

## CHAPTER V

### THE HITTITE CITIES AND RACE

OF the history of the 'White Syrians' or Hittites who lived in the land of Pteria, near the Halys, we know nothing at present beyond what we can gather from the ruins of their stronghold at Boghaz Keui and their palace at Eyuk. The same is the case with the Hittite tribes of Malatiyeh and Komagênê. When the inscription which adorns the body of a stone lion found at Merash can be fully deciphered, it will doubtless cast light on the early history of the city; at present even its ancient name is uncertain. It is not until we leave the mountainous region originally occupied by the Hittite race, and descend into the valleys of Syria, that the annals of their neighbours begin to tell us something about their fortunes and achievements. The history of their two southern capitals, Carchemish and Kadesh, broken and imperfect though it may be, is not an utter blank.

The site of Carchemish had long been looked for in vain. At one time it was identified with the Kirkesion or Circesium of classical geography, built at the confluence of the Khabour and the Euphrates. But the Assyrian name of Kirkesion was Sirki, and its position did not agree with that assigned to 'Gargamis' or Carchemish in the Assyrian texts.

Professor Maspero subsequently placed the latter at Membij, the ancient Mabog or Hierapolis, on the strength of the evidence furnished by classical authors and the Egyptian monuments; but the ruins of Membij contain nothing earlier than the Greek period, and their position on a rocky plateau at a distance from the Euphrates, is inconsistent with the fact known to us from the Assyrian inscriptions, that Carchemish commanded the fords over the Euphrates.

To Mr. Skene, for many years the English consul at Aleppo, is due the credit of first discovering the true site of the old Hittite capital. On the western bank of the Euphrates, midway between Birejik and the mouth of the Sajur, rises an artificial mound of earth, under which ruins and sculptured blocks of stone had been found from time to time. It was known as Jerablûs, or Kalaat Jerablûs, 'the fortress of Jerablûs,' sometimes wrongly written Jerabîs; and in the name of Jerablûs Mr. Skene had no difficulty in recognizing an Arab corruption of Hierapolis. In the Roman age the name of Hierapolis or 'Holy City' had been transferred to its neighbour Membij, which inherited the traditions and religious fame of the older Carchemish; but when the triumph of Christianity in Syria brought with it the fall of the great temple of Membij, the name disappeared from the later city, and was remembered only in connexion with the ruins of the ancient Carchemish.

Two years after Mr. Skene's discovery, Mr. George Smith visited Carchemish on his last ill-fated journey from which he never returned, and recognized at

once that Mr. Skene's identification was right. The position of Jerablûs suited the requirements of the Assyrian texts, it lay on the high-road which formerly led from east to west, and among its ruins was an inscription in Hittite characters. Not long afterwards there were brought to the British Museum the bronze bands which once adorned the gates of an Assyrian temple, and on one of these is a picture in relief of Carchemish as it looked in the days of Jehu of Israel. The Euphrates is represented as running past its walls, thus conclusively showing that Jerablûs, and not Membij, must be the site on which it stood.

The site was bought by Mr. Henderson, Mr. Skene's successor at Aleppo, and the money was invested by the former owner in the purchase of a cow. The mighty were fallen indeed, when the Hittite capital which had resisted the armies of Egypt and Assyria was judged to be worth no more than the price of a beast of the field. In 1878 Mr. Henderson was employed by the Trustees of the British Museum in excavating on the spot; but no sufficient supervision was exercised over the workmen, and though a few remains of Hittite sculpture and writing found their way to London, much was left to be burned into lime by the natives or employed in the construction of a mill.

The ancient city was defended on two sides by the Euphrates, and was exposed only on the north and west. Here, however, an artificial canal had been cut, on either side of which was a fortified wall. The mound which had first attracted Mr. Skene's attention

marks the site of the royal palace, where the excavators found the remains of a dado like that of Eyuk, the face of the stones having been sculptured into the likeness of gods and men. The men were shod with boots with upturned ends, that unfailing characteristic of Hittite art.

Carchemish enjoyed a long history. When first we hear of it in the Egyptian records it was already in Hittite hands. Thothmes III fought beneath its walls, and his bravest warriors plunged into the Euphrates in their eagerness to capture the foe. Tiglath-pileser I had seen its walls from the opposite shore of the Euphrates, but had not ventured to approach them. Assur-natsir-pal and his son Shalmaneser had received tribute from its king, and when it finally surrendered to the armies of Sargon it was made the seat of an Assyrian satrap. The trade which had flowed through it continued to pour wealth into the hands of its merchants, and the 'maneh of Carchemish' remained a standard of value. When Egypt made her final struggle for supremacy in Asia, it was under the walls of Carchemish that the decisive struggle was fought. The battle of Carchemish in B. C. 604 drove Necho out of Syria and Palestine, and placed the destinies of the chosen people in the hands of the Babylonian king. It is possible that the ruin of Carchemish dates from the battle. However that may be, long before the beginning of the Christian era it had been supplanted by Mabog or Membij, and the great sanctuary which had made it a 'holy city' was transferred to its rival and successor.

Like Carchemish, Kadesh on the Orontes, the most southern capital the Hittites possessed, was also a 'holy city.' Pictures of it have been preserved on the monuments of Ramses II. We gather from them that it stood on the shore of the Lake of Homs, still called the 'Lake of Kadesh,' at the point where the Orontes flowed out of the lake. The river was conducted round the city in a double channel, across which a wide bridge was thrown, the space between the two channels being apparently occupied by a wall.

Kadesh must have been one of the last conquests made by the Hittites in Syria, and their retention of it was the visible sign of their supremacy over Western Asia. We do not know when they were forced to yield up its possession to others. As has been pointed out, the correct reading of 2 Sam. xxiv. 6 informs us that the northern limit of the kingdom of David was formed by 'the Hittites of Kadesh,' 'the entering in of Hamath,' as it seems to be called elsewhere. In the age of David, accordingly, Kadesh must still have been in their hands, but it had already ceased to be so when the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III led his armies to the west. No allusion to the city and its inhabitants occurs in the Assyrian inscriptions, and we may conjecture that it had been destroyed by the Syrians of Damascus. As Membij took the place of Carchemish, so Emesa or Homs took the place of Kadesh <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Kidis or Kadesh mentioned in a Babylonian contract of the fortieth year of Nebuchadrezzar, and published by Dr. Pinches in the *Records of the Past*, new series, iv. pp. 99-101, is not necessarily Kadesh on the Orontes. At any rate the latter had long ceased to be a Hittite town.

Was Hebron also in the south of Palestine a Hittite city? Already in the days of Abraham we hear of two cities occupying the ground on which the later Hebron stood. One of these is the Amorite Mamre; the other is Kirjath-Arba, which in the time of the patriarch was inhabited by 'the children of Heth.' In the children of Heth commentators have agreed to see the Hittites, and their view seems to be supported by the independent testimony of Ezekiel, who makes the Hittites part of the original population of Jerusalem, and whose archæological interests are visible elsewhere in his prophecies. On the other hand, Arba, we are told, the founder of Kirjath-Arba, was 'the father of Anak,' and the references to the Anakim in the Old Testament would lead us to infer that they were either of Amorite descent or survivors of the early neolithic population of Canaan. That they were not Hittites is pretty clear.

Nevertheless we now have documentary evidence that in the Mosaic age, at all events, the Hittites had established themselves in what became later the territory of Judah. We have learned from the Tel el-Amarna tablets that the sons of the Hittite prince Arzawaya had there won land for themselves, and seduced the Egyptian governors from their loyalty to the Pharaoh. The letter of Ebed-Khiba, the vassal-king of Jerusalem, in which he recounts the fact, is so important, and has hitherto been so misinterpreted, that I give it here in full:—

'To the king my lord thus [says] Ebed-Khiba thy servant: at the feet of the king my lord seven times

seven I [fall]. Behold Melech-el (*Milkiim*) does not separate himself from the sons of Labai (the Bedâwî) and [from] the sons of Arzawa<sup>1</sup> to demand the territory of the king for themselves. As for a governor who has committed such an act, why does not the king call him in question? Behold Melech-el and Tagi; the act which they have committed is this: At that time they took it, even the city of Rabbah (*Rubuta*), and now Jerusalem—if this land belongs to the king why (are they trying to seize it)? When the city of Gaza was appointed for the king<sup>2</sup>, behold the land of the city of Gath-Carmel (*Gimti-kirmil*) was (assigned) to Tagi, and the men of Gath formed a garrison in Beth-Sannah (*Bit-Sâni*, less probably Beth-Shean), and we acted. When they gave Labai and Mount Shechem (*Sakmi*) to the Khabiri (Confederates), Melech-el sent to Tagi, and they took the sons of the house as slaves (?). They granted all their requests to the men of Keilah (*Kelti*). But we will rescue Jerusalem. The garrison which you sent by the hand of Khaya the son of Meri-Ra Hadadmikhir has taken. He has stationed (it) in his house in Gaza . . . men to Egypt . . . there is no garrison of the king. May the king live for ever! if Pa-ur (the royal commissioner) goes down to him [to Egypt, let the king know that] he has separated himself from me (and) is in Gaza, and let the king command for him a garrison to defend the land. All the king's land is revolting. Send Yehenkhamu and let him

<sup>1</sup> Written Arzawaya and Arzauya elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> By being placed under a special Egyptian Resident.

look after the king's land.—To the royal secretary says Ebed-Khiba [thy] servant: [Bring] the news plainly before the [king]. May it be abundantly well with you. Thy servant am I.'

We gather from a subsequent part of the correspondence that Jerusalem eventually fell into the hands of its enemies, among whom the sons of Arzawaya and their Hittite followers must be reckoned. We thus have the explanation of a fact to which I have drawn attention in *The Races of the Old Testament*. Among the ethnological types represented on the Egyptian monuments, casts of which were made by Prof. Flinders Petrie for the British Association, are the heads of the inhabitants of Ashkelon in the age of the Exodus. These heads present us with the characteristic features of the Hittite race, and so bear witness to the existence of a population of the Hittite type in the southern corner of Palestine.

If Hittite adventurers could find their way to the south of Canaan at a time when it was still under the government and protection of Egypt, there is no reason why they should not have done so centuries before. And the language in which Ezekiel describes the foundation of Jerusalem implies that such was the case. It was founded as much by Hittites as by Amorites, and since it was already an important city and the capital of a district in the age of the Tel el-Amarna tablets, its Hittite founders must have been in Southern Palestine at an early date. The name of its king Ebed-Khiba, 'the servant of the god Khiba,'



may itself be an evidence of this, if the current reading of the name is right. Khiba was a Mitannian deity, whose name is also found in that of the Hittite queen Putu-Khipa. In Ebed-Khiba, the priest-king of Jerusalem, we may have a descendant of invaders who once poured into the 'land of the Amorites' from Mesopotamia and the Hittite lands.

We have seen that the Hittites were originally a northern race. Their primitive home probably lay on the northern side of the Taurus. What they were like we can learn both from their own sculptures and from the Egyptian monuments, which agree most remarkably in the delineation of their features. The extraordinary resemblance between the Hittite faces drawn by the Egyptian artists and those depicted by themselves in their bas-reliefs and their hieroglyphs, is a convincing proof of the faithfulness of the Egyptian representations, as well as of the identity of the Hittites of the Egyptian inscriptions with the Hittites of Carchemish and Kappadokia.

It must be confessed that they were not a handsome people. They were short and thick of limb, and the front part of their faces was pushed forward in a curious and somewhat repulsive way. The forehead retreated, the cheek-bones were high, the nostrils were large, the upper lip protrusive. They had, in fact, according to the craniologists, the characteristics of a Mongoloid race. Like the Mongols, moreover, their skins were yellow and their eyes and hair were black. They arranged the hair in the form of a 'pig-tail,' which characterizes them on their own and the

Egyptian monuments quite as much as their snow-shoes with upturned toes.

In Syria they doubtless mixed with the Semitic race, and the further south they advanced the more likely they were to become absorbed into the native population. The Hittites of Southern Judah have Semitic names, and probably spoke a Semitic language. Kadesh continued to bear to the last its Semitic title, and among the Hittite names which occur further north there are several which display a Semitic stamp. In the neighbourhood of Carchemish Hittites and Aramæans were mingled together, and Pethor was at once a Hittite and an Aramæan town. In short, the Hittites in Syria were like a conquering race everywhere; they formed merely the governing and upper class, which became smaller and smaller the further removed they were from their original seats. Like the Normans in Sicily or the Etruscans in ancient Italy, they tended gradually to disappear or else to be absorbed into the subject race. It was only in their primitive homes that they survived in their original strength and purity, and though even in Kappadokia they lost their old languages, adopting in place of them first Aramaic, then Greek, and lastly Turkish, we may still observe their features and characteristics in the modern inhabitants of the Taurus range. Even in certain districts of Kappadokia their descendants may still be met with. 'The type,' says Sir Charles Wilson, 'which is not a beautiful one, is still found in some parts of Kappadokia, especially amongst the people living in the

extraordinary subterranean towns which I discovered beneath the great plain north-west of Nigdeh.' The characteristics of race, when once acquired, seem almost indelible; and it is possible that, when careful observations can be made, it will be found that the ancient Hittite race still survives, not only in Eastern Asia Minor, but even in the southern regions of Palestine.