

Chapter 2: Mesopotamia: 2-4 Successors to Sumeria
Book Title: World Civilizations
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2-4 Successors to Sumeria

After the conquest of Sumeria by Sargon of Akkad, nomadic peoples eager to enjoy the fruits of civilized life subjected Mesopotamia to a long series of foreign invasions and conquests. These barbaric nomads generally adopted the beliefs and values of those they conquered. After the Akkadians, the most important of them were as follows (in sequence):

1. The *Amorites*, or *Old Babylonians*, were a Semitic people who conquered the plains under their great emperor Hammurabi in the 1700s B.C.E.
2. The [Hittites \(\(HIHT-tites\) An Indo-European people who were prominent in the Near East around 1200 B.C.E.\)](#) (HIHT-tites) were an Indo-European group (that is to say, their language was part of the large Indo-European language family) who came out of modern-day Turkey and constructed an empire there that reached as far east and south as the Zagros Mountains and Palestine. The first people to smelt iron, the Hittites were a remarkable group who took over the river plain around 1500 B.C.E. They were skilled administrators and established the first multiethnic state, which worked fairly well.
3. After the Hittites fell to unknown invaders around 1200 B.C.E., the Assyrians gradually rose to power about 900 B.C.E., operating from their northern Mesopotamian center at Nineveh. We discuss the imperial Assyrian Period from about 800–600 B.C.E. in [Chapter 7](#).
4. The Hebrews were another important Semitic people. According to the Hebrew Bible, or the *Tanakh* (the “Old Testament” in the Christian Bible), they originated in Mesopotamia. After centuries of wandering, they settled in Canaan (Palestine; see [Chapter 7](#)).
5. Finally, after a brief period under the *New Babylonians* (or *Chaldees*, as the Old Testament calls them), the plains fell to the mighty *Persian Empire* in the 500s B.C.E. and stayed under Persian (Iranian) rule for most of the next thousand years (see [Chapter 7](#)).

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