



IRAN VII. NON-IRANIAN LANGUAGES (5) KASSITE

IRAN vii, continued

vii(5). Kassite

The Kassites (q.v.), Akkadian Kaššu (Balkan, 1954), were mountain tribes probably somewhere in the central Zagros who ruled Babylon from the sixteenth to the middle of the twelfth century B.C.E. They may be related to the later Kissaioi in the mountainous regions north of Susa and to the Kossaioi (see [COSSAEANS](#)) whom Potts convincingly locates in the Baḳtiāri mountains west of Isfahan. The Kissaioi were mentioned first in Aeschylus *The Persians* (17) and Herodotus, and latest in post-Alexandrian time as a contingent of the army of Antiochus III at the battle of Raphia in 217 B.C.E. (Polybius, 5.79). In turn, the Kissaioi may be related or identical with the Kossaioi (for the succinct overview of the debate, cf. Potts, 1999, pp. 337-40, 373-78).

Only the oldest stage of the Kassite language is barely known from a few documents: a single tablet containing a fragment of a Kassite vocabulary, and a list of Kassite names with their Akkadian equivalents. In addition, late Akkadian includes a couple hundred words of Kassite origin, some 10 percent of which are divine names.

Early impact of an immigrating Indo-Iranian group is suggested by a small, but linguistically and culturally significant, number of terms. These include *šuriias*



“sun god,” Old Indo-Aryan **sūrya*, and the personal name *Abi-rattaš*, with Indo-Iranian **ratha* “chariot,” which reflects the new technology of warfare. Otherwise the linguistic affiliation of these peoples is uncertain.

Bibliography of Kassite:

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