolve (Ezr 9:1, etc.; comp. Ne 13:23-28). 'After this we hear no more of the Hittites, who probably lost their national identity by intermixture with the neighboring tribes or nations. (See

Hamelseld, 3:51 sq.; *Journ. of Sac. Lit.* Oct. 1851, p. 166.) *SEE HEATHEN*.

**4.** Nothing is said of the religion or worship of the Hittites. Even in the enumeration of Solomon's idolatrous worship of the gods of his wives- among whom were Hittite women (**1Ki 11:1**) no Hittite deity is alluded to (see **1Ki 11:5,7**; **2Ki 23:1**). — See below.

**5.** The names of the individual Hittites mentioned in the Bible are as follow. They are all susceptible of interpretation as Hebrew words, which would lead to the "belief either that the Hittites spoke a dialect of the Aramaic or Hebrew language, or that the words were Hebraized in their transference to the Bible records.

**ADAH** (a woman), **Ge 36:2**.

**AHIMELECH**, **1Sa 26:6**.

**BASHEMATH**, accurately BAS'MATH (a woman); possibly a second name of Adah, **Ge 26:34**.

**BEERI** (lather of Judith, below), **Ge 26:34**. **ELON** (father of Basmath), **Ge 26:34**. **EUHURON**, **Ge 23:10,13-14**, etc.

**JUDITH** (a woman), **Ge 26:34**. **URIAH**, **2Sa 11:3**, etc; **23:39**, etc.

**ZOHAR** (father of Ephron), **Ge 23:8**.

In addition to the above, **SIBBECHAT**, who in the Hebrew text is always denominated a Hushathite, is by Josephus (*Ant.* 7, 12, 2) styled a Hittite.

**II. Notices in Ancient Inscriptions.** —

**1.** The Egyptian monuments give us much information as to a Hittite nation that can only be that indicated in the two passages in the books of Kings above noticed. The kings of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties made extensive conquests in Syria and Mesopotamia. They were opposed by many small states, which probably always formed one or more confederacies. In the time of Thothmes III (B.C. cir. 1450), the

leading nation was that of the RUTEN (or LUTEN), which appears to have once headed a confederacy defeated by that king before Megiddo (De Rouge, *Revue Archeology* n.s., 4, 346 sq.). The KHETA were conquered by or tributary to Thothmes III (Birch, *Annals of Thothmes III*, p. 21); but it is not until the time of Rameses II (B.C. cir. 1306), second king (according to Manetho) of the nineteenth dynasty, that we find them occupying the most important place among the eastern enemies of the Egyptians, the place before held by the RUTEN. The name is generally written KHET, and sometimes KHETA, and was probably in both cases pronounced KHAT. It is not easy to determine whether it properly denotes the people or the country; perhaps it denotes the latter, as it rarely has a plural termination; but it is often used for the former. This name is identical in radicals with that of the Hittites, and that it designates them is clear from its being connected with a name equally representing that of the Amorites, and from the correspondence of this warlike people) strong in chariots, with the non-Palestinian Hittites mentioned in the Bible. The chief or strongest city of the KCETA, or at least of the territory subject to or confederate with the king of the KHETA, was KETESH, on the river ARNUT, ANURTA, or ARUNATA. KETESH was evidently a Kadesh, "a sacred city," קדש, but no city of that name, which could correspond to this, is known to us in Biblical geography. It is represented in the Egyptian sculptures as on or near a lake, which Dr. Brugsch has traced in the modern lake of Kedes, fed by the Orontes, southward of Hems (Emesa). The Orontes, it must be observed, well corresponds to the ARUNATA. The town is also stated to have been in the land of AMAR (or AMARA), that is, of the Amorites. The position of this Amoritish territory is further defined by Carchemish being placed in it, as we shall show in a later part of this article. The territory of these Hittites,

therefore, lay in the valley of the Orontes. It probably extended towards the Euphrates, for the KHETA are also connected with NEHARENA, or Mesopotamia, not the NAHIRI of the cuneiform inscriptions, but it is not clear that they ruled that country. Probably they drew confederates thence, as was done by the Syrians in David's time.

The greatest achievement of Rameses II was the defeat of the KHETA and their allies near KETESH, in the fifth year of his reign. This event is commemorated in a papyrus and by several inscriptions and sculptures. The nations confederate with the KHETA were the ARATU (Aradus?), MAXAUSU (Mash?), PAXTSA or PATASA, KESHKESH, ARUTNU, KATAWATANA, KHERABU (Helbon?), AKATERA, KETESH, RETA, Arkites, TENTENE (or TRATENUEE), and KARAKAMASHA (Carchemish). These names are difficult to identify save the seventh and the last, but it is evident that they do not belong to Palestine. The Hittites are represented as having a regular army, which was strong in chariots, a particular which we should expect from the Biblical notices of them and of the Canaanites, where the latter name seems applied to the tribe so called. Each chariot was drawn by two horses, and held three- men, a charioteer and two warriors. They had also cavalry and disciplined infantry. In the great battle with Rameses they had 2500 horses, that is, chariots. The representations of the KHETA in the sculptures relating to this campaign probably show that their forces were composed of men of two different races. Sir Gardner Wilkinson thinks that both belonged to the KHETA nation, and it seems hardly possible to form any other conclusion. "The nation of Sheta [the initial character is thus sometimes read *sh*] seems to have been composed of two distinct tribes, both comprehended under the same name, uniting in one common cause, and probably subject to the same

government." These supposed tribes differed in dress and arms, and one was sometimes bearded, the other was beardless (*Ancient Egyptians*, 1, p. 400 sq.). They are rather fair than yellow, and the beardless warriors are probably of a different race from the people of Palestine generally. In some cases they remind us of the Tatars, and it is impossible to forget that the Egyptians of the Greek period evidently took the KHETA for Scythians or Bactrians. The name Scythian is not remote, nor is that of the Kittas, or warrior — Tatars in the Chinese garrisons; but mere word resemblances are dangerous; and the circumstance that the Scythians appear in history when the Hittites have just disappeared is not of much value. But it is worthy of remark that in the time of Moses there was a Rephaite ruling the Amorites in Palestine, as the sons of Anak had apparently long ruled the Hittites in Hebron, so that we need not be surprised to find two races under the same government in the case of the Hittites of Syria. In the twenty-first year of Rameses II, the great king of the Hittites, KHETSER, came to Egypt to make a treaty of peace. A copy of the treaty is preserved in a hieroglyphic inscription. From this it appears that KHETSER had been preceded by his grandfather SAPRARA, his father MAURASARA, and his brother MAUTNURA, and that in the reigns of SAPRARA and MAUTNURA peace had been made upon the same conditions. In a tablet of the thirty-fourth year of the same king, one of his wives, a Hittite princess with the Egyptian name RA-MIA-UR-NE-FRU, is represented as well as her father, the king (or a king) of the KHETA. Solomon also, as Dr. Brugsch remarks, took Hittite women into his harem ([1Ki 11:1](#)). Rameses III (B.C. cir. 1200) had a war with the KHETA, mentioned in one of his inscriptions with KETE (KETESH) KARA[K]AMSA (Carchemish), ARATU (Aradus?), and ARASA, all described as in the land AMABA.

The religion of the Hittites is only known from the above treaty with Rameses II, though it is probable that additional information may be derived from an examination of proper names. In this inscription the divinities both of the land of KHETA and of Egypt are mentioned, probably because they were invoked to see that the compact was duly kept. They are described from a Hittite point of view, a circumstance which is curious as showing how carefully the Egyptian scribe had kept to the document before him. They are the gods of war, and the gods of women of the land of KHETA and of Egypt, the SUTEKH of the land of KHETA, the SUTEKH of several forts, the ASHTERAT (written ANTERAT) of the land of KHETA, several unnamed gods and goddesses of places or countries, and of a fortress, the mountains and rivers of the land of KHETA, and of Egypt, Amen, SUTEKH, and the winds. SUTEKI — , or SET, was the chief god of the Shepherd-kings of Egypt (one of whom appears to have abolished all other worship in his dominions), and is also called BAR; or Baal. SUTEKH is perhaps a foreign form, SET seems certainly of foreign origin. ASHTERAT is, of course, Ashtoreth, the consort of Baal in Palestine. They were the principal divinities of the KHETA, for they are mentioned by name, and as worshipped in the whole land. The worship of the mountains and rivers is remarkably indicative of the character of the religion, and the mention of the gods of special cities points in the same direction. The former is low nature-worship, the latter is entirely consistent with it, and, indeed, is never found but in connection with it.

The Egyptian monuments furnish us with the following additional Hittite names: TARAKANUNASA, KAMAET, TARKATATASA (an ally?), KHERAPSARA, scribe of books of the KHETA, PESA, TETARA, KRABETUSA, AAKMA (an ally?), SANARPUS, TATARA, MATREMA, brother of [the king

of] the KHETA, RABSUNUNA (an ally?), TUATASA (an ally?). These names are evidently Shemitic, but not Hebrew, a circumstance that need not surprise us when we know that Aramaic was distinct from Hebrew in Jacob's time. The syllables SERA in KHET-SERA, and RAB in RAB-SUNUNA, seem to correspond to the SAR and RAB of Assyrian and Babylonian names. TETARA may be the same name as the Tidal of Scripture. But the most remarkable of all these names is MATREMA, which corresponds as closely as possible to Mizraim. The third letter is a hard T, and the final syllable is constantly used for the Hebrew dual. In the Egyptian name of Mesopotamia, NEHARENA, we find the Chaldee and Arabic dual. It would therefore appear that the language of the KHETA was nearer to the Hebrew than to the Chaldee. TARKATATASA probably commences with the name of the goddess Derceto or Atargatis.

The principal source of information on the Egyptian bearings of this subject is Brugsch's *Geographische Inschriften*, 2, 20 sq. The documents to which he mainly refers are the inscriptions of Rameses II, — the poem of PENTAUR, and the treaty. The first are given by Lepsius (*Denkmäler, A bh.* 3, bl. 153-161, 164-166, 187, 196; see also 130, 209), and translated by M. Chabas (*Rev. Arch.*, 1859); see also Brugsch, *Histoire d'Egypte*, 1, 137 sq.: the second is translated by M. de Rouge (*Revue Contemporaine*, No. 106, p. 389 sq.), Dr. Brugsch (11. cc.), Mr. Goodwin, *Cambridge Essays*, 1858, and in Bunsen's *Egypt's Place*, 4, 675 sq.; and the third is translated by Dr. Brugsch (11. cc.) and Mr. Goodwin (*Parthenon*, 1862).

**2.** In the Assyrian inscriptions, as lately deciphered, there are frequent references to a nation of *Khatti*, who "formed a great confederacy ruled by a number of petty chiefs," whose territory also lay in the valley of the Orontes, and who were sometimes assisted by the people of the sea-coast, probably

the Phoenicians (Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, 1, 463). "Twelve kings of the southern. Khatti are mentioned in several places." If the identification of these people with the Hittites should prove to be correct, it agrees with the name *Chat*, as noticed under HETH, and affords a clew to the meaning of some passages which are otherwise puzzling. These are

**(a)** [Jos 1:4](#), where the expression "all the land of the Hittites" appears to mean all the land of Canaan, or at least the northern part thereof.

**(b)** [Jg 1:26](#). Here nearly the same expression recurs. See Luz.

**(c)** [1Ki 10:29](#); [2Ch 1:17](#), "All the kings of the Hittites and kings of Aram" (probably identical with the "kings on this side Euphrates," [1Ki 4:24](#)) are mentioned as purchasing chariots and horses from Egypt, for the possession of which they were so notorious, that

**(d)** it would seem to have become at a later date almost proverbial in allusion to a alarm of an attack by chariots ([2Ki 7:6](#)).