

Battle of Kadesh

April 17th Quiet Green

Who? The Egyptians, led by Ramses II, against the Hittites, led by Muwatalli II.

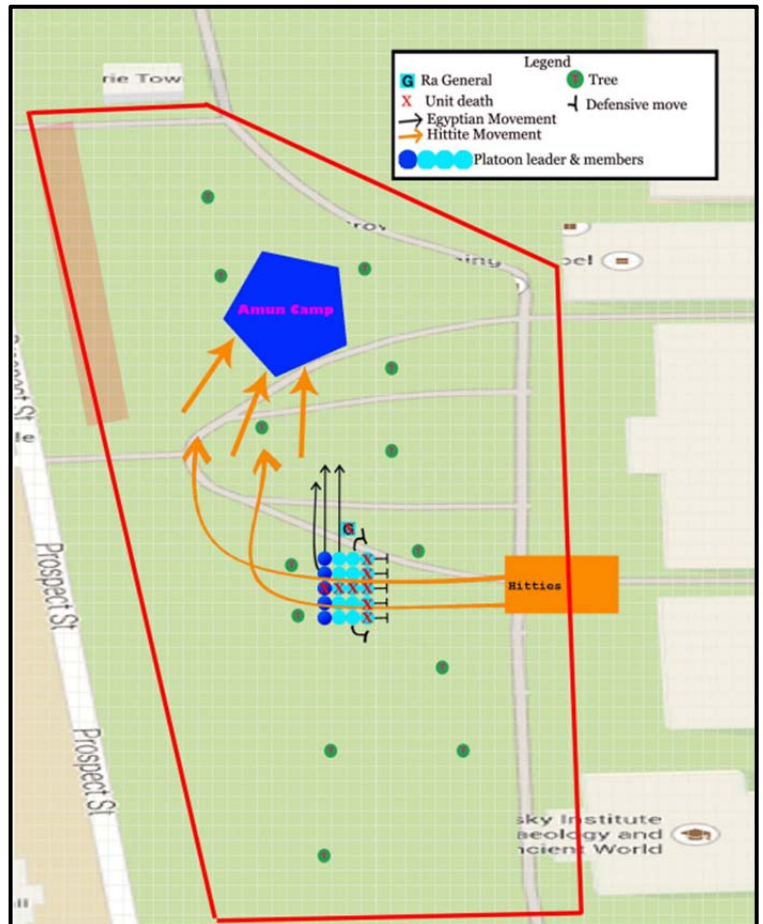
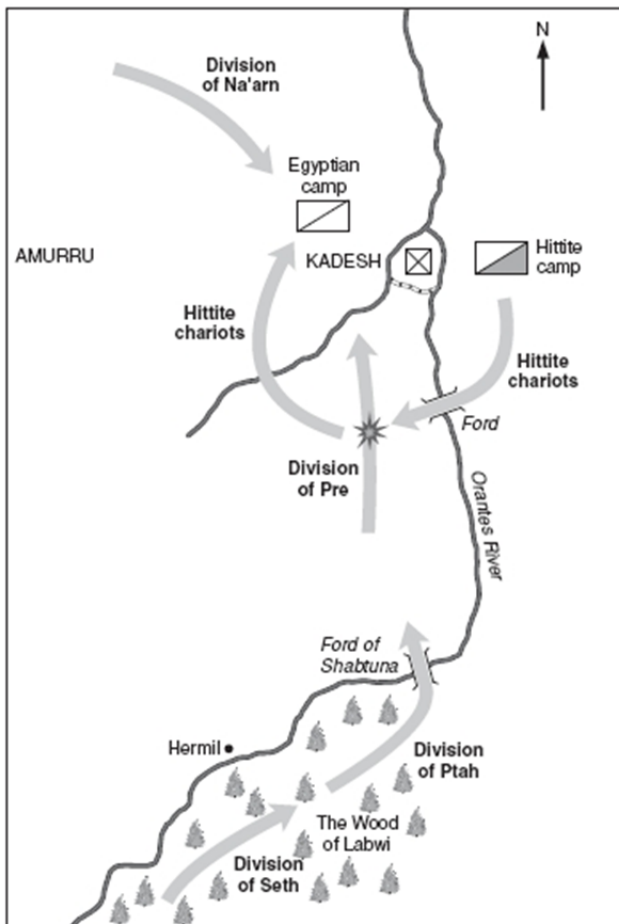
What? The Battle of Kadesh was a conflict between the Egyptians and Hittites over the vassal community of Kadesh in Syria-Palestine.

When? Around 1274 BCE

Where? The Levant, modern Syria-Palestine.

*In our reenactment, the Egyptians are in brown and the Hittites are in white.
Pick a side and cheer them on to victory!*

Why? The Egyptians and Hittites, as the most powerful empires in the region, both desired to control the Levant because of its valuable trade routes, port access, and natural resources.



The Plot

Ramses II leads his army north and, on false information from Hittite spies, unwittingly lands himself in the midst of Hittite forces. The Hittites attack the unsuspecting Egyptian army but Ramses rallies his troops and with the help of reinforcements, clashes against his northern foes.

Who was Ramses II?

Commonly called Ramses the Great, he was a pharaoh of the 19th Dynasty of the New Kingdom. He reigned from approximately 1279 to 1213 BCE.

Ramses is remembered for his large building program and expanding the Egyptian empire through military prowess.

Who were the Hittites?

The Hittites were a cultural group that built a kingdom in central Anatolia, an area roughly equivalent to modern day Turkey, with a capital at Hattusa. Their Empire period, during which they had ongoing relations with Egypt, lasted from 1450-1180 BCE. At the time of the Battle of Kadesh, Muwatalli II was king.

The axe has a long history in Egyptian warfare and iconography, used in the Battle of Kadesh and various other contests. Ceremonial axes have also been found in burial contexts, often made of metal hafted to a wooden shaft. Our reconstructed axes are made of cardboard and dowels, mimicking the duckbill shape of the original.



Egyptian Duckbill Axe
Providence, RI
2014 CE

Egyptian Duckbill Axe
Thebes, Upper Egypt
1550-1295 BCE



So Who Won Anyway?

Both sides claimed victory and though the Egyptians did not gain any territory in this conflict, they have been historically viewed as the victors due to Ramses' successful propaganda campaign. The two powers signed a treaty several years later.