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History of the Middle East and the Aegean Region c. 1380-1000 B.c.

Edited by I. E. S. Edwards, N. G. L. Hammond & E. Sollberger

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THE  
CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY  
  
VOLUME II  
  
PART 2

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# THE CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY

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THIRD EDITION

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VOLUME II  
PART 2

HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND  
THE AEGEAN REGION c. 1380-1000 B.C.

*EDITED BY*

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## P R E F A C E

FOR very different reasons the two kings who lived at the beginning of the period to which this part of the *History* is devoted have received more attention in modern times than any of their predecessors or successors on the Egyptian throne: Akhenaten, on account of his religious and artistic innovations, and Tutankhamun, on account of the chance survival of his tomb at Thebes with its fabulous contents untouched since antiquity until its discovery in 1922. Neither of them was accepted as having been a legitimate ruler worthy of inclusion in the king-lists of the Nineteenth Dynasty kings Sethos I and Ramesses II, as recorded in their temples at Abydos. While they and their successors until the end of the Twenty-first Dynasty occupied the throne of Egypt, important events were happening in Western Asia, the course of which is traced in this volume. The long Kassite rule in Babylonia came to an end and the rivalry between Assyria and Babylonia began. The Hittite empire reached its peak, declined and fell, as did the Elamite kingdom in Persia. The Phrygians appeared on the scene for the first time. Along the Mediterranean shores, in Phoenicia and in Ugarit new forms of writing were developed. Palestine emerged from its long period of anonymity with the rise of the Hebrew kingdom culminating in the reign of Solomon. Inevitably some of these events and others too, such as the southern movement of the so-called Sea Peoples, affected Egypt either directly or indirectly and she was fortunate in having on the throne a succession of warrior-kings who were able to ward off the worst of the threats to their country's independence either by military action or by judicious diplomacy. Indecisive battles between the Hittites and the Egyptians under Sethos I and Ramesses II ended with a peace-treaty which was honoured by both nations until the Hittites had ceased to be a power in Western Asia and the Sea Peoples had taken their place as the most serious menace to Egypt. The first clash came in the reign of Merneptah when the Sea Peoples, in alliance with the Libyans, invaded the western Delta but were beaten in a six-hour battle in which they suffered heavy losses. Further battles on land, outside Egyptian territory to the north-east, and in one of the mouths of the Nile, fought by Egypt's last great pharaoh, Ramesses III, proved more conclusive and the danger of invasion from the

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north was removed. The Libyans, however, in spite of being driven back by Ramesses III, continued to encroach on Egyptian soil and ultimately, under his weak successors of the same name, they set up communities in the Delta and at Heracleopolis, near the entrance to the Faiyūm. Their relations with the native population are not easy to understand. On the one hand Libyan bands are reported as harrying workers in the royal necropolis as far south as Thebes, and on the other hand Libyans served as mercenaries in the Egyptian army. Not very many years after their arrival a descendant of one of the chiefs of the Libyan community at Heracleopolis named Sheshonq was able to establish himself on the throne as king of Egypt, but his reign lies outside the scope of this volume.

The central theme in the Aegean region is the spread of Mycenaean civilization. Although deeply influenced by Minoan culture, the rulers and the upper classes of the Mycenaeans imposed their own pattern upon the outlook and the art of the peoples of the mainland. They built strongly fortified castles, organized their realms into powerful kingdoms and made conquests overseas. In the fourteenth century, when the Mycenaean civilization was at its zenith, the overseas settlements extended from Acragas and Syracuse in Sicily to Miletus in Asia Minor and to Cyprus. At this time when the civilizations of the Near East enjoyed a high level of prosperity and the resources of Europe and the Western Mediterranean were being developed, especially in minerals, the Mycenaeans held the intermediate zone through which most of the seaborne traffic passed between Europe, Africa and Asia. Mycenaean objects and Mycenaean traders reached many distant parts of the world, and the Greek language was enriched by contact with many peoples. Mycenaean experiences were incorporated in the myths which were to be transmitted to the Classical world and to modern times, and the foundations of Greek religion were laid in a Minoan–Mycenaean context which was itself influenced by the other religions of the Near East.

The decline of the Mycenaean civilization was a result of a general deterioration of trade and a dislocation of political conditions, to which the Mycenaean states themselves contributed by attacking one another and by destroying Troy. The Aegean Bronze Age drew to its end with the migrations of less civilized peoples into the Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor, which led in their turn to the migrations of Greek-speaking peoples from the North into Greece and from Mycenaean Greece to Crete, Cyprus,

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Asia Minor and other places. It was in this final stage of the Mycenaean world that the expedition of Agamemnon against Troy took its place in Greek legend and provided Homer, centuries later, with the theme of the *Iliad*. The prehistoric cultures of the Western Mediterranean region, including the islands and the coastal lands, are described in Chapter xxxvii, and the account is carried down to the arrival of migrants and colonists from the Eastern Mediterranean in the Early Iron Age.

Four contributors wish to express their gratitude to other scholars for giving them assistance: Dr R. D. Barnett to Dr J. Chadwick, Dr M. and Dr T. Dothan and Professor O. R. Gurney in his revision of Chapter xxviii, and to Professor Gurney, Mr J. D. Hawkins and Dr G. I. Martin in his revision of Chapter xxx; Professor D. J. Wiseman to Professor J. A. Brinkman for generously placing at his disposal the manuscript of his doctoral thesis (see the bibliography to Chapter xxxi, G, 2 and A, 3), and allowing him to use it freely when writing Chapter xxxi; Professor J. M. Cook to Mr R. V. Nicholls; Professor W. K. C. Guthrie and the Editors to Mrs Helen Hughes-Brock for additions to the bibliography of Chapter xl. The Editors are also indebted to Dr Chadwick for the generous help which he has given in matters deriving from the decipherment of Linear Script B.

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It is with sadness that the Editors record the deaths of no fewer than seven contributors since the publication of the previous part: Professors W. F. Albright, J. Černý, O. Eissfeldt, C. W. Blegen, A. Goetze, R. Labat and R. de Vaux.

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I.E.S.E.  
N.G.L.H.  
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