

HISTORY OF THE MITANNI STATE

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Annotation: This article discusses the emergence of the Mitanni state, which was established in the territories of Northern Mesopotamia in ancient world history. It explores the conquests of its rulers, the internal and external policies of the state, and its cultural life.

Keywords: Mitanni state, Hurrian state, Washshukanni, Mitanni army, Kirta, Shuttarna I, Parattarna I, Shaushtatar, decline of the Mitanni state, Mitanni culture.

Mitanni was an ancient Hurrian state that emerged in Northern Mesopotamia and the surrounding regions. This state existed from the 17th to the 13th century BCE. In Assyrian texts, it was referred to as **Hanigalbat**, while in Egyptian and Semitic languages, it was known as **Naharin**. The name **Mitanni** is associated with the **Maytani dynasty**, which is considered its founding lineage. The capital of Mitanni, **Washukanni** (referred to as **Khoshkhani** in some sources), was located in the upper reaches of the **Khabur River**. According to estimates, this city was situated on the site of present-day **Serê Kaniyê (Ras al-Ayn) in modern Syria**. According to ancient Near Eastern history specialist Igor Mixaylovich Dyakonov, the Hurrians became the primary constituent of the Armenian people, having completely intermingled with other related groups. The population of Mitanni was made up of Hurrians and Semites, and its official languages were Hurrian and Akkadian.

The Mitanni people spoke in the Hurrian language. This is clearly evidenced by the texts of the treaties they concluded with the Hittites and by the letters they sent to the Egyptian pharaohs. The Mitanni army possessed advanced technology in horse and chariot warfare, which enabled them to unite the small Hurrian tribal groups of Mesopotamia and subjugate the Amorite-Akkadian city-states located between the Zagros and Amanos mountains.

Because the Hittites were completely absorbed in expanding into the western part of Asia Minor, this enabled the Mitanni state to establish political dominance in Upper Mesopotamia. During the reign of the Hittite king Hattusili I (c. 1650–1620 BCE), the Mitanni launched military campaigns into the territory of Asia Minor. The Hittites repelled these incursions with considerable difficulty. Hattusili I's grandson and successor, Mursili I, in 1595 BCE, organized a campaign against Babylon, defeating the Amorite dynasty. After the Hittite invasion, Babylon was conquered by the Kassites. Following Mursili's reign, prolonged internal conflicts began within the Hittite kingdom, which played a significant role in the rise and strengthening of Mitanni.

According to traditional accounts, the first legendary founder of the Mitanni kingship was a ruler named Kirta. This view is supported by the discovery of a royal seal from Alalakh dating to the late 16th century BCE from northern Syria, which is inscribed with the words "Maytaniy – Shuttarna I, son of Kirta." This leads us to conclude that Kirta was the initiator of the Mitanni dynasty. After Kirta, his son Shuttarna I ruled, probably during the late 16th century BCE. Later on, during the reign of Parattarna I, the Syrian territories came under Mitanni influence. It is recorded that a ruler named Idrimi ascended the throne of Alalah with the assistance of Parattarna I, and he governed his state as a vassal to Mitanni.

Mitanni's most powerful king was Shaushtatar (or Saussadadattar), who reigned approximately 1450–1410 BCE. He held the title "King of the Hurrian Warriors of Maytaniy." He also

concluded a treaty with the king of Kizzuvadna, located to the south of the Taurus Mountains. The rulers of Alalax and Arrafa submitted to him. Moreover, even if not directly, Shaushtatar managed to establish his control over Ashur. The Mitanni ambassador, participating in the affairs of the Assyrian elders' council, received the title of limmu each year, like others. Many cities in the eastern part of the Asia Minor peninsula submitted to Mitanni.

In the New Kingdom period, the military campaigns of the 18th Dynasty Egyptian pharaohs in the Near Eastern territories clashed with the interests of the Mitanni state in the region. According to the year lists compiled by the royal secretary Tanini—which provide information on the wars that pharaoh Thutmose III waged in the Near East against the Mitanni state—during the 33rd and 35th years of his reign, Thutmose III invaded the Mitanni state and forced its ruler to retreat via the Furot River.[1]

The war between Mitanni and Egypt continued until peace was established between the Mitanni ruler Artadama I and Pharaoh Thutmose IV. This peace was cemented when Artadama I gave his daughter in marriage to the pharaoh. At a time when the strong threat from the Hittite kingdom was growing against Mitanni, establishing peace with Egypt was absolutely necessary. The Hittite king Hattusili III had penetrated deeply into Syria. In later periods, wars continued between the Hittites and the Mitanni, and on top of that, a series of dynastic disputes began within Mitanni. Nevertheless, relying on his friendship with Egypt, King Tushratta managed to successfully fight against the Hittites and maintained secure rule over Upper Mesopotamia for a long time. Tushratta's daughter, Tado-Xebani, was married to the Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep III. With the rise to power of the reformer Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) in Egypt and Egypt becoming preoccupied with its internal affairs, the relations between Egypt and Mitanni eventually broke down.

During the reign of the Hittite king Suppiluliuma I (c. 1380–1335 BCE), he invaded Mitanni. At first, Tushratta managed to repel the Hittite attacks, but in the later years of his reign, Suppiluliuma I's forces defeated him. Consequently, the Hittites seized part of Mitanni, forcing Tushratta to flee, and he was eventually killed. The Assyrian ruler Ashshurbalit I, who was called upon for help, annexed the eastern provinces of the country. From that point on, Mitanni was reduced to a small state in Upper Mesopotamia, with the Assyrians and Hittites engaged in ongoing struggles for control over it. During the time of Shattuara II – specifically around 1260 BCE – the Mitanni state was finally terminated by the Assyrian king Salmanassar I.

List of Rulers of the Mitanni State:

- **Kirta** – (date unknown)
- **Shuttarna I** – Late 16th century BCE
- **Parrattarna I** – Approximately 1500–1485 BCE
- **Parshatatar** – Approximately 1485–1465 BCE
- **Saushtatar** – Approximately 1465–1435 BCE
- **Shaytarna** – Approximately 1435–1410 BCE
- **Artadama I** – Approximately 1410–1400 BCE
- **Shuttarna II** – Approximately 1400–1375 BCE
- **Artashshumara** – Approximately 1375–1370 BCE
- **Tushratta** – Approximately 1370–1350 BCE
- **Artadama II** – Approximately 1335–1330 BCE
- **Shuttarna III** – In 1330 BCE
- **Shattivaza** (also known as Mattivaza, Kurtivaza) – Approximately 1350–1320 BCE
- **Shattuara I** – Approximately 1320–1300 BCE



– **Vasashatta** – Approximately 1300–1280 BCE

– **Shattuara II** – Approximately 1265–1260 BCE [2]

Mitanni Culture. The people of the Mitanni state spoke in a Hurrian dialect associated with the Indo-Aryan languages. Many words and expressions found in sources written in Sanskrit from ancient India are also repeated in the Hurrian language.

For example, in the treaties concluded between the Hittite and Mitanni states, the names of Hurrian deities such as Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and Nasatya are enumerated [3].

Although the Mitanni state was relatively short-lived on the historical stage, it remains an inseparable part of ancient Near Eastern history. Its politics, culture, and economy were among the most complex and advanced systems of its time, and they exerted a significant influence on later periods. While much information about the Mitanni state has not yet been fully explored, ongoing archaeological research and historical documents continue to provide a better understanding of its role.

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