

## Egyptians, Canaanites, and Philistines in the Period of the Emergence of Israel

ITAMAR SINGER

### INTRODUCTION

During the 150 years from about the middle of the twelfth century to the beginning of the tenth century BCE, revolutionary changes occurred in Palestine in many spheres. One of the most outstanding was in the sphere of political organization: from a province of the Egyptian empire, it turned into a national Israelite state.

Different peoples took part in the power struggle which brought about this unprecedented transformation. The most important of these were the Egyptians—rulers of the region for hundreds of years. Others were: the Canaanites—the early inhabitants of Palestine,<sup>1</sup> who dwelt primarily in the lowlands; the Philistines and other Sea Peoples (Sikila, Sherdani), who had arrived recently from the northwest and settled along the coastal plain; and the Israelite tribal groups, who settled mainly in the highlands.<sup>2</sup> Research has, as a matter of course, focused upon the Israelites, if only because they had the upper hand in the struggle. This study will essay a historical examination of the events of this period from the standpoint of the other forces that participated in the struggle for control over Palestine—those perceived in the perspective of history as the losers.

Sources for reconstruction of the non-Israelite aspects of the period are meager and even more limited than those for the period in general. Along with the constraints and problematics which the biblical sources pose for the historian altogether, the simple fact is that they were written by Israelites and obviously

1 In this article no distinction will be made between the terms 'Canaanite' and 'Amorite'. They are largely interchangeable in the biblical literature and refer to the autochthonous population of Palestine—the biblical 'inhabitants of the land' (Gen 50:11) or 'who were born in the land' (1 Chr 7:21).

2 For purposes of this discussion the term 'Israelites' is used as a collective generic term for all the tribal groups that united under the leadership of Saul at the end of the period being considered. The substance of the term and its earliest use in connection with a comprehensive national entity are discussed in other articles in this volume.

their authors had manifestly 'pro-Israelite' inclinations, both in their choice of material and in the way it was presented.

Independent sources from elsewhere are almost nonexistent. As is the case with empires forced to retreat from their colonies, Egypt did not document its withdrawal from Canaan. In fact, it is from negative evidence—the disappearance of Egyptian artifacts in Palestine—that we know of the Egyptian retreat from Canaan. Neither the Canaanites nor the Philistines or the other peoples in Palestine left behind a national epic which could serve as a historical source analogous to the Bible, while the few and meager inscriptions from the period itself are of almost no help to the historian. It is ironic that the Canaanites, who gave mankind the first alphabet, left behind so few inscriptions to document their history. Archaeological evidence makes a certain contribution to balancing the distortion which ensues from the one-sidedness of the biblical sources, helping at times to either confirm or refute a historical reconstruction which has been built upon fragmentary biblical information along with the personal judgment of the investigator.

Excessive dependence upon 'historical logic', a perspective which necessarily entails a retrospective view of events, constitutes a hazard for the historian. Thus, for example, judging by the results of the struggle for control over Palestine, we would expect to find Egyptian-Canaanite cooperation in an attempt to preserve the existing order against the growing Israelite threat to its foundations. Yet the actual developments were quite different. The Egyptians pursued a short-sighted policy: not only did they not reinforce the Canaanite city-states so that they would withstand the pressure of the hill country people, but rather, in certain instances, they took steps to weaken them, conquer them, and tear down their walls. On several occasions, the reverse also occurred: Canaanite cities did not heed the instructions of the Egyptian authorities and even undermined the power of the regime. Despite the pitfalls of retrospective reconstruction, reasoning remains the main work tool of the historian, especially for this sparsely documented period.

Finally, a word on the difficulties concerning the chronological reconstruction of the period. The diminishing Egyptian sources on Canaan and the disappearance of Egyptian artifacts in Palestine entail the concomitant absence of data for an absolute chronology, and even relative chronology becomes very difficult to establish. The French historian Roland de Vaux wrote a comment to this effect in the rough draft of the last chapter ('Period of the Judges') of his monumental work on the history of the Israelites, which he did not manage to complete before his death: 'Impossibilité d'établir une chronologie'.<sup>3</sup> We can only agree with that comment and try, nevertheless, to roughly and tentatively reconstruct the main course of events during the thirteenth to eleventh centuries BCE.

3 R. de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne d'Israël: La période des Juges*, Paris 1973, p. 4.



'And the Egyptians said, let us flee from before Israel...'

#### THE FINAL STAGES OF EGYPTIAN RULE IN CANAAN

(CA 1300-1135 BCE)

The tightening of the Egyptian grasp on Palestine during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Dynasties, a process already discerned by Alt half a century ago,<sup>4</sup> has been increasingly illuminated by recent archaeological studies.<sup>5</sup> One of its expressions was the annexation of large regions, especially along the southern coast of Palestine, and their subjugation to direct Egyptian rule. This was a sharp departure from the policy which had been pursued by the Egyptians for hundreds of years. Although not referred to explicitly in Egyptian documentation, it is reasonable to suppose that one of Egypt's objectives in this new policy was to counteract the pressure of various tribal groups which had become more active in the hilly regions and the desert fringe of Canaan. In this effort the Egyptians could not expect much help from the weak Canaanite city-states, which were plagued by strife among themselves. Thus they were compelled to increase their direct control over these towns, thereby gaining greater maneuverability for their forces. As more archaeological data have become available in confirmation of this policy, especially in the south of the country, we can now reconstruct the different stages of the annexation policy.<sup>6</sup>

#### Ramesses II (1279-1212 BCE)

The new Egyptian policy is foreshadowed in the expeditions of Seti I (1291-1279) to northern Canaan, but it was fully crystallized during the long reign of Ramesses II.

An Egyptian fortress, subject to the control of the Egyptian governmental center in Joppa, was built at Aphek in the Sharon on the ruins of the Canaanite palace.<sup>7</sup> In excavations at Ashdod and its ancient port Tel Mor, evidence has been

- 4 A. Alt, 'Ägyptische Tempel in Palästina und die Landnahme der Philister', *ZDPV*, 67 (1944), pp. 1-20 (repr. *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I, München 1953, pp. 216-230).
- 5 N. Na'aman, 'Eretz-Israel in the Canaanite Period: The Middle Bronze Age and the Late Bronze Age (ca. 2000-1200 BCE)', I. Eph'al (ed.), *The History of Eretz Israel*, Vol. I: *The Early Periods*, Jerusalem 1982, pp. 246-251 (Hebrew); E.D. Oren, "'Governors' Residencies" in Canaan Under The New Kingdom: A Case Study of Egyptian Administration', *JSSA*, 14 (1984), pp. 37-56; O. Goldwasser, 'Hieratic Inscriptions from Tel Sera' in Southern Canaan', *Tel Aviv*, 11 (1984), pp. 77-93; D. Ussishkin, 'Levels VII and VI at Tel Lachish and the End of the Late Bronze Age in Canaan', J.N. Tubb (ed.), *Palestine in the Bronze and Iron Ages: Papers in Honour of Olga Tufnell*, London 1985, pp. 213-228; I. Singer, 'Mernephtah's Campaign to Canaan and the Egyptian Occupation of the Southern Coastal Plain of Palestine in the Ramesside Period', *BASOR*, 269 (1988), pp. 1-10; idem, 'The Political Status of Megiddo VIIA', *Tel Aviv*, 15-16 (1988-1989), pp. 101-112.
- 6 For a detailed discussion, see Singer (above, n. 5—1988).
- 7 M. Kochavi, 'The History and Archaeology of Aphek-Antipatris: A Biblical City in the Sharon Plain', *BA*, 44 (1981), pp. 75-86.

found that during the reign of Ramesses II this region too was under direct Egyptian control.<sup>8</sup> Presumably, the annexation process began in the southern coastal region, in the hinterland of the Egyptian administrative seat in Gaza.<sup>9</sup> However, data from excavations carried out at the beginning of this century at sites along Naḥal Besor (Tell Jemmeh and Tell el-Far'ah) do not allow us to determine the exact time when the 'Governors' Residencies' were established at these sites.<sup>10</sup>

The picture which emerges from these data is that during the first stage of Egyptian expansion, which largely paralleled the reign of Ramesses II, Egyptian strongholds and administrative centers were established chiefly in cities located along the *Via Maris*. At this time, Ashdod, located midway between Gaza and Joppa, became an important supply base for Egyptian caravans on their way north. A similar purpose was served by the annexation of Aphek, which lies in a strategic pass between the sources of the Yarkon and the Hills of Ephraim. Presumably, other places were also added to the chain of Egyptian fortresses, but their sites have not yet been excavated.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps expansion of the sphere of Egyptian control near the higher reaches of Naḥal Besor should be understood in connection with the routes leading to Transjordan and the Arabah copper mines. Apparently, Tell Jemmeh and Tell el-Far'ah were way stations along this route. As noted, we do not have sufficient evidence to determine exactly when the process began in this region, and it may possibly have transpired in one of the later stages of Egyptian expansion.

Thus far we do not have data about the policy of tightened Egyptian control in other parts of the country, but by analogy with developments in southern Canaan, it is reasonable to assume that the Egyptians acted similarly north of the Yarkon River. Egyptian texts from this period mostly report on the expeditions of Ramesses to Syria and Transjordan, with almost no mention of Canaan. Although in the Amarah temple in Nubia a topographical list has been preserved which includes the names of Raphia, Sharuhēn, [...] Maḥoz, Socoh, Joppa and (after a broken segment) Dor and Rehob,<sup>12</sup> it does not constitute conclusive evidence of a special Egyptian presence in the places mentioned.

- 8 M. Dothan, 'Archaeological Evidence for Movements of the Early "Sea Peoples" in Canaan', *AASOR*, 49 (1989), pp. 64-65; idem, 'Mor, Tell', *EAHL*, Vol. III, Jerusalem 1978, pp. 889-890; Singer (above, n. 5—1988), p. 2.
- 9 Building stones on which the name of Ramesses II was engraved were found south of Gaza, comparable to the doorjamb stones from Beth-Shean, Joppa, and Ashdod. See R. Giveon, 'Two Inscriptions of Ramesses II', *IEJ*, 25 (1975), pp. 247-249. Also, during the Nineteenth Dynasty a new fortress was built at the Egyptian site of Deir el-Balah, and adjacent to it, a water reservoir. See T. Dothan, 'Aspects of Egyptian and Philistine Presence in Canaan during the Late Bronze-Early Iron Ages', E. Lipiński (ed.), *The Land of Israel: Cross-Roads of Civilizations*, Leuven 1985, pp. 61-62.
- 10 For the literature, see Oren (above, n. 5).
- 11 For example, Maḥoz (Tell Abu Sulṭān) between Ashdod and Joppa. See Singer (above n. 5—1988), p. 3.
- 12 B. Mazar, *Cities and Districts in Eretz-Israel*, Jerusalem 1975, pp. 154-159 (Hebrew); E. Edelman, 'Die Ortsnamenlisten in den Tempeln von Aksha, Amarah und Soleb im Sudan', *BN*, 11 (1980), p. 67.



An indirect hint at the status of the city of Megiddo during this period is found in a fragment of a letter from Boğazköy.<sup>13</sup> In the document, dating from the middle of the thirteenth century, the city of Megiddo (Makkitta) is mentioned as a meeting place for Hittite and Egyptian emissaries on expeditions between their respective kingdoms. If we add to this the two rare Hittite artifacts which were discovered in the Megiddo excavations—a Hittite ivory from the treasure of the palace of Stratum VIIA and a button seal of approximately the same period—it becomes clear that Megiddo occupied a central place in Egyptian relations with the north during the Nineteenth Dynasty. It may be that by this time Megiddo had already become an Egyptian administrative seat, even though there is clearer evidence of this process in findings from the period of the Twentieth Dynasty, which will be discussed below.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Merneptah (1212-1202 BCE)*

With Merneptah's ascent to the throne, a new stage in the policy of tightening Egyptian control was inaugurated. After the standstill in Egyptian foreign policy during the last decades of Ramesses' rule, there was a renewed need to secure the important international routes in Canaan by annexing more territory to direct Egyptian control.

The most important document for clarifying this issue is the 'Israel Stele' from the fifth year of Merneptah's rule (1207 BCE).<sup>15</sup> The historical significance of this solitary external mention of early Israel was for a long time the center of discussion, and recently, there has been renewed disagreement resulting from a suggestion which adds a fresh perspective to Merneptah's expedition. But first the basic data and main approaches prevalent in current research must be reviewed.<sup>16</sup>

The 'Israel Stele' is a memorial record erected by Merneptah to commemorate his victory over the Libyan tribes in the west during the fifth year of his reign. The stele is concerned chiefly with this war, and it is only in the last section, a kind of survey of the situation on the borders of the empire, that the well-known description of the surrender of Ashkelon, Gezer, Yeno'am, and Israel appears. Because of the poetic style of the description, some Egyptologists were inclined to a certain skepticism concerning the historical reliability of this section;<sup>17</sup> this despite the fact that the title 'conqueror of Gezer' also appears in the inscription

13 I. Singer, 'Megiddo Mentioned in a Letter from Boğazköy', E. Neu and C. Rüster (eds.), *Documentum Asiae Minoris Antiquae: Festschrift für Heinrich Otten zum 75. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden 1988, pp. 327-332. This is the only mention so far of a city in Palestine in the archives of Boğazköy.

14 For a comprehensive discussion, see Singer (above, n. 5—1988-89).

15 J.A. Wilson in J. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Princeton 1955, p. 377.

16 See the literature quoted in R. Krauss, 'Merneptah', *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, IV/25, Wiesbaden 1980, pp. 71-76.

17 J. von Beckerath, *Tanis und Theben*, Hamburg 1951, p. 67; W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Wiesbaden 1971, p. 224.

of Merneptah from Amada.<sup>18</sup> Other scholars have attached greater credibility to the information included in the stele.<sup>19</sup> Of course no one disputes the importance of the first appearance of the name 'Israel' in an extra-biblical document.

A new dimension has been added to the debate as a result of Yurco's suggestion that a relief from Karnak, previously attributed to Ramesses II, must rather be ascribed to Merneptah.<sup>20</sup> The relief, only partially preserved, portrays the conquest of three fortified cities and the defeat of a fourth enemy on the open field. Of the captions accompanying the relief, only the name of Ashkelon has been preserved. According to Yurco's suggestion, the other two cities represented would be Gezer and Yeno'am, and the enemy in the open field would then be Israel.<sup>21</sup> Following a careful scrutiny of the location of the reliefs and the inscriptions engraved at their side, Redford has recently rejected the dating proposed by Yurco.<sup>22</sup> He also invoked doubts about the historical reliability of the Canaanite list in the 'Israel Stele', leaving only the possibility that it describes a limited and unimportant Egyptian expedition to Gezer.<sup>23</sup>

Without adopting an unequivocal stand in the debate among Egyptologists concerning this question, I consider it worthwhile to point out that if Yurco's suggestion is correct, it can resolve a certain difficulty in reconstructing the course of events along the southern coast of Canaan. According to the traditional dating of the relief, the city of Ashkelon would have been conquered twice—during the reign of Ramesses II (according to the relief) and during the rule of Merneptah (according to the 'Israel Stele'). This difficulty, which had earlier been of concern to Alt,<sup>24</sup> is resolved by Yurco's proposal. To this it should be added that places in the south of Canaan do not appear in descriptions of the campaigns of Ramesses II,<sup>25</sup> whereas dating the four scenes on the relief to the time of Merneptah would well suit the four locations mentioned in the 'Israel Stele'. At any rate, even if we do not consider the relief, because of the doubt about its dating, we cannot reject the information conveyed by the stele concerning the campaign to Canaan, which occurred before the fifth year of Merneptah's reign. Furthermore, an analysis of the strategic significance of this campaign and its results will indicate its complete consonance with overall Egyptian policy in Canaan.<sup>26</sup>

After the annexation of large portions of the southern coastal plain during the time of Ramesses II, Ashkelon and Gezer were the last remaining Canaanite city-

18 K.A. Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions*, IV/2, Oxford 1981, p. 34.

19 See, for example, Krauss (above, n. 16), p. 72, n. 14.

20 F. Yurco, 'Merneptah's Palestinian Campaign', *JSSEA*, 8 (1978), p. 70; idem, 'Merneptah's Canaanite Campaign', *JARCE*, 23 (1987), pp. 189-215.

21 See also L.E. Stager, 'Merneptah, Israel and Sea Peoples: New Light on an Old Relief', *Eretz-Israel*, 18 (1985), pp. 56\*-64\*, who discusses the ramifications of this identification.

22 D.B. Redford, 'The Ashkelon Relief at Karnak and the Israel Stele', *IEJ*, 36 (1986), pp. 188-200.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 196 ff.

24 Alt (above, n. 4), p. 225, n. 3.

25 See Helck (above, n. 17), pp. 219ff.

26 Singer (above, n. 5—1988).



states located in the southern part of the *Via Maris*, which still retained a certain degree of independence. Merneptah's campaign, in the course of which these cities were conquered, ensured complete Egyptian control over this crucial section of the international route. Ashkelon became an Egyptian stronghold, and apparently, a temple was erected there to the Egyptian god Ptah.<sup>27</sup> Merneptah considered the conquest of Gezer to be the pinnacle of his campaign, as evidenced by the title 'conqueror of Gezer' that he conferred upon himself. It may be assumed that in Gezer as well, an Egyptian center of government was set up. And indeed, an impressive building, which perhaps served as the 'Governor's Residency', was uncovered in the excavations of Macalister.<sup>28</sup> Gezer, which was the most important Canaanite city-state in southern Canaan,<sup>29</sup> dominated not only a vital section of the *Via Maris* but also the main crossroad ascending from the Shephelah to the central highlands. It may be that the Egyptians tried to expand their control in this region, then at the beginning of a settlement process, and it is possibly in this connection that the name 'Israel' is mentioned in the inscription.<sup>30</sup>

Indirect evidence of this can be found in the 'Border Journal' from the third year of Merneptah's reign,<sup>31</sup> which reports the arrival of fortress commanders from 'Merneptah's well in the hills'. Even if there is no proof of the identification proposed many years ago with the 'Waters of Nephtoh' (Jos 15:9; 18:15),<sup>32</sup> the designation of the place in the 'Border Journal' accords well with locating it in the hills around Jerusalem. The practice of fortifying water sources along caravan routes is well known from the reliefs of Seti I, which describe the 'Ways of Horus',<sup>33</sup> and from the new archaeological research in northern Sinai and at Deir el-Balah.<sup>34</sup> It is difficult to determine whether the fortification of the water source near Jerusalem was meant as preparation for Merneptah's expedition, or was perhaps one of its results.<sup>35</sup> The Egyptian attempt to assure a certain amount of

27 Alt (above, n. 4), pp. 219ff.

28 I. Singer, 'An Egyptian "Governor's Residency" at Gezer', *Tel Aviv*, 13-14 (1986-1987), pp. 26-31.

29 N. Na'aman, 'The Political Disposition and Historical Development of Eretz-Israel According to the Amarna Letters' (Ph.D. Thesis), Tel Aviv University 1975, pp. 78-87 (Hebrew); idem, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography*, Jerusalem 1986, pp. 472-475; I. Singer, 'The Beginning of Philistine Settlement in Canaan and the Northern Boundary of Philistia', *Tel Aviv*, 12 (1985), pp. 116-118.

30 Singer (above, n. 5—1988), p. 4.

31 Wilson in Pritchard (above, n. 15), p. 258.

32 See the literature quoted in Krauss (above, n. 16), p. 74, n. 13.

33 A.H. Gardiner, 'The Ancient Military Road Between Egypt and Palestine', *JEA*, 6 (1920), pp. 99-116; Helck (above, n. 17), pp. 310ff.

34 E.D. Oren, 'The "Ways of Horus" in North Sinai', A.F. Rainey (ed.), *Egypt, Israel, Sinai: Archaeological and Historical Relationships in the Biblical Period*, Tel Aviv 1987, p. 83; T. Dothan, 'Deir el-Balah, Preliminary Report of the 1979 and 1980 Campaigns', *IEJ*, 31 (1981), pp. 127-129; idem (above, n. 9), pp. 61-62.

35 H.J. Priebatsch, 'Jerusalem und die Brunnenstrasse Merneptahs', *ZDPV*, 91 (1975), p. 22. For Egyptian finds from Jerusalem, apparently from the period of the Nineteenth Dynasty, see G. Barkay, 'A Late Bronze Age Egyptian Temple in Jerusalem?', *Eretz-Israel*, 21 (1990), pp. 94-106 (Hebrew).

control in the central hill country, in the vicinity of Jerusalem, has far-reaching significance for the following stages of the 'Israelite Settlement' process and the crystallization of the tribes of Israel: it may be assumed that this was the beginning of the non-Israelite wedge between Jerusalem/Jebus and Gezer, which separated the tribes in the central highlands from those in the south.

Apparently, one of the objectives of Egyptian penetration into the central hills was to open an alternative route northward, via the Jordan Valley to the Beth-Shean Valley. A vessel bearing the name of Queen Taosert found at Tell Deir 'Alla<sup>36</sup> may point to an Egyptian presence in the central Jordan Valley. The alternative route to the northern valleys lessened dependence on the roads through the Sharon, which were in the nature of a 'bottleneck' along the *Via Maris*. As noted, data are not available about what the Egyptians did to secure the safe passage of their caravans from Aphek northward; but it may be assumed that in this stretch as well Egyptian *Stützpunkte* were established.<sup>37</sup> There is increasing evidence that the accelerated settlement of the tribes of the House of Joseph and their spilling over into the eastern Sharon<sup>38</sup> did indeed create a continuing threat that this vital artery might be blocked.

The picture which emerges from the evidence concerning Merneptah's reign is one of energetic attempts to tighten the Egyptian hold on different parts of Palestine, and perhaps even further north, following the apparent weakening of control at the end of the reign of Ramesses II. According to the 'Border Journal', Egyptian emissaries reached as far as Tyre and Aram.<sup>39</sup> If the assumption is correct, that the 'city of Merneptah in P3-Aram' is Damascus/Upi,<sup>40</sup> then, it follows that during the period under discussion, this city also became an Egyptian seat of government. At a different place in the Papyrus Anastasi III, mention is made of an Egyptian governor who bears the title 'King's envoy [to the rulers of] the foreign lands of Huru from Sile to Upi'.<sup>41</sup> This title, which has no previous parallels, hints perhaps at concentration of the control of all the Asiatic districts in the hands of a single Egyptian governor, in contrast with the earlier period, in which Canaan had been divided into a number of administrative districts.<sup>42</sup>

36 H.J. Franken, 'Deir 'Alla, Tell', *EAEHL*, Vol. I, Jerusalem 1975, p. 323.

37 The question of the significance of the topographical list of Ramesses II from Amarah in Nubia, which mentions Dor and Socoh (in the Sharon), arises again here. If it was indeed copied from the list in Soleb, dated tentatively to Amenhotep III (Edel, above, n. 12), it has no administrative or political significance. However, it is worth noting that other places in Palestine mentioned in the list have a clear Egyptian connection.

38 M. Garsiel and I. Finkelstein, 'The Westward Expansion of the House of Joseph in the Light of the 'Izbet Sartah Excavations', *Tel Aviv*, 5 (1978), pp. 192-198; M. Kochavi, 'The Settlement Period', I. Eph'al (ed.), *The History of Eretz Israel*, Vol. II: *Israel and Judah in the Biblical Period*, Jerusalem 1984, p. 32 (Hebrew); Y. Porat, S. Dar and S. Applebaum, *The History and Archaeology of Emek-Hefer*, Tel Aviv 1985, p. 55 (Hebrew).

39 E. Edel, *Die Ortsnamenlisten aus dem Totentempel Amenophis III*, Bonn 1966, p. 28.

40 Helck (above, n. 17), p. 231, n. 40.

41 E. Edel, 'Weitere Briefe aus der Heiratskorrespondenz Ramses II', *Geschichte und Altes Testament: Festschrift für Albrecht Alt*, Tübingen 1953, p. 231, n. 40.

42 I. Singer, 'Takuḥlinu and Ḥaya: Two Governors in the Ugarit Letter from Tel Aphek', *Tel Aviv*, 10 (1983), p. 21, n. 31.



*Ramesses III (1182-1151 BCE)*

For about two decades after the reign of Merneptah, Egypt was beset with internal difficulties and power struggles, and we have at our disposal almost no information about its rule over Canaan during that period. However, the discovery of a limited number of artifacts bearing the names of contemporary Pharaohs<sup>43</sup> is evidence of a certain amount of continuing Egyptian presence in Canaan.

Under the energetic rule of Ramesses III Egypt recovered, and the efforts to consolidate its control in Palestine reached their peak. One of the important developments in Egypt at this time was the unprecedented increase in the wealth and power of the royal temples and priestly apparatus.<sup>44</sup> This phenomenon, which contributed significantly to the eventual weakening and disintegration of the New Kingdom, made its appearance in the Egyptian provinces in Asia as well. From Papyrus Harris I we learn of a temple being built to the god Amon in 'P3-Canaan', i.e., Gaza, to which the local population brought offerings.<sup>45</sup> In addition, nine cities in Canaan and Nubia were dedicated to Amon.

As in Egypt, the temples in Canaan served as administrative centers for collecting taxes (chiefly grain) from the local population. Instructive testimony as to the functioning of two Egyptian administrative centers in southern Canaan has been uncovered recently in excavations at Tel Sera' and Lachish.<sup>46</sup> At these two sites Egyptian offering bowls with hieratic inscriptions were found, noting the amounts of grain which had been raised as taxes.<sup>47</sup> In a few instances the year of rule of the governing Pharaoh has also been preserved: 'year 22' in Tel Sera' and the 'year 4' and 'year 10 + x' in Lachish apparently relate to Ramesses III.

The inclusion of Tel Sera' and Lachish within direct Egyptian administration signifies a new phase in the Egyptian policy of annexation. Their control was no longer limited to the regions along the *Via Maris*, but instead extended deep into the Judean Plain and Shephelah. The possibility that the important city-state of Gath (Tell eš-Šafi) was annexed at this time to the Egyptian administrative area<sup>48</sup> is hinted by the Egyptian artifacts discovered at the site; especially important is a fragment of an Egyptian stele unearthed in the trial excavation conducted at the

43 Storage vessels on which the name of Seti II (1199-1193 BCE) was engraved were found at Tell el-Far'ah and in Haruvit in northern Sinai; see O. Goldwasser, 'An Egyptian Store-Jar from Haruvit', *Qadmoniot*, 13 (1980), p. 34 (Hebrew). The name of his widow Taosert (1193-1185 BCE) appears on a faience vessel from Tell Deir 'Alla; see Franken (above, n. 36), p. 323. Scarabs of Siptah (1193-1187 BCE) were found at Gezer and Beth-Shemesh, and of Taosert at Acco; see Dothan (above, n. 8—1989), p. 63. The date of the Ramesside scarab from Tel Masos is unclear; see R. Giveon, 'A Monogram Scarab from Tel Masos', *Tel Aviv*, 1 (1974), pp. 75-76.

44 R.O. Faulkner, 'Egypt: From the Inception of the Nineteenth Dynasty to the Death of Ramesses III', *CAH*, II/2 (1975), pp. 245ff.

45 Wilson in Pritchard (above, n. 15), pp. 260ff.

46 Oren (above, n. 5); Ussishkin (above, n. 5).

47 Goldwasser (above, n. 5).

48 Singer (above, n. 5—1988), pp. 5-6.

site at the beginning of the century.<sup>49</sup> If this assumption is correct, annexation of the city-states of Gath and Lachish completed the process of consolidating Egyptian control along the southern coastal plain. While during the Eighteenth Dynasty there had been only two administrative centers—Gaza and Joppa—the Egyptians now controlled a wide area, stretching as far as the Yarkon River in the north and the Judean Hills in the east. Control of this vast area, which undoubtedly entailed a large military and administrative effort, was intended to accomplish a twofold aim: to block the tribal elements which were gaining strength in the hilly regions and the desert fringe, and at the same time to reinforce and improve the apparatus of tax collection in the fertile areas of the southern coastal plain and the Shephelah. This economic aspect should be seen in the general context of the period of famine, which affected wide regions of the Ancient Near East at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the twelfth.<sup>50</sup>

The second outstanding development in Egypt's Canaanite policy is related to the great clash with the Sea Peoples in the eighth year of Ramesses III (1175 BCE) and its consequences. We will deal here only with the main aspects of this encounter.<sup>51</sup> The two battles, both that on land and that at sea, took place on the northern border of the Egyptian empire.<sup>52</sup> According to descriptions in the reliefs and in the texts,<sup>53</sup> the Egyptian victory was overwhelming. However, it turned out to be a 'Pyrrhic victory': the Egyptians were subsequently forced to settle many Sea Peoples in Canaan, a solution they found to be the least disadvantageous under the circumstances. This becomes clear both from the description in Papyrus Harris I, written during the reign of Ramesses IV,<sup>54</sup> and also from the fact that during the rule of Ramesses III there had been extensive settlement of Philistines and other Sea Peoples in areas under direct Egyptian control.<sup>55</sup> By settling Philistines in fortresses along the seacoast, the Egyptians hoped to mobilize these superior fighters to block further assault by subsequent waves of invasion from the sea or by tribes from the hills and the desert fringe. However, the Egyptian-

49 R. Giveon, *The Impact of Egypt on Canaan*, Fribourg 1978, pp. 97-104.

50 For literature on this subject, see Singer (above, n. 42), pp. 26-27.

51 For a detailed discussion, see Singer (above, n. 29).

52 This approach, according to which the battles took place near the eastern fork of the Nile after Canaan had already been conquered by the Sea Peoples, has gained support recently, especially in the German research; see the literature cited in Singer (above, n. 29), p. 109, n. 1; and also R. Drenkhan, 'Ramesses III', *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Vol. V/33, Wiesbaden 1983, pp. 114-119; W. Helck, 'Nochmals zu Ramses III: Seevölkerbericht', *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur*, 14 (1987), pp. 129-145. However, this view conflicts with the Egyptian description itself, according to which the land battle took place near the land of Amurru. It also is inconsistent with the accumulating evidence of an Egyptian presence in Palestine during the rule of Ramesses III.

53 Wilson in Pritchard (above, n. 15), pp. 260ff.

54 *Ibid.*, pp. 260-262.

55 The Egyptians adopted a similar policy toward the Libyan prisoners and their families, who were settled in the Delta region and in the Fayum as mercenaries; for references, see Drenkhan (above, n. 52), p. 115.



Philistine connection did not last long, and as Egypt became weaker after Ramesses III, the Philistines began to take an active part in pushing the Egyptians out of the country. This historical reconstruction, which was in the main proposed by Alt,<sup>56</sup> leans mostly on an analysis of the history of Philistia in the twelfth century. There is no documentation which can throw direct light on the sequence of events in the area. Still, this historical reconstruction is preferable to others which have been suggested,<sup>57</sup> and it also is consistent with the archaeological data from the excavations which have been undertaken in and around Philistia.

Along with moves to tighten their hold in the southern part of the country, the Egyptians seriously reinforced their control in the northern valleys as well. In Stratum VI at Beth-Shean, a new temple, a 'Governor's Residency' and other administrative buildings were erected.<sup>58</sup> The Egyptian inscriptions even give the name and titles of the fortress commander in Beth-Shean during the rule of Ramesses III: Ramesses-Weser-Khepesh—'Commander of troops of the Lord of the Two Lands' (*ts. pd.t nb t3.wy*), 'Royal scribe' (*s3 nsw*) and 'Overseer of the Great House' (*Imy-r pr wr*).<sup>59</sup> This last appellation was accorded to those holding important positions in the Egyptian administration as managers of the royal estates. Thus, in addition to his military duties, the commander of Beth-Shean was also responsible for the administration of large tracts of land extending as far as the Jezreel Valley.<sup>60</sup> According to the inscriptions, his father Thutmose held even more exalted titles: his military rank was 'Captain of Troops' (*hry pd.t*),<sup>61</sup> and his administrative role was 'Overseer of the Foreign Countries' (*Imy-r h3swt*). Ward has suggested that he should be identified with the Thutmose whose name is apparently inscribed beside the cartouches of Ramesses III on a model pen case from the ivory treasure uncovered in Megiddo.<sup>62</sup> The pen case owner also carried the title 'Captain of Troops', and his administrative title was 'Royal Commissioner to Every Foreign Country' (*wprwt nsw r h3st nbt*)—comparable to the title of Thutmose from Beth-Shean. The latter title exactly parallels the Akkadian appellation *šākin māti*, borne by the Egyptian governors of Canaan.<sup>63</sup> This has far reaching implications in regard to the political status of Megiddo during this period.<sup>64</sup> Renewed study of the finds from Stratum VIIA, and especially the hieroglyphic inscriptions, reveals that during the Twentieth Dynasty

56 Alt (above, n. 4).

57 For references and discussion, see Singer (above, n. 29), pp. 109-114.

58 F. James, *The Iron Age at Beth Shean*, Philadelphia 1966, pp. 149-150.

59 W.A. Ward, 'The Egyptian Inscriptions of Level VI', James, op. cit., pp. 174ff.

60 On the 'King's Estates', see N. Na'aman, 'Pharaonic Lands in the Jezreel Valley in the Late Bronze Age', M. Heltzer and E. Lipiński (eds.), *Society and Economy in the Eastern Mediterranean (c. 1500-1000 B.C.): Proceedings of the Conference Held at Haifa, 1985*, Leuven 1988, p. 182; Singer (above, n. 5—1988-89).

61 A.R. Schulman, *Military Rank, Title and Organization in the Egyptian New Kingdom*, Berlin 1964, pp. 54-56.

62 G. Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories*, Chicago 1939, p. 11, n. 377.

63 Singer (above, n. 42), pp. 20-21.

64 For a detailed discussion, see Singer (above, n. 5—1988-89).

(and possibly already as early as the end of the Nineteenth) Megiddo became an Egyptian administrative center, perhaps the most important in the northern part of Palestine. This conclusion is also based on the bronze pedestal of a statue of Ramesses VI, which was found in this stratum. This is the only significant Egyptian artifact postdating Ramesses III which has been found in Canaan, and it hints at the extent of Egyptian rule during the final years of Pharaonic government in the country.<sup>65</sup>

The reign of Ramesses III, lasting approximately three decades, was the 'swan song' of the Egyptian empire in Canaan. This Pharaoh, the last of the strong sovereigns, was wont to decorate monumental walls with fictitious historical descriptions of such events as the conquest of cities in Hatti and Syria, which he copied from the reliefs of the much admired Ramesses II.<sup>66</sup> Many scholars thus tended to question all of the accomplishments imputed to Ramesses III, and some even went so far as to claim that after the battle against the Sea Peoples, Egypt lost all its Asian provinces and was forced to fight for its life in the eastern Delta.<sup>67</sup> Yet, the evidence that has accumulated from the excavations in Israel provides a completely different picture. His reign was marked by energetic building in the existing administrative centers and extensive annexation of territory to direct Egyptian management.

In light of the above conclusion as to the completion of the annexation of the entire southern coastal plain, and in view of the change in the status of Megiddo, it would seem that the overall objective of the Egyptians near the end of their rule was to bring all the lowlands of Canaan, through which the important trade routes passed, under their direct control. In certain regions, such as the corridor leading up to Jerusalem, they even penetrated into the low hills. While we do not have data about Egyptian involvement in broad sections of the country, such as the Sharon Plain and the Jordan Valley, it would not be surprising if, in the future, Egyptian *Stützpunkte* were to be discovered there too, since these longitudinal strips connected the Egyptian administrative centers along the southern coast with those in the northern valleys. The expansion of Egyptian control at this time had important ramifications for the crystallization of the territorial units which emerged after the Egyptian retreat from Canaan.

The last days of Egyptian rule in Canaan are shrouded in mystery. The Timna mines continued to operate until the time of Ramesses V, and those at Serabit el-

65 So far no epigraphic finds from the Twentieth Dynasty have been discovered north of the northern valleys, except for an alabaster vessel with cartouches of Ramesses III from Byblos—B. Porter and R. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, VII, Oxford 1962, p. 91. Byblos had always had a special relationship with Egypt, and in any case, this find does not testify to Egyptian government beyond the coastal region. From the Egyptian government center in Kumidi (Kamid el-Loz) in the Lebanon Valley we do not have any data later than Ramesses II—R. Hachmann, *Frühe Phöniker im Libanon: 20 Jahre deutsche Ausgrabungen in Kamid el-Loz*, Mainz 1983; it is difficult to imagine that the Egyptians still controlled this city during the Twentieth Dynasty.

66 Helck (above, n. 17), p. 233.

67 See above, n. 52.



Khadem until the time of Ramesses VI.<sup>68</sup> In Palestine itself, except for the pedestal of the statue of Ramesses VI from Megiddo,<sup>69</sup> only minor artifacts have been found.<sup>70</sup> There is a tendency not to attach much importance to the Megiddo pedestal since it may have been brought there after the Egyptians left.<sup>71</sup> But, as noted above, this artifact is, to my mind, proof that the Egyptians still enjoyed some influence as far as the northern valleys.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps they no longer exercised complete control over that area, but rather retained a hold on a small number of garrisons, such as Beth-Shean, Megiddo, Gezer, and Joppa. The gradual takeover of the areas surrounding these positions by other elements would have increasingly limited the mobility of the remaining Egyptian forces. Severing of the vital travel routes, which had been the lifeline of the Egyptian imperial system,<sup>73</sup> put an end to Egyptian rule in Canaan, that had endured for about four centuries.

The Bible reports nothing at all of the Egyptian regime in Canaan, even though Israelite settlement had begun and continued concurrently with the Egyptian presence in the country for at least a century. According to the Bible, the land was wrested from its Canaanite, Amorite, and other inhabitants. This does not necessarily indicate ignorance of geo-political realities in Canaan at the beginning of the Settlement period, since the Bible presents a quite accurate picture of the structure of the Canaanite city-states. Biblical oblivion to Egyptian rule in Canaan stems chiefly from ideological and political considerations, which cannot be dealt with here.<sup>74</sup>

68 For references, see J.M. Weinstein, 'The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: A Reassessment', *BASOR*, 241 (1981), p. 23.

69 J.H. Breasted, 'Bronze Base of a Statue of Ramses VI Discovered at Megiddo', G. Loud, *Megiddo II*, Chicago 1948, pp. 135-138.

70 Scarabs of Ramesses IV have been discovered at Tell el-Far'ah and at Tel Aphek; see Kochavi (above, n. 7), p. 81. A scarab from Alalakh, which was attributed to Ramesses VI, and scarabs from Tell el-Far'ah and from Gezer, attributed to Ramesses VIII, apparently belong to the Eighteenth Dynasty; see K.A. Kitchen, 'Ramses V-XI', *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Vol. V/33, Wiesbaden 1984, p. 127, n. 51. In Gezer an enamel inlay with the name of Ramesses IX was found (ibid).

71 Helck (above, n. 17), p. 234; Kitchen (above, n. 70), p. 124.

72 See also Weinstein (above, n. 68), p. 23.

73 Liverani found in the beginning of the period of Assyrian expansion in the Middle Euphrates region an interesting analogy to the model of Egyptian imperial government, which was built around a network of main routes with administrative centers located at the junctions: M. Liverani, 'The Growth of the Assyrian Empire in the Habur Middle Euphrates Area: A New Paradigm', *Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes. Symposium International: Histoire de Deir ez-Zor et ses antiquités*, Deir ez-Zor 1983, pp. 107-115.

74 J. Garstang (*Joshua-Judges*, London 1931, p. 259) attempted to find an echo of an Egyptian expedition to Canaan in Joshua 24:12: 'And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow'. In his opinion, the 'hornet' is a reflection of the bee which symbolizes Lower Egypt. Although Garstang's interesting suggestion did not find acceptance, the historical conclusion which he reached, that the destructive policies of the Egyptian Pharaohs toward the Canaanite cities paved the way for Israelite control, is basically correct.

*'In those days there was no king in Israel'*

PREPARATIONS FOR THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL IN PALESTINE (CA. 1135-1075 BCE)

The Egyptian retreat from Canaan left a political vacuum, unprecedented for the area. The upheavals which took place in the Ancient Near East at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the twelfth centuries BCE created a situation, rare in the annals of the region, in which none of the great powers was strong enough to impose its authority, so that control remained in the hands of the area's inhabitants for several hundred years.

During the last phase of Egyptian rule, Palestine experienced extensive socio-ethnic transformations. Alongside autochthonic Canaanite groups of the *ancien régime*, which were left exposed with the disappearance of Egyptian protection, elements of the 'new order' — Israelite tribal groups and other elements which had recently arrived from the north — began to take shape.<sup>75</sup> In the varied socio-ethnic array which ensued, new centers of power did not crystallize immediately upon Egyptian withdrawal, but rather arose gradually, over a period of several decades. This, then, was the stage of coalescence and preparation for the decisive struggle for control of the country.

With the disappearance of Egyptian artifacts and other imported objects from the local sites, reconstruction of the subsequent historical mosaic is based primarily upon an analysis of biblical sources, and their juxtaposition with the archaeological data.

Alt compared the ethnic spheres of influence which emerged in the country following the Egyptian withdrawal to a 'double bolt' of foreigners in the lowlands, with the Israelite tribes ensconced between the 'bolts', i.e., in the highlands and desert fringe.<sup>76</sup> The coastal plain formed the 'hinge'; the string of northern valleys, the 'upper bolt'; and the foreign corridor of Gezer-Aijalon-Jerusalem, the 'lower bolt'. As will be suggested below, the areas under Canaanite rule should include most parts of the Jordan Valley, which adds a second 'hinge' for the 'double bolt'. Following is a description of the web of relations which emerged between different population groups at the peripheries of these areas.

*The Sikila in the Sharon Plain*

After the eighth year of Ramesses III (1175), a number of groups of Sea Peoples who had come from the eastern Aegean region settled along the coasts of Palestine.<sup>77</sup> The historical circumstances of this first wave of settlement have been

75 B. Mazar, *The Early Biblical Period*, Jerusalem 1986, pp. 35-48.

76 A. Alt, 'Die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina', *Reformationsprogramm der Universität Leipzig*, Leipzig 1925 [trans. *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, Oxford 1966, pp. 133-169, esp. p. 166].

77 For a concise summary on the origins of the Sea Peoples, see I. Singer, 'The Origin of the



described above, and apparently, small groups of Sea Peoples continued to arrive in the country after this preliminary stage.

The Bible tells only of the Philistines, who occupied the broadest, most fertile part of the coast, and who undoubtedly constituted the dominant element among the Sea Peoples in Canaan. According to Egyptian sources, and recently, from the archaeological evidence as well, we know of two additional groups of Sea Peoples who settled north of Philistia.<sup>78</sup>

The Onomasticon of Amenope,<sup>79</sup> a kind of encyclopedic list compiled at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty (around 1100 BCE), notes the three Philistine coastal cities—Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Gaza—and goes on to specify three groups of Sea Peoples—the Sherdani, the Sikila, and the Philistines. We also learn of the Sikila<sup>80</sup> settlement at Dor from a slightly later literary document (around 1075 BCE)—the Wen-Amon Tale.<sup>81</sup> This is the story of the odyssey of an Egyptian emissary who was sent to purchase cedars in Byblos. Even though it is primarily a literary document, there is no doubt that the account gives us an accurate indication of the geo-political situation at the time, and especially the decline of Egyptian power, as expressed in the disdain shown for its official emissary. On his way north, Wen-Amon weighed anchor at Dor, a Sikila port, governed by a man called *Bdr*. The story reveals that the Sikila had a large fleet of ships, whose range covered the area as far as Byblos in Phoenicia. The document also mentions a number of individuals (*Mkmr*, *Wrt*, *Wrkr*), who have been tentatively identified as governors of Philistine port-cities. However, there is nothing in the document to connect these people to a particular place and there is no basis for identifying them as Philistine princes.

Dor and its port are now being excavated,<sup>82</sup> and when the dig reaches the early strata, we will have a picture of Sikila history and culture. It may be assumed that the beginning of their settlement on the Sharon coast was concurrent with the beginning of Philistine settlement in Philistia, during the second quarter of the twelfth century BCE. It may be that in Dor, as in the principal cities of Philistia,

Sea Peoples and Their Settlement on the Coast of Canaan', M. Heltzer and E. Lipiński (eds.), *Social and Economic Structure of the Eastern Mediterranean (c.1500-1000 B.C.): Proceedings of the Conference Held at Haifa, 1985*, Leuven 1988, pp. 239-250.

78 On Yadin's suggestion that the tribe of Dan be identified with another group of Sea Peoples which settled between the Philistines and the Sikila, see below. In this article we will not discuss the other northern groups (Hittites, Hivites, Jebusites, etc.) that settled in the highlands of Palestine. For this subject, see G.E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation*, Baltimore 1973, pp. 142-173; M. Görg, 'Hivwiter im 13. Jahrhundert v. Chr.', *UF*, 8 (1976), pp. 53-55.

79 A.H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, Oxford 1947, pp. 190ff.

80 On the transliteration of the name, see Singer (above, n. 77), pp. 245-246.

81 Wilson in Pritchard (above, n. 15), pp. 25ff.

82 E. Stern, 'The Excavations at Tel Dor', E. Lipiński (ed.) *The Land of Israel: Cross-Roads of Civilizations*, Leuven 1985, pp. 169-192; A. Raban, 'The Harbor of the Sea Peoples at Dor', *BA*, 50 (1987), pp. 118-126. For recent bibliography on the excavations at Tel Dor, see A. Gilboa, 'New Finds at Tel Dor and the Beginning of Cypro-Geometric Pottery Import to Palestine', *IEJ*, 39 (1989), p. 204, note \*.

evidence will be found of an Egyptian presence at the end of the Nineteenth and beginning of the Twentieth Dynasties.<sup>83</sup>

A frontline fortress of the Sikila was apparently revealed in Tel Zeror.<sup>84</sup> In the adjacent cemetery, cist graves were uncovered, built of stone slabs, and the artifacts found inside proved to resemble finds from Cyprus and from Philistia. We do not have the data necessary to determine the extent of the Sikila settlement—whether it included the entire Sharon coast down to the Yarkon River or rather was limited only to its northern part.

In this regard, the interesting picture which we obtain from Tel Aphek should be noted.<sup>85</sup> Subsequent to the destruction of the Egyptian 'Governor's Residency' (Stratum X-12), perhaps after a certain lapse of time, a number of square buildings were constructed (X-11). These resemble buildings uncovered at Meskene/Emar on the Middle Euphrates, as well as those at Tell Abu Hawam at the mouth of Naḥal Kishon.<sup>86</sup> The small amount of pottery found in these buildings does not seem to differ much from that of the very end of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>87</sup> In the next stratum (X-10), Philistine pits were found. The ethnic identity of the inhabitants of the unusual buildings of Stratum X-11 is unknown, but perhaps the settlement was merely a southern offshoot of the Sikila in the Sharon. The Philistine presence in the next stratum probably represents the stage of Philistine expansion to the Yarkon basin.

#### *The Sherdani in the Plain of Acco*

North of the Carmel Range a third group of Sea Peoples settled, apparently the Sherdani. This assumption of Alt,<sup>88</sup> based upon the presence of the name in the Onomasticon of Amenope, has received confirmation from finds during the excavations at Acco.<sup>89</sup> A group of Sea Peoples, who produced Monochrome Ware resembling that of Philistia, settled on the ruins of the Canaanite city. A stone object was also found at the site on which boats were engraved, recalling those of the Sea Peoples in the reliefs from Medinet Habu.<sup>90</sup> A Monochrome-type vessel was also found at Tell Keisan in the southeast part of the Acco Plain,<sup>91</sup> as well as a

83 For the appearance of Dor in the list from Amarah in Nubia, see above, n. 37.

84 M. Kochavi, 'Zeror, Tel', *EAEHL*, Vol. IV, Jerusalem 1978, p. 1225; idem (above, n. 38), p. 32.

85 Kochavi (above, n. 7).

86 Ibid., pp. 79-80; idem, (above, n. 38), p. 31; J. Balensi, 'Revisiting Tell Abu Hawam', *BASOR*, 257 (1985), p. 72, n. 21.

87 Pirhiya Beck, personal communication.

88 A. Alt, 'Syrien und Palästina im Onomastikon des Amenope', *Schweizerische Theologische Umschau*, 20 (1950), pp. 58-71 [repr. *Kleine Schriften*, I, München 1953, p. 244, n. 1].

89 Dothan (above, n. 8—1989), p. 63.

90 M. Artzy, 'On Boats and Sea Peoples', *BASOR*, 266 (1987), pp. 75-84.

91 The vessel was first identified as belonging to the Myc. IIIC 1a subgroup; see J. Balensi, 'Tel Keisan, témoin original de l'apparition du "Mycénien III Cl a" au Proche-Orient', *RB*, 88 (1981), pp. 399-401. However, later it emerged that it is no different from the other Monochrome pottery (Myc. IIIC 1b), even though, in contrast with the vessels from Acco



small amount of Bichrome Ware, similar to Philistine pottery.<sup>92</sup>

The situation in the important site of Tell Abu Hawam is problematic. Previously, the fact that no Philistine pottery had been found was cited as proof of the hiatus in settlement subsequent to the destruction of the city at the end of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>93</sup> However, a number of sherds have recently been identified as late 'Philistine'.<sup>94</sup> In any event, early Sea Peoples' ceramics, such as the Monochrome Ware uncovered in Acco and Tell Keisan, have not yet been found at Tell Abu Hawam.<sup>95</sup> The reason for their absence may be related to the special status of the city. Mazar has suggested that this important port at the mouth of the Kishon River served as an Egyptian naval base during the Nineteenth Dynasty.<sup>96</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the Egyptians clung for as long as possible to this last outlet to the sea, through which they evacuated the remnants of their forces from the Beth-Shean and Jezreel Valleys, and that for this reason, the Sea Peoples did not settle here at this early stage. It may be that the situation was similar at the 'southern bolt', where the Egyptians may have continued to hold on to the port of Joppa as a sea outlet for Gezer and its environs. This proposal is, however, only conjectural.

The Sherdani and the Sikila did not manage to strike roots in their settlements for any length of time. The Sikila are still referred to as a serious sea power in the story of Wen-Amon, which dates from around 1075 BCE. Presumably, not long afterwards, during the Philistine expansion northward, they were swallowed up among their more dominant kinsmen and among the local population, so that their name does not appear in the Bible. The fate of the Sherdani is even more uncertain. The Plain of Acco, where they tried to gain a foothold,<sup>97</sup> maintained its distinct Canaanite character (Jgs 1:31-32), and was even transferred to the jurisdiction of the city of Tyre (1 Kgs 9:10-13). Presumably, in this region, the Sea Peoples assimilated among the Canaanites even sooner than their brethren in the Sharon Plain.

and Philistia, it was not produced in Palestine (Balensi, lecture at the Eleventh Archaeological Congress in Israel, 1985; see also Singer [above, n. 29], p. 113).

92 J.B. Humbert and J. Briand, *Tell Keisan (1971-1976)*, Paris 1980; J.F. Brug, *A Literary and Archaeological Study of the Philistines*, Oxford 1985, p. 100.

93 B. Mazar (Maisler), 'The Stratification of Tell Abu Hawam on the Bay of Acre', *BASOR*, 124 (1951), p. 25; E. Anati, 'Tell Abu Hawam', *EAEHL*, Vol. I, Jerusalem 1975, p. 12.

94 J. Balensi and M.D. Herrera, 'Tell Abu Hawam 1983-1984, Rapport préliminaire', *RB*, 92 (1985), p. 105; but compare with Brug (above, n. 92), p. 101-102.

95 Balensi (above, n. 86), p. 72, n. 18.

96 Mazar (above, n. 93), p. 21. See also Balensi (above, n. 91), p. 68. For counterarguments, see J.M. Weinstein, 'Was Tell Abu Hawam a 19th Dynasty Egyptian Naval Base?', *BASOR*, 238 (1980), pp. 43-46. For the location of the ancient port, see Balensi and Herrera (above, n. 94), p. 127.

97 Only a meager amount of Monochrome sherds has been found along the Phoenician coast—in Tyre, Sarafend, Byblos, Tell Kazel and Tell Sukas; for references, see Stager (above, n. 21), p. 64\*, n. 37. It may be assumed that this paucity stems not only from the limited scope of the excavations in the region, but also from the fact that in these areas there was only limited settlement by the Sea Peoples.

### *The Philistines in Philistia*

The most widespread settlement of Sea Peoples in Palestine was that of the Philistines in the southern coastal plain. Despite their strong tendency to assimilate among the inhabitants of the country, the Philistines retained their political and national identity until the end of the Iron Age.

The nature of the Philistine settlement and its different stages have become clearer following the excavations recently conducted in Philistia and its environs.<sup>98</sup> These excavations were carried out primarily in the large cities ('royal cities' in the words of 1 Sm 27:5) of Philistia—Ashdod, Ekron, and Ashkelon—but also in medium- and small-sized cities ('country towns'—1 Sm 27:5), such as Ziklag (Tel Sera'), Timnah (Tel Ba'ash), and Tell Qasile. The level of rural settlement ('unwalled village'—1 Sm 6:18) is thus far known chiefly from surveys conducted along Nahal Shiqmah and Nahal Besor.<sup>99</sup>

With the exception of Jerusalem and Samaria, the cities of the Philistine rulers were the largest and richest in Palestine during the Iron Age. Merely comparing them to the small, poor Israelite settlements of the Early Iron Age will give an accurate picture of the balance of forces in the country during the period under discussion. So far, there are only a few data about the layout of these cities, or the central public buildings erected in them. As has recently been learned, all the cities of the Philistine Pentapolis, including Ekron,<sup>100</sup> are located at sites of previous Canaanite cities. During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, the three coastal cities—Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod—were Egyptian centers of government, and it would appear that this also holds true for Gath and Ekron.<sup>101</sup> This assumption supports the historical reconstruction whereby the Philistine settlement began as a result of Egyptian initiative.

It would appear that all those cities which were later to become the seats of government of Philistine *seranim* had been destroyed at some point during the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age. We do not yet have enough data to place an exact date on the time of this destruction or to link the downfall of these cities with any particular historic event. Accordingly, it would be premature to conclude that their destruction was connected with the invasion of the Sea Peoples,<sup>102</sup> and other possibilities should not be ruled out. For example, it is not impossible that the destruction level found by Phytian-Adams in Ashkelon should be attributed to Merneptah's conquest. We will acquire an accurate picture of the situation—not necessarily uniform throughout Philistia—only as the excavations continue.

98 For a general survey, see T. Dothan, 'The Philistines Reconsidered', J. Amitai (ed.), *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem April 1984*, Jerusalem 1985, pp. 165-176.

99 R. Gophna, 'Iron Age I *haserim* in Southern Philistia', *Atiqot*, 3 (1966), pp. 44-51 (Hebrew). See also, R. Gophna and L. Singer-Avitz, 'Iron Age I Settlements to the West of Tel Beer-Sheba', Z. Hérzog (ed.), *Beer-Sheba II*, Tel Aviv 1984, pp. 125-131.

100 T. Dothan, 'The Rise and Fall of Ekron of the Philistines: Recent Excavations at an Urban Border Site, Part I: The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages', *BA*, 50 (1987), pp. 205-220.

101 Singer (above, n. 5—1988), p. 6.



*Philistine Material Culture*

Archaeological and historical research faces difficult problems in the attempt to define the nature of Philistine culture. Undoubtedly, the process of assimilation of the Philistines among the indigenous population was quite rapid, and within a few generations the attributes of their original material culture disappeared. Thus, in recent years it has become clear that in order to isolate the original cultural elements of the Philistines, prior to their integration into the 'Canaanite-Egyptian' culture of southern Palestine, it is necessary, first and foremost, to examine the initial stage of their settlement. This stage lasted for about one generation and found palpable expression in the large cities of Philistia. The excavations at Ashdod have provided important data, and it is likely that those now under way in Ekron and Ashkelon will make an even greater contribution. As we get further away from the beginnings of Philistine settlement and from the heartland of Philistia itself, we encounter increasing difficulty in isolating the Philistine element, as is evident from the heated debate on this subject.<sup>103</sup> The historical information on the Philistines, gathered from the biblical, the Assyrian, and the Classical sources, naturally reflects later stages in Philistine history, and any attempt to use it to reconstruct the original character of Philistine culture is infinitely more problematic.

Rigorous sifting has thus far yielded only a limited number of clearly identifiable original Philistine attributes, but these constitute a beginning, which will eventually lead to the regions whence the Philistines originated. Data from the material culture have been widely studied in recent years, and a few summary comments will suffice here.<sup>104</sup>

The most salient element of the earliest Philistine settlement is the 'Monochrome Ware', from which the 'Bichrome' Philistine pottery developed as local ceramic traditions were adopted.<sup>105</sup> In Ashdod and in Ekron considerable quantities of these ceramics have been found in all areas of the excavations where the early layers have been reached.<sup>106</sup> Confirmation of these first indications from the continuing excavation at Ekron and Ashkelon will have great significance in estimating the scope and nature of Philistine settlement.<sup>107</sup> Current opinion holds that the Philistines constituted a small military elite, who gained control in

102 See, for example, W.F. Albright, 'Syria, the Philistines and Phoenicia', *CAH*, Vol. II/2A (1975), p. 514.

103 For a definition of the problems, see, for example, S. Bunimovitz, 'Problems in the Ethnic Identification of the Philistine Material Culture', *Tel Aviv*, 17 (1990), pp. 210-222.

104 See especially T. Dothan, *The Philistines and Their Material Culture*, Jerusalem 1982; Brug (above, n. 92); A. Mazar, 'The Emergence of Philistine Culture', *IEJ*, 35 (1985), pp. 95-107.

105 For discussion of the terminology and the historical significance of this pottery, see Dothan (above, n. 98), p. 173; Mazar, *ibid.*; Singer (above, n. 29).

106 Dothan (above, n. 100).

107 For preliminary reports, see L.E. Stager and D. Esse, 'Ashkelon, 1985-1986', *IEJ*, 37 (1987), p. 68; Stager, 'When Canaanites and Philistines Ruled Ashkelon', *BAR*, 17 (1991), pp. 24-43.

Philistia, while most of the population is thought to have been indigenous.<sup>108</sup> New data from the excavations would seem to indicate that the extent of Philistine settlement was greater than had first been imagined. This conclusion may be qualified by the hypothesis that when the early Philistine pottery took root in Philistia, it became the property of the entire population and thus its presence does not reflect upon the size of the Philistine element in the population.<sup>109</sup> Still, it seems more likely that the sudden appearance of a new material culture on quite a large scale does signify a major demographic shift. It is still too soon to make a definitive decision about this, and additional statistical data from the excavations are awaited.<sup>110</sup>

We have at hand very little data concerning original Philistine architecture. In Ashdod (area H) an 'apsidal' structure, which apparently served as a public building, has been partially uncovered. However, those data published so far<sup>111</sup> are not sufficient to reconstruct its plan and determine its function. More complete data are available from a large public structure which has recently been uncovered in the excavations at Ekron; a hearth found in one of its rooms is of special interest.<sup>112</sup> Data whose source is sites located outside Philistia must be treated with great caution, since they postdate the beginning of Philistine settlement by at least one generation, and represent a period when the process of assimilation was already well under way. This is the case in all three stages of the Tell Qasile temple, which was at first identified as a 'Philistine'.<sup>113</sup> Yet, as the excavator himself noted, the plan and artifacts of this temple are not essentially different from what is found in Canaan during the earlier period.<sup>114</sup> Even though

108 For example A. Alt, 'Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina', *Reformationsprogramm der Universität Leipzig*, Leipzig 1930 [trans. *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, Oxford 1966, p. 181]; B. Mazar (above, n. 12), pp. 271, 276. From the early days of research, scholars have had recourse to a historical analogy—at times explicit and at times hidden—between the Philistines and the Crusader knights, who despite their small numbers controlled a large local population; see, for example, O. Eissfeldt, 'Philister und Phönizier', *Der Alte Orient*, 34 (1936), p. 40. An extreme example of this approach, which had much influence on crystallizing the historical attitude toward the Philistines, is found in Macalister's important book, considered to be the first comprehensive work on the Philistines in modern research: 'But in Palestine the Philistines were, after all, foreigners: they had come from their healthy maritime life to the fever haunted and sirocco-blasted land of Canaan. The climate of that country guards it for its Semitic heirs, and Philistine and Crusader alike must submit to the laws of human limitations'; R.A.S. Macalister, *The Philistines, Their History and Civilization*, London 1911 (repr. Chicago 1965), p. 61.

109 Bunimovitz (above, n. 103).

110 For a preliminary attempt to gather statistical data on Philistine pottery, see Brug (above, n. 92).

111 Dothan (above, n. 8—1989), p. 66; Dothan (above, n. 104), pp. 39-41.

112 Dothan (above, n. 100), pp. 203-205.

113 A. Mazar, *Excavations at Tell Qasile, Part One, The Philistine Sanctuary: Architecture and Cult Objects (Qedem, 12)*, Jerusalem 1980; *idem*, *Excavations at Tell Qasile, Part Two: The Philistine Sanctuary - Various Finds, The Pottery, Conclusions, Appendixes (Qedem, 20)*, Jerusalem 1985.

114 See further J.D. Muhly, 'The Role of the Sea Peoples in Cyprus During the LC III Period', V. Karageorghis and J.D. Muhly (eds.), *Cyprus at the Close of the Late Bronze Age*, Nicosia



this temple was undoubtedly also used by the Philistine population in Tell Qasile, it contains nothing which can enrich our understanding of original Philistine architecture. On the other hand, the 'House of the Hearth' uncovered at the site<sup>115</sup> undoubtedly preserves a Philistine architectural tradition originating in the north.<sup>116</sup>

We do not have direct information concerning the burial customs of the Philistines. Early cemeteries in the large Philistine cities have not yet been uncovered, and the identification of the Tell el-Far'ah graves as Philistine is very doubtful (see below). A large cemetery, which includes, among other things, cist graves and cremation burials, has been excavated at Azor north of Philistia proper.<sup>117</sup> It may be assumed that in this cemetery, Philistines were also buried, but we will only have an accurate picture of original Philistine burial customs when the cemeteries of Ekron and Ashkelon are revealed.

As for small-sized artifacts, special mention should be made of the engraved and pyramidal seals<sup>118</sup> (on one of which signs of writing appear; see below), and of the 'Ashdoda'-type figurines found at Ashdod and Tell Qasile, which point to an Aegean artistic tradition.<sup>119</sup>

#### *The Boundaries of Philistia*

We can reconstruct the boundaries of Philistia during the first phase of Philistine settlement according to biblical evidence and the map of the distribution of early Philistine pottery. According to the biblical description, Philistia extended to the south as far as the 'Shihor, which is east of Egypt', i.e., Nahal Besor.<sup>120</sup> We do not have at hand clear data as to how the border was set between Egypt and Philistia, but it is likely that the Egyptians continued to control the Sinai coast as far as Nahal Besor even after they left Canaan. It is difficult to evaluate the archaeological data from this region not only because of the paucity of information but also because the Sea Peoples continued to serve in the Egyptian army even after the battles of Ramesses III.<sup>121</sup> It may even be that the Sea Peoples

1984, p. 49; Bunimovitz (above, n. 103), pp. 213-216. Cf. M. Burdajewicz, 'A propos des temples Philistins de Qasileh', *RB*, 93 (1986), pp. 222-235.

115 A. Mazar, 'Excavations at Tell Qasile, 1982-1984: Preliminary Report', *IEJ*, 36 (1986), pp. 1-15.

116 For this topic, see also below, n. 289.

117 See Dothan (above, n. 104), pp. 54-57 with literature.

118 See Brug (above, n. 92), p. 298, n. 552.

119 Dothan (above, n. 104), pp. 234-237; Mazar (above, n. 115), pp. 12-13. On Philistine religion, see I. Singer, 'Towards an Identity of Dagon, the God of the Philistines', *Cathedra*, no. 54 (1989), pp. 17-42 (Hebrew; forthcoming in *Syria*).

120 Joshua 13:3. N. Na'aman, 'The Brook of Egypt and Assyrian Policy on the Border of Egypt', *Tel Aviv*, 6 (1979), pp. 68-90; idem, 'The Shihor of Egypt and Shur that is Before Egypt', *Tel Aviv*, 7 (1980), pp. 95-109.

121 G.A. Lehmann, 'Die "Seevölker"-Herrschaften an der Levanteküste', H. Müller-Karpe (ed.), *Geschichte des 13. und 12. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. (Jahresbericht des Instituts für Vorgeschichte der Universität Frankfurt A.M. 1976)*, München 1976, p. 101, n.7 and literature on this subject mentioned there.

served in the Egyptian army near the Philistine border, and the appearance of a certain amount of Philistine sherds south of Nahal Besor does not necessarily indicate that these places fell within the boundaries of Philistia. Much importance is accorded to the processing of data from the Deir el-Balah excavations, between Gaza and Raphia.<sup>122</sup> This is an Egyptian site, one of the stations along the 'Ways of Horus', where public buildings and a cemetery from the Amarna and Ramesside periods were uncovered. Above these remnants were found pits (Stratum III) which contained both Philistine and Egyptian pottery.<sup>123</sup> A preliminary statistical analysis of the finds from four pits indicates that the proportion of ceramics defined as Philistine is about ten percent.<sup>124</sup> This is a small percentage compared with what was found at Ashdod, Ekron, and even at Tell Qasile, but it is necessary to wait for the final results of processing the material. A few Philistine sherds have also been found further south, in Sheikh ez-Zuweid and Haruvit.<sup>125</sup> It would seem, therefore, that under Egyptian rule, there was a certain Philistine presence south of Nahal Besor.

It is difficult to determine the political status of the sites located along the Besor during the Philistine settlement period. In Tell el-'Ajjul at the mouth of the Besor, there was apparently a small settlement at that time. Philistine vessels have been found in several of the graves.<sup>126</sup> Tell el-Far'ah has been a key site in all discussion on Philistine ceramics, because of the late scarabs discovered in cemeteries from this period, which provided chronological data for dating the pottery.<sup>127</sup> The complicated debate surrounding these data is beyond the scope of the present article, but a general summary of the situation will be given here. In cemetery 900, where scarabs of Ramesses III and Ramesses IV were revealed, Bichrome Philistine pottery was not found; on the other hand, this cemetery yielded Mycenaean Simple Style vessels.<sup>128</sup> Philistine Bichrome Ware was found in cemetery 500. This would seem to suit the chronological framework suggested above.<sup>129</sup> According to McClellan's statistical analysis, the ratio of Philistine pottery is less than ten percent.<sup>130</sup> Brug accepts this figure in regard to graves, but argues that the percentage of Philistine pottery at the tell was somewhat higher (about 15%).<sup>131</sup>

122 For an up-to-date summary with references to earlier literature, see Dothan (above, n. 9), pp. 55-67.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

124 Brug (above, n. 92), pp. 91-92.

125 Dothan (above, n. 104), p. 85; E. Oren, personal communication.

126 Dothan, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

127 T.L. McClellan, 'Chronology of the Philistine Burials at Tell el Farah S.', *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 6 (1979), pp. 57-73; Dothan (above, n. 104), pp. 27-33; Brug (above, n. 92), pp. 70-73; Mazar (above, n. 104), p. 98.

128 On this type of pottery and its dating, see V. Hankey, 'A Sherd in the Simple Style of Late Mycenaean IIIB', I. Finkelstein, *'Izbit Sarṭah: An Early Iron Age Site near Rosh Ha'ayin, Israel (BAR International Series, 299)*, Oxford 1986, pp. 99-103.

129 See Mazar (above, n. 104), p. 98.

130 McClellan (above, n. 127).

131 Brug (above, n. 92), p. 73.



We do not yet have statistical data from Tell Jemmeh, but from the latest excavations, there are reports of a considerable Philistine presence and even of local production of Philistine pottery.<sup>132</sup> The material from Qubur el-Walaidah, on the eastern bank of Nahal Besor between Tell Jemmeh and Tell el-Far'ah, has not yet been published. According to preliminary reports, Philistine pottery has been found in three strata of the settlement.<sup>133</sup>

From these partial data it is difficult to gain a clear picture of the political status of the region at the beginning of the Philistine settlement; were these settlements at the southern boundary of Philistia or were they perhaps on the other side of the border, under Egyptian rule.<sup>134</sup> In either case it is clear that these sites, located on the periphery of Philistia, were open to influence from both sides of the border and, therefore, cannot be considered typical Philistine sites. This is a departure from the traditional view which, identifying the Brook of Egypt with Wadi el-'Arish, puts these sites in the heart of Philistia and hence accords them (especially Tell el-Far'ah) a prominent place in all the discussions about Philistine culture.

The description of 'the land that yet remains' in Joshua 13:2-6 delineates the southern border of Philistia ('the Shihor, which is east of Egypt') and the northern one ('northward to the boundary of Ekron'), but its eastern boundary is not indicated. The author purposely avoids defining this boundary, since it would obligate him to limit the extent of Judah in the west. The notable tendency to magnify the glory and the dominion of the tribe of Judah<sup>135</sup> even brought about the contradiction between two descriptions of this boundary in the Book of Joshua. According to the description of the 'land that yet remains' (13:2), Philistia is located outside Judea; whereas in the description of Judah's allotment in Joshua 15:2-4, Philistia is included within its domain. The same desire of the author to deny any failure of Judah also apparently explains the absence of the word of negation (which is found in the LXX) in Judges 1:18: 'Judah also took Gaza with its territory, and Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory'.<sup>136</sup> The next verse gives away the original content of the Masoretic text: '...but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain, because they had chariots of iron'.

The boundary in the southeastern corner of Philistia can be determined through a reconstruction of the history of the cities of Gerar and Ziklag. At the end of the eleventh century, while David was in the service of Achish, king of Gath, Ziklag

132 Ibid., pp. 88-89 with references.

133 For references see *ibid.*, pp. 94, 194. On the 'Proto-Canaanite' inscription, see below.

134 Compare the description of David's pursuit of the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 30, in which Nahal Besor is described as the southern border of Philistia, the far side of which is settled by the tribes of Amalek. Upon crossing the river, David's men meet an Egyptian youth, a slave of an Amalekite, who shows them the way to the camp of Amalek.

135 See, for examples, Na'aman (above, n. 29—1975), pp. 64ff.

136 Thus, there is no foundation for reconstructing, on the basis of this verse, an early expedition by Judah to the Philistine coast before the military ascent of the Philistines, as suggested by Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, London 1961, p. 246, n. 2; see also Dothan (above, n. 8—1978), p. 890.

was the most southeasterly border town of Philistia. Ziklag should apparently be identified with Tel Sera' on Nahal Gerar. Philistine strata from the twelfth and eleventh centuries have been discovered at the site.<sup>137</sup> However, in the last Canaanite-Egyptian city (Stratum IX), dated to the time of Ramesses III, there is no Philistine presence. In contrast, at Tel Haror,<sup>138</sup> which should perhaps be identified with ancient Gerar, there is evidence for early Philistine settlement, including Monochrome pottery.<sup>139</sup> Thus, it would seem that the bounds of the first Philistine settlement passed between Tel Haror in the west and Tel Sera' in the east.

Two cities of Philistine *seranim*—Gath (Tell eš-Šafi) and Ekron (Kh. el-Muqanna')—were located in the northeast corner of Philistia. The distance between them is no more than ten kilometers, which raises questions about the way in which the cities which served as Philistine principalities were chosen. For this very reason, many scholars have hesitated to accept the identification of Gath with Tell eš-Šafi.<sup>140</sup> It would seem that one of the reasons for the concentration of Philistine settlement in this region had to do with strategic considerations: Gath and Ekron dominated two routes which led up to the central hills—via Nahal Elah and Nahal Sorek. We have already mentioned the growing desire of the Egyptians at the end of their rule in Canaan for a corridor connecting the coastal plain with the Jerusalem region. It would seem that the same strategic considerations were behind the creation of a nucleus of Philistine settlement in the interior of Philistia, in its northeastern corner. Indeed, this region became one of the main battlefields in the history of the struggle between the Philistines and the Israelites.

As noted, we can assume that, like its sister cities in the coastal plain, Gath too was an Egyptian base at the end of Pharaoh's rule in Canaan. The status of Ekron at the end of the Canaanite period has not yet clarified, but it would not be surprising if here too evidence were found of an enhanced Egyptian presence. This rule, however, does not work the other way around, i.e., not all the former Egyptian governmental centers were settled by the Philistines. For example, in Lachish, which was under direct Egyptian rule at the end of the Canaanite period, Philistines did not settle during the days of Ramesses III or even after the Canaanite-Egyptian city had been destroyed.<sup>141</sup> Apparently, a similar situation existed at Tell el-Hesi, west of Lachish. Except for a few sherds, this site too has a

137 In the early reports, a hiatus in settlement was noted between the end of the Canaanite-Egyptian city (Stratum IX) and the first Philistine city (Stratum VIII), dated to the eleventh century—Oren (above, n. 34), p. 1065. However, in the course of the final processing of the ceramic material, it emerged that the beginning of Philistine settlement had already occurred in the second half of the twelfth century (Oren, personal communication).

138 E. Oren, 'Tel Haror 1985', *Hadashot Archeologiot*, 77 (1985), pp. 42ff. (Hebrew); E. Oren et al., 'Tell Haror—After Six Seasons', *Qadmoniot*, 24 (1991), pp. 2-19 (Hebrew).

139 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

140 For the identification, see A.F. Rainey, 'The Identification of Philistine Gath' *Eretz-Israel*, 12 (1975), pp. 63\*-76\*.

141 Ussishkin (above, n. 5), pp. 222-223.



settlement hiatus from the end of the Late Bronze Age until the tenth century BCE. The absence of Philistine pottery at Lachish and Tell el-Hesi sets the boundary of Philistia west of these sites.

An archaeological survey conducted along the lower course of Nahal Shiqmah<sup>142</sup> has led to a similar conclusion. The sites located in the eastern part of this region, whose central settlement is Tell el-Hesi, belong culturally to the political entity to their east—the city-state of Lachish during the Late Bronze Age and to Judah in Iron Age II. Between this region and the sites in the hinterland of the Philistine cities of Ashkelon and Gaza there is an intermediate region with few sources of water, which was almost uninhabited. The ethnic and political boundary apparently passed through this strip (extending from Kibbutz Erez to Kibbutz Beror-Hayil) during the Philistine settlement period as well.

The identity of the force which at some point during the mid-twelfth century destroyed Lachish, Tell el-Hesi, and probably other Canaanite cities in the western Shephelah, is unknown.<sup>143</sup> If it was the Philistines, the question arises as to why they did not continue to occupy this region, and why they refrained from establishing centers of government here, similar to Gath and Ekron in the north. A partial explanation may perhaps be derived from the discussion about the location of these latter two cities. As they began to expand, the Philistines concentrated most of their forces in a thrust northward toward the city-state of Gezer and northeast toward the corridor going up to Jerusalem. Thus, the central Shephelah would have been of secondary importance. But the issue has not yet been fully resolved, and it is not at all certain that it was the Philistines who destroyed Lachish and its environs.

To the northeast of the Lachish region, cities with a Canaanite population apparently continued to exist during Iron Age I. This emerges from the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38. While the story is included among the Patriarchs' narratives, it is, nevertheless, a clear reflection of life close to the beginning of the Israelite monarchy. Of particular interest is the description of good neighborly relations and intermarriages between people of Judah and the Canaanite residents of Adullam and Achzib—a situation contrary to that described in the conquest stories in the Book of Joshua.

To summarize: the eastern boundary of Philistia at the beginning of Philistine settlement resembled an arc turning westward. The Philistine borders encompassed an area whose length from north to south was approximately 50 km, and whose width varied from 25 km at the broadest point in the north to about 15 km at the 'narrow waist' in the center. At first, the entire area of Philistia was not more than about 1,000 square kilometers, but it was a flat and fertile region, whose potential for settlement was among the best in all of Palestine.

142 Gophna (above, n. 99).

143 Ussishkin (above, n. 5), pp. 223-224.

### *The Gezer Enclave*

In the north, Philistia bordered on a Canaanite/Amorite enclave at whose center was the city of Gezer.<sup>144</sup> With its conquest by Merneptah, this strategic city became an Egyptian base.<sup>145</sup> Gezer was probably one of the last cities in the country to be evacuated by the Egyptians, as attested by the Egyptian artifacts from the Twentieth Dynasty.<sup>146</sup> After the Egyptian withdrawal, Gezer retained its Canaanite character for a long time, even when the Philistines brought it under their control. This we learn from the archaeological findings but especially from the biblical testimony (Jgs 1:34-35; 1 Kgs 9:16).

This autochthonic enclave, located according to the biblical view outside Philistia,<sup>147</sup> extended from Nahal Sorek in the south to the basin of Nahal Aijalon in the north, largely conforming to the territory of Dan (Jos 19:40-46).<sup>148</sup> In the east, it stretched to the western reaches of the foothills and included the cities Aijalon, Shaalbim, and Gath (=Gittaim) (Jgs 1:35; 1 Chr 7:21). To the east of this enclave lay Gibeon and the other Hivite cities stretching as far as Jebusite Jerusalem. This non-Israelite strip—'the southern bolt' in Alt's terminology—ranged from Joppa in the west to Jerusalem in the east, creating a partition between the Israelite settlements on either side.

This demographic situation explains the failure of the tribe of Dan to retain control of its tribal inheritance in the region of Zorah and Eshtaol for any length of time and to expand toward the west. The description of Dan's allotment in Joshua 19:40-46 is utopian, never being the case in actual fact. Most of the tribe was forced to abandon its original domain and search for new lands in the north (Jgs 18). Many attempts have been made to date this migration;<sup>149</sup> if the excavation of Tel Dan<sup>150</sup> yields reliable data for determining the date and circumstances of the Danite migration, it will provide a benchmark for the historical reconstruction of the period of Settlement and Judges.

On the west, the kingdom of Gezer bordered on the narrow coastal strip, in whose center stood the city of Joppa. The status of this port-city during Iron Age I is unclear. From the beginning of Egyptian rule in Canaan, Joppa was an important government center, and we may assume that the Egyptians continued to control it until they withdrew from the country. In the discussion on Tell Abu

144 Singer (above, n. 29), pp. 116-118.

145 Singer (above, n. 28).

146 For references, see *ibid.*, p. 27.

147 Of special interest is the tradition preserved in 1 Samuel 7:14 concerning the 'liberation' of the region from the Philistine yoke and reconciliation with the Amorite inhabitants; see Singer (above, n. 29), p. 117, n. 8.

148 See Na'aman (above, n. 29—1975), pp. 78-87; Singer (above, n. 29), pp. 116-118; cf. also G. Galil, 'The Land of Dan', *Tarbiz*, 54 (1984), pp. 1-19 (Hebrew).

149 For the extensive literature on the subject, see A. Malamat, *Israel in Biblical Times*, Jerusalem 1983, pp. 149-163 (Hebrew); H.M. Niemann, *Die Daniten*, Göttingen 1985, p. 48 ff.

150 A. Biran, 'Tel Dan', *IEJ*, 35 (1985), p. 187; *idem*, 'The Collared-rim Jars and the Settlement of the Tribe of Dan', *AASOR*, 49 (1989), pp. 71-76.



Hawam, we raised the possibility that Joppa served as the last path of retreat for the remnants of the Egyptian forces in and around Gezer. It is hard to surmise to whom the city fell with the Egyptian retreat; in any event it is surprising that, as an Egyptian seat of government, Joppa did not become a Philistine center, unlike its sister cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod. Joppa is not mentioned in descriptions of the struggles between the Philistines and Israel in the Books of Judges and Samuel; accordingly there is no evidence supporting the hypothesis that it was included within the boundaries of Philistia.<sup>151</sup> The fact that at a much later period, during the campaign of Sennacherib, Joppa was under the jurisdiction of the king of Ashkelon tells us nothing about Iron Age I. Neither do the as yet unpublished excavations conducted at Tell Jaffa shed light on the status of the city at this time. According to preliminary reports, after the destruction of the Canaanite Egyptian city (Stratum IV), the site was abandoned for all of the twelfth century.<sup>152</sup> From the eleventh century 'Philistine city' (Stratum IIIB), only part of a floor and a pit which contained a few Philistine sherds have been reported thus far.<sup>153</sup> This preliminary impression from the excavations is consistent with our assumption that at the beginning of Philistine settlement, Joppa was not included within the boundaries of Philistia. It may be that the city and the strip of coast alongside were part of the autochthonic enclave of Gezer. At any rate, it would seem that the city lost its importance or was even abandoned after the Egyptian retreat. In this connection it should be noted that with their expansion northward, the Philistines set up a new port at Tell Qasile on the Yarkon. What happened to Joppa remains within the realm of speculation, and only further excavations will shed more light on the fate of this important city.

Alt, basing himself on the Onomasticon of Amenope, has raised the possibility that in the Yarkon Basin, in the intermediate region between the Philistines and the Sikila, the Sherdani settled.<sup>154</sup> Alternately, he has suggested the plain of Acco, a possibility now supported by excavations in Tel Acco. This idea has been developed by Yadin, who suggested that Stratum XI in Tell Qasile belonged to the Sherdani, while he would ascribe the earliest settlement at the site (Stratum XII) to the Dn(n)/Danaoi, who, according to his hypothesis, are nothing but the sons of Dan who were later assimilated within the Israelite tribes.<sup>155</sup> Yet, it is difficult to accept this original suggestion, which has already been adopted by several scholars,<sup>156</sup> if only because of the absence from this region of the Monochrome pottery, whose presence has been the sign throughout the entire Levant of the beginnings of settlement of the Sea Peoples.<sup>157</sup>

151 Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, Philadelphia 1979, p. 18.

152 J. and H. Kaplan, 'Jaffa', *EAEHL*, Vol. II, Jerusalem 1976, p. 535.

153 *Ibid.*, p. 535.

154 Alt (above, n. 88), p. 224, n. 1.

155 Y. Yadin, 'And Dan, Why Did He Remain in Ships?', *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology*, 1 (1968), pp. 9-23; see already C.H. Gordon, *Before the Bible: The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations*, New York 1962, p. 21.

156 For references, see Niemann (above, n. 149), pp. 280-281.

157 For additional arguments for rejecting this view, see *ibid.*, pp. 273-291.

Thus, it would appear that the Canaanite/Amorite enclave of Gezer, which perhaps stretched as far as the sea, created a wedge between areas of Philistine and Sikila settlement. If so, it is not surprising that this autochthonic wedge was one of the first objectives of Philistine expansion, immediately after they consolidated their hold on Philistia.

### *The Northern Valleys*

With the Egyptian withdrawal from the northern valleys strip in the last third of the twelfth century, the Canaanite population of the 'northern bolt' was cut off from any central government. During the period of time between the end of Egyptian rule and the consolidation of the Philistines and their expansion northward, there was a decline in the material culture of the valley cities, which is an indication that they were then suffering from economic and political weakness. A good example is the feeble settlement of Stratum VIB in Megiddo, which was established on the ruins of the rich Canaanite-Egyptian city of Stratum VIIA.<sup>158</sup>

Albright, and others in his wake, tried to date the war of Deborah to this period, arguing that the verse 'in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo' in the song of Deborah indicates the decline in the power of Megiddo, or even a lapse in its settlement.<sup>159</sup> But the two cities are mentioned in the verse only as landmarks for the sites at which the Canaanite forces assembled, and nothing should be inferred from this about the status of occupation in Megiddo or Taanach.

In the northern Jordan Valley, the leading city of Hazor was apparently destroyed during the first half of the thirteenth century.<sup>160</sup> Recently, it has been suggested that Canaanite Hazor was destroyed by the Egyptians at the beginning of the Nineteenth Dynasty, in order to eliminate this important power center, which dominated the route going up to the valley of Lebanon.<sup>161</sup> The reasons for the conquest of Laish, which was 'far from Sidon, and they had no dealings with Aram(l)' (Jgs 18:28), are likely to become clearer with the continuation of the excavation of Tel Dan. We also lack information concerning the other Canaanite cities in the northern Jordan Valley and in eastern Galilee, and the status of the region at the beginning of Iron Age I is still shrouded in mist.

In Beth-Shean, the last Egyptian city (Stratum VI) was destroyed in a large

158 For a detailed discussion of the nature of Stratum VI, see G.I. Davis, 'Megiddo in the Period of the Judges', *Crises and Perspectives: Papers Read at the Joint British-Dutch Old Testament Conference Held at Cambridge, U.K. 1985* (OTS, 24), Leiden 1986, pp. 40ff.; I. Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, Jerusalem 1988, pp. 92-93, with additional literature.

159 W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology', *BASOR*, 62 (1936), pp. 26-31; J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, Philadelphia 1980, p. 179, n. 83.

160 P. Beck and M. Kochavi, 'A Dated Assemblage of the Late 13th century B.C.E. from the Egyptian Residency at Aphek', *Tel Aviv*, 12 (1985), p. 58.

161 M. Kochavi, 'Eretz-Israel in the 13th-12th c. B.C.E.: Historical Conclusions Derived from Archaeological Data', *Eleventh Archaeology Conference in Israel*, Jerusalem 1985, p. 16 (Hebrew).



conflagration.<sup>162</sup> On its ruins were found pits and brick walls of a small settlement.<sup>163</sup> We do not have sufficient data about the southern part of the Beth-Shean Valley, with the city of Rehob (Tell es-Sarem) located at its center.<sup>164</sup>

#### *The Jordan Valley*

The main excavation undertaken in this region is at Tell Deir 'Alla, near the outlet of the Jabbok River.<sup>165</sup> At the end of the Late Bronze Age, this was a sacred site, and an Egyptian faience vessel with the name of Queen Taosert was found in the sanctuary. Three clay tablets with inscriptions of great interest were found in the rooms adjacent to the temple. Although no real progress has yet been made in deciphering these inscriptions, it may already be assumed that the writing is related to the linear scripts of the Aegean area and Cyprus. Though it is still too soon to determine the historical and cultural significance of this exceptional find, it is perhaps possible to tentatively suggest that the inscriptions, which, judging by where they were found, are religious in character, were written by Sea Peoples who were employed in the service of the Egyptians.<sup>166</sup> We hinted above at the possibility that the rare Egyptian inscription from the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty may be an indication that the Jordan Valley was at that time an alternative route for Egyptian forces who were on their way to the Beth-Shean Valley. According to Franken, the temple was destroyed in an earthquake which was accompanied by a huge fire. In the next layer, painted pottery was found, comparable to the Philistine pottery of the coastal plain and the northern valleys.<sup>167</sup> Yet, it is still difficult to determine its exact nature, and it is doubtful that it can provide evidence of the settlement of Sea Peoples in the region.<sup>168</sup> In

162 James (above, n. 58), pp. 159, 178-179; Y. Yadin and S. Geva, *Investigations at Beth Shean: The Early Iron Age Strata (Qedem, 23)*, Jerusalem 1986, p. 89; R. Chapman, 'Review of Yadin and Geva', *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society*, 6 (1986-1987), p. 40; Y. Garfinkel, 'The Early Iron Age Stratigraphy of Beth Shean Reconsidered', *IEJ*, 37 (1987), pp. 224-228.

163 Of a nomadic population, according to Yadin and Geva, *ibid.*, pp. 38-39; but see Chapman, *ibid.*, pp. 38-40.

164 It is possible that this city-state was already annexed to the Egyptian administrative center at Beth-Shean during the course of the punitive Egyptian campaign in the first year of Seti I: Na'aman, (above, n. 29—1986), p. 480.

165 H.J. Franken, *Excavations at Tell Deir 'Alla I*, Leiden 1969; *idem* (above, n. 36).

166 In this connection attention should be paid to twelve bronze plaques found in the temple, which apparently belonged to scale armor: H.J. Franken, 'The Excavations at Deir 'Alla in Jordan', *VT*, 11 (1961), p. 365, pl. 12; E. Masson, 'Un nouvel examen des tablettes de Deir 'Alla (Jordanie)', *Minos*, 15 (1976), p. 33. On the basis of data from the new excavations at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, Tubb reached a similar conclusion concerning the presence of Sea Peoples in the region during the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age: J.N. Tubb, 'Tell es-Sa'idiyeh: Preliminary Report on the First Three Seasons of Renewed Excavations', *Levant*, 20 (1988), p. 72; *idem*, 'The Role of the Sea Peoples in the Bronze Industry of Palestine/Transjordan in the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age Transition', J.E. Curtis (ed.), *Bronze Working Centers of Western Asia*, London 1988, pp. 251-270.

167 Franken (above, n. 165), p. 245; Dothan (above, n. 104), pp. 84-86.

168 F.H. Dornemann, 'The Beginning of Iron Age in Transjordan', A. Hadidi (ed.), *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*, Vol. I, Amman 1982, p. 138.

any event, the material culture of Tell Deir 'Alla at the beginning of the Iron Age is not Israelite in character. This conclusion is supported in other sites in the northern and central Jordan Valley (Pella, Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, Tell el-Mazar), which are different in character from the sites of the highlands on both sides of the Jordan Valley.<sup>169</sup> The archaeological and biblical evidence indicates that this area was renowned for its developed metalcrafts.<sup>170</sup> Without going into the question of identifying the key sites in the central Jordan Valley,<sup>171</sup> the impression is that this area lay outside the boundaries of the earliest Israelite settlement.<sup>172</sup> Study of biblical traditions concerning Succoth and Penuel also leads us to infer that perhaps a Canaanite enclave still existed there.<sup>173</sup> This conclusion receives additional support from the list of Solomon's districts found in 1 Kings 4:7-19, in which the central Jordan Valley is included, together with the Jezreel and Beth-Shean Valleys, in the fifth district, which was made up of former Canaanite enclaves.<sup>174</sup> This is thus the fourth side of the non Israelite 'double bolt', which was extended through the lowlands of western Palestine.

#### *Deployment of the Forces*

The most stable side of the 'double bolt' was certainly the western one, where the Canaanite population was joined by new groups of Sea Peoples. These groups united and gained strength in preparation for the decisive struggles for control which would take place in Palestine during the eleventh century. From the data available to us, there is no evidence of settlement by groups of Sea Peoples in the interior of the country. The Philistine pottery found at sites outside the coastal plain reached these places partially through commerce and partially at the time the Philistines gained control of most of western Palestine. Attempts to infer the penetration of Sea Peoples into the northern valleys from various biblical traditions, especially the account of Shamgar Ben-Anath, are insupportable, as will be shown below.

The short transition period between the Egyptian withdrawal and the Philistine entrenchment was marked by preparations for the coming struggles for control of the country. New patterns of life, adapted to the situation which arose with the

169 J.A. Sauer, 'Transjordan in the Bronze and Iron Ages: A Critique of Glueck's Synthesis', *BASOR*, 263 (1986), p. 12; for Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, see also Tubb (above, n. 166—*Levant*).

170 Dornemann (above, n. 168), p. 137; Tubb (above, n. 166—The Role of Sea Peoples); O. Negbi, 'The Continuity of the Canaanite Bronze Work of the Late Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age', *Tel Aviv*, 1 (1974), pp. 162ff.

171 B. Mazar, 'The Valley of Succoth', E. Schiller (ed.), *Ze'ev Vilnay's Jubilee Volume*, Jerusalem 1984, pp. 215-217 (Hebrew).

172 A different conclusion was reached by Finkelstein (above, n. 158), pp. 110-112 and Map 106, p. 295. The situation in Jericho and in the southern Jordan Valley is still unclear; see *ibid.*, p. 112, n. 8.

173 H. Reviv, 'Two Notes to Judges VIII, 4-17', *Tarbiz*, 38 (1969), pp. 309-317 (Hebrew). But cf. R. de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel*, London 1978, p. 817.

174 Aharoni (above, n. 151), p. 313; Na'aman (above, n. 29—1986), pp. 187-190.



disappearance of the central governing power, emerged during this period of comparative order. Different population groups, some of long standing in the country and some newcomers, lived alongside each other and influenced each other, even intermingling and assimilating to some extent. It is only natural that the Bible minimizes this pattern of reciprocal relations between Israelite and foreign groups. In the story of Judah and Tamar, there is a hint of neighborly relations and marital connections between Canaanites and Israelites; fascinating descriptions of relations between Philistines and Israelites appear in the stories of Samson, apparently reflecting a somewhat later period. Still, even if the period as a whole is characterized by an atmosphere of 'the calm before the storm', more 'stormy' incidents undoubtedly also occurred during its course, such as the campaign of the Danites northward to conquer new territory for themselves.

This relative respite was well exploited, especially by the Philistines and the Israelite tribes, who consolidated and fortified their territories. On the other hand, the Canaanite enclaves became gradually weaker, as attested by the pronounced decline in their material culture. After hundreds of years of division and strife, the Canaanite city-states were not able to adapt to the new political situation and join forces against the other, more energetic, groups. This divisiveness is reflected in the biblical tradition which lists the Canaanite enclaves and the Canaanite kings one by one (Jgs 1; Jos 12), while only isolated instances of Canaanite cooperation are described, for example, the assistance afforded by Horem, king of Gezer, to Lachish (Jos 10:33). Even the alliance between the southern Canaanite kings, organized by Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, was primarily directed against the Gibeonites who had made peace with Israel, rather than against the real enemy (Jos 10:1-5). Even if there is doubt as to the historical value of these traditions, they would appear to present an accurate reflection of the general weakness of the Canaanite defenses, since the biblical author cannot be suspected of choosing to play down the strength of the defeated enemies of Israel.

A certain revival and unification in the ranks of the Canaanites took place only after they consolidated around the Philistine center of power, which they apparently regarded as the heir to Egyptian rule. But as will be described below, this revival came too late and proved to be the 'swan song' of Canaanite culture in the country. Parallel with Canaanite Philistine cooperation, which was in part voluntary and in part the result of circumstance, the Israelite tribes as well tried to limit the length of their front lines, in their case by cooperating and forming alliances with the Hivites and perhaps with other foreign groups in the highlands. This policy is reflected in the story of the covenant with the Gibeonites and in the traditions about relations with the city of Shechem (Jos 9; Gn 34; Jgs 9).

We do not have definitive data for determining the duration of this transition period, and the dates we have suggested are primarily a matter of conjecture. We have set the time of Egyptian withdrawal as a convenient date for the beginning of this period, and have tentatively put its end several decades before the decisive battle at Ebenezer, which sealed the fate of the Land of Israel for the next fifty years.

'...the Philistines are rulers over us'

PALESTINE UNDER PHILISTINE CONTROL (CA. 1075-1000 BCE)

Not long after their arrival on the shores of Canaan, and immediately after the withdrawal of their Egyptian lords, the Philistines began to expand the sphere of their influence and control. At first, they expanded slowly, influencing only their immediate neighborhood; but as their power increased, their expansion accelerated, until they reached the height of their powers at the time of Saul. About a century and a half after they had settled as prisoners and servants of Pharaoh in Philistia, the Philistines became masters of the country. But their control was short-lived.

As noted above, the five cities of the Philistine rulers were established on the former sites of large Canaanite cities, which had been Egyptian administrative centers during the last phase of Egyptian rule in Canaan. Thus, the Philistines inherited the Canaanite governmental structure and the Egyptian administrative organization.

The Philistine city-states were headed by *seranim*. The borders between the principalities and the relationship between them are not clear; but it would seem that under normal circumstances they were united in a confederation,<sup>175</sup> headed by one of the five, as *primus inter pares*. From the tales of Samson it appears that at first Gaza was the primary principality, while during the era of David it was replaced by Gath. If this observation is correct, it would reflect the transfer of the focus of Philistine activity from the coast into the interior of Philistia.

The power of the Philistines came chiefly from their superior military organization and equipment. The combat proficiency of the Sea Peoples derived from two splendid fighting traditions in the ancient Orient—that which they had brought from their places of origin in western Anatolia, and that which they had acquired in the ranks of the Egyptian army, where they had served in elite units. The combination of these traditions created a strong and effective army, which included a force of chariots, archers (1 Sm 31:3) and well-equipped foot soldiers.

A detailed description of the heavy armor worn by a Philistine hoplite appears in the story of the duel between David and Goliath (1 Sm 17:4, 8).<sup>176</sup> The Mycenaean 'Warrior Vase' is usually proffered as a visual illustration of Goliath's weapons and armor.<sup>177</sup> There are scholars who find support in this comparison, and in the parallel with the duel described in Homer's Iliad, for the hypothesis of the Aegean origin of the Philistines.<sup>178</sup> Without detracting from the value of these comparisons, their contribution to solving the complex problems, not dealt with here, of determining the origins of the Philistines and the other Sea Peoples should

175 And perhaps an amphictyonic league, as suggested by B.D. Rahtjen, 'Philistine and Hebrew Amphictyones', *JNES*, 24 (1965), pp. 100-104.

176 Y. Yadin, 'Goliath's Javelin and the *Menor Orgim*', *PEQ*, 87 (1955), pp. 58-69.

177 See enlarged photograph in N.K. Sandars, *The Sea Peoples*, London 1978, p. 178.

178 See, for instance, Dothan (above, n. 104), pp. 19-20.



not be overestimated.<sup>179</sup> The duel is not unique to the Homeric setting,<sup>180</sup> while the depiction of the warriors on the Mycenaean vase (dated to about the middle of the twelfth century) differs from typical illustrations of Mycenaean fighters, so that they should perhaps be identified as Sea People figures.<sup>181</sup>

Similar to Egyptian recruitment policy, the Philistines also reinforced their army with mercenaries from among the indigenous population. These were groups of Hebrews, such as the band which gathered around David. From the account of David's stay in Ziklag in the service of Achish, king of Gath, it emerges that the Philistines primarily assigned these bands the task of defending the outlying districts of their city-states. In the decisive battles, where the Philistines committed their entire military might, they avoided including the mercenary Hebrews, for fear that the latter would desert to the Israelites (1 Sm 29:4), as had happened in the battle of Michmash (1 Sm 14:21).

Much has been written of the unique metallurgical skills of the Philistines and of the monopoly which they held over iron. This is not the place to elaborate on that subject,<sup>182</sup> but we will briefly note that this assessment has thus far been based chiefly upon biblical evidence (1 Sm 13:19-20; 17:5). In sites from the period, few signs of iron production have been found thus far.<sup>183</sup> Also there is no basis for assuming that the Philistines had a monopoly on the production of bronze, since an analysis of the finds points to the continuity of Canaanite metalwork in the northern valleys and in the Jordan Valley.<sup>184</sup> The biblical narrator conveys an exaggerated picture of the concentration of the metal industry in Philistine hands, which would be in keeping with the viewpoint of the Israelite highlands settlers,

179 See Singer (above, n. 77), with additional literature.

180 The classical comparison is with the battle between Sinuhe, the Egyptian, and the fighter from Retenu; see, for example, Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands, II*, Ramat Gan 1963, p. 267; E. Blumenthal, 'Zu Sinuhes Zweikampf mit dem Starken von Retjenu', M. Görg (ed.), *Fontes atque Pontes: Eine Festgabe für Hellmut Brunner*, Wiesbaden 1983, pp. 42-46; M. Görg, 'Goliath aus Gat', *Biblische Notizen*, 34 (1986), p. 21. See also H.J. Stoebe, *Das erste Buch Samuelis*, Gütersloh 1973, pp. 316ff, on Ugaritic *bnš bnny*, which is perhaps parallel to the biblical 'š *beinayim*. An interesting comparison is also found in the Hittite text of the 'Indictment of Madduwatta', which describes a battle between a Hittite warrior and one from Ahhiya(wa) (i.e., the land of the Mycenaeans): H.G. Güterbock, 'The Hittites and the Aegean World, Part I: The Ahhiyawa Problem Reconsidered', *AJA*, 87 (1981), p. 134.

181 Sandars (above, n. 177), pp. 188-189; F. Schachermeyr, *Griechenland im Zeitalter der Wanderungen vom Ende der Mykenischen Ära bis auf die Dorier*, Wien 1980, p. 102; Mühlly (above, n. 114), p. 42, n. 15. A similar warrior is depicted on an engraved bowl from Boğazköy: K. Bittel, 'Tonschale mit Ritzzeichnung von Boğazköy', *Revue Archéologique*, 1976, pp. 9-14; perhaps this drawing as well is a representation of a warrior of the Sea Peoples.

182 See survey of literature in Brug (above, n. 92), pp. 165-172.

183 See Dothan (above, n. 104), pp. 20, 92-93, with references. In a laboratory analysis of the long sword from Beth-Dagon, which served as the standard example of this Philistine weapon (see, for example, Yadin, above, n. 180), it has recently become clear that it is from a period much earlier than that discussed here: S. Shalev, 'Redating the "Philistine Sword" at the British Museum: A Case Study in Typology and Technology', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 7 (1988), pp. 303-311.

184 Negbi (above, n. 170); cf. Tubb (above, n. 166—The Role of the Sea Peoples).

who were largely isolated from the sources of metal. The distinct connection between the Philistines and the metal industry, as impressed upon Israelite consciousness, may perhaps be explained more in terms of the accessibility to sources of metal on land and on sea than in terms of exceptional metallurgical skills. The question of the operation of the copper mines in the southern Arabah at this time should perhaps be raised in this connection. After the Egyptian withdrawal, the Egyptian shrine at Timnah apparently continued to serve the Midianites who lived in the area.<sup>185</sup> It is plausible that the Arabah continued to produce copper, and it may be that some of the metal was sold to the Philistines, heirs of the Egyptians. The 'meeting' of Midianite and Philistine pottery in Tell el-'Ajjul, Tell el-Far'ah, and Tel Masos<sup>186</sup> may support this hypothesis.

#### *Philistine Hegemony in the South*

Philistine expansion began immediately after the Egyptian departure, or perhaps even concurrently with it, and at first it was directed toward the north and northeast. Timnah (Tel Baṭash) on Naḥal Sorek was transformed from a Canaanite city to a Philistine one—a satellite of Ekron. The transition can be dated to the second half or the twelfth century, since no Monochrome pottery was found in the excavations.<sup>187</sup> People from Judah regularly visited Timnah, some to shear their flocks, and others to take a wife from among the local women (Gn 38:13; Jgs 14). In this border town, Canaanites, Philistines, and Israelites all met and intermingled—a state of affairs which finds its expression in the excavations that were carried out at the site.<sup>188</sup>

The Philistines apparently gained control of the autochthonic enclave of Gezer in the middle of the twelfth century. Gezer and the cities to its east, including Gittaim, Shaalvim, and Aijalon, retained their Canaanite character, both under the Philistine yoke and also under the House of Joseph (Jgs 1:29, 35). In contrast, the Philistine grip was firmer in the western territory of Gezer, and they apparently even settled in Azor. In the cemetery of Azor simple graves have been uncovered along with cremation burials, cist graves, and jar burials, where at least some of those buried were Philistines.<sup>189</sup> In Tell Qasile a new settlement was established, whose ancient name is not known. The wealth of finds uncovered at the site, especially in the temple,<sup>190</sup> raises difficult questions about defining the cultural character of the city. Only one generation after their arrival in the country, it is already difficult to distinguish, even within Philistia proper, between

185 B. Rothenberg, *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna*, London 1988, p. 277; idem, 'Timna', *EAEHL*, Vol. IV, Jerusalem 1978, p. 1196.

186 For the Midianite Pottery, see B. Rothenberg and J. Glass, 'The Midianite Pottery', J.F.A. Sawyer and J.A. Clines (eds.), *Midian, Moab and Edom*, Sheffield 1983, pp. 65-124.

187 Mazar (above, n. 104), p. 107.

188 G.L. Kelm and A. Mazar, 'Three Seasons of Excavations at Tel Baṭash—Biblical Timnah', *BASOR*, 248 (1982), pp. 1-36.

189 Dothan (above, n. 104), pp. 55-57.

190 Mazar (above, n. 113).



the original Philistine elements and those which were adopted in Canaan; so much more so in a city which was established outside Philistia several decades after the Philistines' first settlement. A complex ethnic situation probably also characterized Aphek at the sources of the Yarkon, where the Philistine presence began after some time, during which the city was apparently inhabited by other Sea Peoples, perhaps the Sikila. Gaining control of the strategic passage at Aphek opened up the way north for the Philistines, and Aphek became the regular point of departure for their armies (1 Sm 4:1; 29:1).

Although consolidation and expansion efforts were chiefly directed toward the strategic areas in the north and northeast of Philistia, as time passed the Philistines expanded their sphere of control to include the areas to the east and southeast as well. This development, most of which probably did not take place before the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the tenth, was in large measure the result of the increased activity of the Amalekite tribes on the desert fringe and the coalescence of the Israelite groups in the areas of Judah and Simeon, which only then had become something of a threat to the eastern outskirts of Philistia.<sup>191</sup> Mazar has suggested that the episode concerning the relations between Abimelech, king of the Philistines who dwelt at Gerar, and Abraham and Isaac (Gn 21:22-34; 26), reflects a situation which is no different from that of the era of David's stay at Ziklag.<sup>192</sup> If this is so, then the quarrel between the shepherds of Gerar and the shepherds of Isaac over the wells in the area between Gerar and Beer-Sheba, which resulted in the covenant concluded between Abimelech and Isaac at Beer-Sheba, points to an attempt to bring the tribe of Simeon under Philistine control, and to thereby prevent the former from spilling over into the Negeb of the Cherethites.<sup>193</sup> In this episode, Gerar is portrayed as a Philistine city-state, dominating an area known for its pasture in southeastern Philistia. Even if the general framework of these stories reflects the beginning of the period of the monarchy, it may be that the centrality of Gerar rests upon the situation existing at the end of that period, at a time when the Patriarchal traditions crystallized. Support for this reconstruction is also found in the fact that at the time of David, nearby Ziklag was subject to Achish, king of Gath.<sup>194</sup> The excavations at Tel Haror, perhaps to be identified with Gerar, have revealed that the site was densely inhabited at both periods—the early Iron Age and the end of the Iron Age.<sup>195</sup>

191 On the beginning of settlement in the Beer-Sheba Valley and in Judea see Finkelstein (above, n. 158), pp. 37ff.

192 Mazar (above, n. 75), p. 54.

193 On the expansion of Philistine settlement on the southern desert fringe of the city-state of Gaza, see Gophna and Singer-Avitz (above, n. 99).

194 Mazar (above, n. 75), p. 55, refers to the replacing of the name of Achish by the name of Abimelech in the heading of Psalms 34 as one of the data for determining the historical background of these traditions. It may be that the psalmist, recalling David's stay in Ziklag, wondered why this city, so close to Gerar, should belong to distant Gath. Thus he mistakenly wrote 'A Psalm to David, when he feigned madness before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away'.

195 See above, n. 138.

Philistine control over Judah is reflected in the cycle of stories of Samson (Jgs 13-16). Even though this exceptional judge<sup>196</sup> is related to the tribe of Dan, the Danites are not mentioned at all in the stories, and the Philistine pressure is portrayed as directed only at Judah. The lone struggle of Samson assumes an air of personal revenge, while the people of Judah accept Philistine authority without question and are even prepared to hand over Samson to the Philistines (Jgs 15:11-12).

The enigmatic anecdote about Shamgar Ben-Anath, who smote 600 Philistines with an ox-goad (Jgs 3:31) is similar in nature to the stories of Samson. Since the element 'Ben-Anath' was associated with the city of Beth-Anath in the territory of Naphtali,<sup>197</sup> the tendency has been to ascribe Galilean origins to Shamgar and to find in the narrative echoes of clashes with an early group of Sea Peoples, which had supposedly penetrated into the northern valleys.<sup>198</sup> However, the combination 'Ben-Anath', common during the second millennium throughout the Ancient Near East from Ugarit to Egypt,<sup>199</sup> denotes a military title or designation, and it has no connection whatsoever (except indirectly via the Canaanite goddess 'Anat) with the city of Beth-Anath. This in effect dislodges one of the foundations of Shamgar's northern connection; and neither does the second basis, his mention in the Song of Deborah (Jgs 5:6) enlighten us about his origin. 'In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael...' is nothing more than a chronological comment, and it does not fix the region in which he was active. We can assume that he clashed with the Philistines in the south of the country, and indeed, in several manuscripts of the LXX, this episode appears following the cycle of stories about Samson. May it not be that Shamgar and Samson are parallel names for the same person? Although a conclusive explanation has not yet been found for the name Shamgar,<sup>200</sup> the prevailing view

196 See Yadin (above, n. 155), pp. 14-15.

197 A. Alt (above, n. 108), p. 181, n. 21.

198 Alt, 'Megiddo im Übergang vom Kanaanäischen zum Israelitischen Zeitalter', *ZAW*, 19 (1944), pp. 67-85 [repr. *Kleine Schriften*, I, München 1953, pp. 261-263]; Y. Aharoni, 'Jael the Wife of Heber the Kenite and Shamgar the Son of Anath', H.Z. Hirschberg (ed.), *All the Land of Naphtali - The Twenty-Fourth Archaeological Convention*, Jerusalem 1966, pp. 55-66 (Hebrew); Mazar (above, n. 12), p. 210.

199 De Vaux (above, n. 173), pp. 822-823; W.W. Hallo and H. Tadmor, 'A Lawsuit from Hazor', *IEJ* (1977), p. 4, nn. 12-15; Y. Yadin, 'New Gleanings on Resheph from Ugarit', *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry*, Winona Lake 1985, pp. 271-273.

200 Noth and Mazar suggested that Shamgar was a theophoric Hurrian name, to be found in the name of the sun deity (Šimigi-ari): M. Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung*, Stuttgart 1928 (repr. Hildesheim 1966), pp. 122-123; B. Mazar, 'Shamgar Ben Anat', *PEFQS*, 19 (1934), pp. 192-194. However, in Hurrian names the two elements of the theophoric name appear in the opposite order (e.g., Ari-Tešub, Ari-Sarruma); see E. Laroche, 'Glossaire de la langue Hourrite: première partie', *Revue Hittite et Asiatique*, 34 (1976), p. 52. Also, no parallel has yet been found for the component Ari (from the root *ar-*, to give) plus Šimigi. Despite these difficulties, this possibility should not be completely ruled out. According to another conjecture, the name has perhaps been taken from the West Semitic root *m-g-r* (see J.A. Soggin, *Judges, a Commentary*, London 1981, pp. 57-58, with earlier literature) and it may be compared with the name *Mgr'l* which appears on seals; see P. Bordreuil and A. Lemaire, 'Nouveaux sceaux



holds that it is Canaanite; and in the short account of his deeds, a hint has been found of the objections of the Canaanite inhabitants to Philistine hegemony.<sup>201</sup> Still, caution should be exercised in reconstructing a far-reaching historical picture based upon this enigmatic episode, particularly since it differs from all that we know about the nature of the relations between the Canaanites and the Philistines. If Shamgar was indeed a Canaanite who crossed over into Israelite ranks, then one might cautiously suggest that it is this deviation which provided the reason for his mention here. Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, together with whom he is mentioned in the Song of Deborah, had also switched her allegiance.

Like the story of Judah and Tamar and that of Abimelech and Isaac, so too, the tales of Samson reflect a state of relative tranquillity and close daily contact between Philistines and Israelites. Indeed, the archaeological discoveries in the Shephelah suggest close commercial and cultural relations with Philistia. In Beth-Shemesh, which was an Israelite border city (1 Sm 6), a considerable amount of Philistine pottery has been found (Stratum III), and even further east, in the cemetery of Tell 'Eton, Philistine vessels which had been imported from the coast have been uncovered.<sup>202</sup> On the other hand, there are no signs of any Philistine attempt to annex parts of the Shephelah or to expand their settlement eastward.

Thus, the picture which emerges is that the Philistines' takeover of the southern part of Palestine took place without any special difficulty, with the result that the tribes of the southern hill country found themselves subject to the authority of Philistine city-states. Judah did not participate in the uprising against the Philistine rule, which broke out among the tribes of the House of Joseph, and especially that of Benjamin. One expression of this situation is found in a comparison of the biography of Saul with that of David before he was crowned in Hebron.

#### *Canaanite-Philistine Cooperation in the North*

With the Philistine takeover of the northern Shephelah and the subjection of the autochthonic population in the area, the wedge which had separated the Philistines in the south from the Sikila on the central coast was removed. We do not have information about the relations between the various groups of Sea Peoples, but it may perhaps be assumed that with the Philistine expansion northward, there would have been some cooperation among them against their common enemies, and that the Sikila would have been gradually assimilated into

hébreux, araméens et ammonites', *Semitica*, 26 (1976), pp. 45-63 and n. 33. Perhaps we should reconsider the earlier suggestion, according to which the name 'Shamgar' should be compared with the name 'Sangara', one of the rulers of Carchemish; see R. Zadok, 'Die nichthebräischen Namen der Israeliten vor dem hellenistischen Zeitalter', *Ugarit-Forschungen*, 17 (1985), pp. 396-397, with earlier literature.

201 Alt (above, n. 198), p. 261.

202 G. Edelstein and J. Glass, 'The Origin of Philistine Pottery Based on Petrographic Analyses', Y. Aharoni (ed.), *Excavations and Studies*, Tel Aviv 1973, pp. 125-129 (Hebrew).

the Philistines. In the tale of Wen-Amon, dating from ca. 1075 BCE, the Sikila living at Dor are still mentioned as being a strong naval power, and clearly, it was only in the second half of the eleventh century that they lost their separate identity.

The Sharon had always been a 'bottleneck' on the way to the north, and it would seem that there was danger that it would be blocked by Israelite hill country tribes during this period as well. The struggle between the Sea Peoples on the coast and the highlands tribe of Manasseh for control of key spots along the route is reflected in Tel Zeror in northern Sharon—a settlement which passed from hand to hand throughout this period. After the first settlement, which had an Israelite character, the place came under the control of a new element, probably the Sikila, who established a fortress there during the eleventh century.<sup>203</sup>

The strategic Sharon was vital for maintaining the connection between the Philistines and the Canaanite enclaves in the northern valleys. It is reasonable to think that it was the Philistine penetration into the northern valleys which provided the impetus for Canaanite rejuvenation in the eleventh century. Stratum VIA at Megiddo is notable for its wealth of artifacts, including metal objects, and the contrast with the poverty of the previous layer is conspicuous. A considerable amount of painted pottery, some of it Philistine, was uncovered.<sup>204</sup> These include a magnificent vessel with rare decorations.<sup>205</sup> Mazar has suggested that the public building uncovered above the Late Bronze Age palaces was the residency of the Philistine governor of Megiddo.<sup>206</sup> A similar rejuvenation apparently occurred in other Canaanite cities in the valley such as Yoqneam.<sup>207</sup>

The war between Barak and Sisera described in Judges 4-5 should probably be attributed to this period. We cannot, even in summary, relate here to the rich literature on this event, and we will only mention a number of key points which are important for reconstructing the historical background and time frame of this episode.<sup>208</sup>

It should be stated at the outset that there is no disagreement about the historicity of the event: all theories about the period of Settlement and the Judges include a major battle (or battles) between Canaanite and Israelite forces north of the Jezreel Valley. The uncertainty and disagreement appear with the attempt to reconstruct the details of the event—the exact place where the battle (or battles) occurred, its date and participants, the relation between the prose (Chapter 4) and

203 Kochavi (above, n. 84), pp. 1225-1224; idem (above, n. 38), p. 32.

204 Dothan (above, n. 104), pp. 79-80; Brug (above, n. 92), pp. 97-98.

205 B. Mazar, *Canaan and Israel*, Jerusalem 1980, pp. 174-182 (Hebrew).

206 B. Mazar, *The Early Biblical Period*, Jerusalem 1986, pp. 71ff., n. 18.

207 A. Ben-Tor et al., 'A Regional Study of Tel Yoqne'am and its Vicinity', *Qadmoniot*, 20 (1987), pp. 6-7 (Hebrew).

208 For a comprehensive survey and literature, see de Vaux (above, n. 173), pp. 655-662. For the literary aspects, see also B. Halpern, 'The Resourceful Israelite Historian: The Song of Deborah and Israelite Historiography', *HTR*, 76 (1983), pp. 379-401; A. Caquot, 'Les tribus d'Israël dans le Cantique de Débora (Juges 5,13-17)', *Semitica* 18 (1986), pp. 47-70.



poetry (Chapter 5), and the relation of both to the description of the battle at the Waters of Merom in Joshua 11.<sup>209</sup>

A convenient starting point for the discussion is the status of Hazor, whose king Jabin, according to both Joshua 11 and Judges 4, reputedly stood at the head of the Canaanite coalition. If Hazor had already been destroyed in the first half of the thirteenth century, then it could not have participated in the Canaanite coalition, let alone lead it. Joshua 11:10, 'for Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms,' is a historical anachronism of an author who knew of the central status of this city in the distant past and thus chose to attribute to it leadership of the Canaanite alliance.<sup>210</sup> Removing Hazor from the picture resolves the chronological difficulties stemming from the stratigraphic evidence in Hazor. As already mentioned, the geographical reference 'at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo' (Jgs 5:19) cannot serve as a basis for dating the battle. The historical reconstruction of the war of Sisera and Barak should thus be based on an analysis of the political-strategic circumstances at the time.

Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth-ha-Goiim (Jgs 4:2), commanded the Canaanite forces. Scholars suggested that the name Sisera, could be a non-Semitic name, of Illyric, Luwian, or Cretan origin.<sup>211</sup> Although no exact parallel has yet been found for the name, the closest comparisons point in an Anatolian-Aegean direction. This would support the hypothesis that Sisera's origins were from among the Sea Peoples generally, or the Philistines in particular.<sup>212</sup>

Of the different suggestions for the location of Harosheth-ha-Goiim, the most plausible would seem to be that of Rainey, according to which this name is a descriptive appellation for the Jezreel Valley generally and the plain adjacent to Megiddo in particular, similar to the parallel term 'Galil-ha-Goiim'.<sup>213</sup> This plain served as the traditional assembly and staging point of the Canaanite armies.

Thus, Sisera was the army commander appointed to lead the Canaanite forces which gathered in the Jezreel Valley, between Taanach and Megiddo. Although the Philistines are not mentioned at all in this connection, it is logical that Sisera was indeed a Philistine strategist (or from some other group of Sea Peoples), who was able to mobilize a massive Canaanite force and lead it toward a large-scale battle against the Israelite tribes in the Galilee. This was surely one of the largest

209 The question of the connection between the descriptions of the battle of Deborah in Judges and the tradition in Joshua 11 is not within the purview of the present discussion. For a summary, see de Vaux (above, n. 173), pp. 657-658; see also Halpern (above, n. 208), p. 391, n. 53.

210 In this connection, attention should be paid to what comes afterward (v. 13): 'But none of the cities that stood on mounds did Israel burn, except Hazor only; that Joshua burned'. This emphasis creates the impression that the author knew that Hazor no longer 'stood on its mound' at the time of the events which were being described.

211 Alt (above, n. 198), p. 266, n. 3; W.F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, London 1968, p. 218; G. Garbini, 'Il Cantico di Debora', *La Parola del Passato*, 33 (1978), pp. 20-21.

212 See de Vaux (above, n. 173), p. 792, with references to additional literature.

213 A.F. Rainey, 'The Military Camp Ground at Taanach by the Waters of Megiddo', *Eretz-Israel*, 15 (1981), pp. 61\*-66\*.

armies of that time, even if the report of 900 chariots (Jgs 4:13) would appear to be considerably exaggerated.

Opposite them stood an Israelite force commanded by Barak from Kedesh-Naphtali. The size of the Israelite force and the number of tribes that actively participated in the attack are subjects beyond the scope of this article. I would note only that there are scholars who disagree with the prevailing opinion as to the age and unity of the Song of Deborah.<sup>214</sup> This has far-reaching implications for the historical discussion, since various details in the list of tribes (e.g., the appearance of the names Machir and Gilead) served as chronological anchors for the antiquity of the battle. Caquot has recently advanced an interesting hypothesis, according to which the entire list of tribes is nothing more than a late-Judahite addition to the ancient text, describing with irony the part played by most of the northern tribes in the war effort.<sup>215</sup>

The battle took place at the foot of Mount Tabor, near the Kishon River (Jgs 4:14). The Israelites chose the place of battle and perhaps even the season of the year, which put Sisera's army at a disadvantage. The Canaanite chariots had difficulty moving over the rocky and muddy hilly terrain, and the Canaanite attack ended in dismal failure. The Israelites pursued the retreating Canaanite forces all the way back to the staging area 'at Taanach on the waters of Megiddo'.

The most suitable period for the creation of a broad Canaanite coalition headed by a Philistine strategist was during the Philistine expansion northward, in the eleventh century BCE.<sup>216</sup> The Canaanite cities in the northern valleys were experiencing a resurgence, so that for them the time was ripe to gather their armies under Philistine command for one of the few organized attacks (if not the only one) in which most of the city-states of the north cooperated closely with one another. It is difficult to propose an exact date for the battle during the eleventh century. There are those who suggest a causal connection between the results of the war in the north and the battle at Ebenezer, the latter deemed to be a Philistine retaliatory attack,<sup>217</sup> but this is not necessarily the case. At any rate, there is general agreement for dating the war of Barak and Sisera prior to the Ebenezer battle, which is commonly dated to the middle of the eleventh century,<sup>218</sup> or even later.<sup>219</sup> Some date during the first half of the eleventh century would thus seem appropriate for the battle of Mount Tabor.

As far as we know, this was the last serious attempt on the part of the

214 A.D.H. Mayes, *Israel in the Period of the Judges*, London 1974, pp. 89-92; Garbini (above, n. 211); Caquot (above, n. 208).

215 Caquot (above, n. 208).

216 Alt (above, n. 198), pp. 256-273, suggested a similar dating based on other considerations; see also A.D.H. Mayes, 'The Historical Context of the Battle against Sisera', *JT*, 19 (1969), pp. 353-360. Most of the scholars date the battle to the twelfth century; for a survey of literature on the date of the battle see Niemann (above, n. 149), pp. 37-48.

217 Mayes (above, n. 216).

218 B. Mazar, 'The Philistines and Their Wars with Israel', B. Mazar (ed.), *The World History of the Jewish People*, Vol. III: *Judges*, Tel Aviv 1971, p. 175.

219 Mayes (above, n. 216); Bright (above, n. 159), p. 185.



Canaanites to gather their forces in order to block the spread of the Israelite tribes into the northern valleys. Also, nothing further is known of such widespread cooperation between Canaanites and Philistines, and afterwards, the struggle against Israel was centered in the hands of the Philistines. The latter, following the decisive victory over the Israelite armies in the Gilboa, placed Saul's armor in the temple of Ashtaroth, and his body and those of his sons, they fastened to the wall of Canaanite Beth-Shean (1 Sm 31:10). Perhaps this was an expression of revenge for the Canaanite-Philistine defeat at the foot of Mount Tabor approximately fifty years earlier.

#### *Philistine Rule in the Highlands*

The Canaanite defeat in the Galilee brought the Philistines to the realization that they would need to continue the struggle against the Israelite tribes alone and near their power center in the southern part of the country.

It was undoubtedly the Philistines who initiated the decisive clash in the battle of Ebenezer, in the second half of the eleventh century. This conclusion is supported by the expanded version of the LXX for 1 Samuel 4:1, which is preferable on several counts to the Masoretic version:<sup>220</sup>

And the word of Samuel came to all Israel<sup>221</sup> [Now Eli was very old and his sons continued to do evil in the eyes of the Lord. And it came to pass that the Philistines gathered for war on Israel.] Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines ...

The addition in the LXX (which was omitted from the Masoretic text due to haplography) clearly indicates not only which side was the aggressor but also the cause of the defeat—the sins of the sons of Eli.

The Israelite defeat and the subsequent conquest of the religious center in Shiloh<sup>222</sup> brought Philistine rule into the heart of the Israelite settlement in the central hills. The stages which followed in completing the conquest are not described, but the circumstances reflected in 1 Samuel reveal that the central highlands were subject to Philistine authority.

The apparatus of Philistine control in Israelite regions is known only from indirect sources, but from what little we do know, it would seem that it did not differ substantially from Egyptian rule in Canaan. We do not know of the annexation of Israelite territories or of a centralized government in them. Control

220 S.R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, Oxford 1913, p. 45; P.K. McCarter, *1 Samuel (The Anchor Bible)*, New York 1980, pp. 97, 103. This is in contrast to the opinion of S. Pisano, *Additions or Omissions in the Books of Samuel*, Freiburg-Göttingen 1984, pp. 33-34.

221 The first part of verse 1 should be added to the end of the literary unit in chapters 1-3, which recounts the story of the birth and childhood of Samuel in the house of Eli. The description of Samuel's activity begins only in chapter 7, whereas in the narrative section of chapters 4-6, which recounts the defeat of Ebenezer and the wanderings of the ark of the covenant, Samuel is not mentioned at all.

222 On the excavations at the site, see I. Finkelstein (ed.), 'Excavations at Shiloh 1981-1984: Preliminary Report', *Tel Aviv*, 12 (1985), pp. 123-180.

was exercised from 'Philistine garrisons' (*maṣṣab Pelištīm*; 1 Sm 14:1), where Philistine governors and garrison soldiers were stationed (1 Sm 10:5; 13:3).

One of the Philistine government centers was at Gibeah of Benjamin, later to become Gibeah of Saul, which is usually identified with Tell el-Ful.<sup>223</sup> In excavations at the site, part of a fortress was uncovered, with a tower and a casemate wall, which at an earlier stage had perhaps served as a 'Philistine garrison'.<sup>224</sup> But the plan is not sufficiently clear, and the finds are quite meager.<sup>225</sup>

The obvious strategic logic of selecting Gibeah of Benjamin as a Philistine government center is in many ways comparable to David's choice of nearby Jerusalem for his capital. Gibeah of Benjamin sits between three ethno-political units: the Gibeonite cities to the west, Jebusite Jerusalem to the south, and Israelite Benjamin to the north and the east. What kind of relations existed between the Philistines on the one hand and the Jebusite and the Gibeonites on the other is not known, but it may be assumed that these enclaves too, like their Israelite neighbors, were subject to Philistine control. Some scholars argue for cooperation between the Gibeonites and the Philistines, a circumstance which would explain Saul's hostile attitude toward this population.<sup>226</sup> However, this remains a conjecture. The stationing of garrison troops at Gibeah ensured efficient control over the ethnic units in the area and also constituted a wedge between Judah and the tribes of Israel, a wedge which, as we have noted, had its beginnings at the end of Egyptian rule.

In Gibeah, the main Philistine government center in the highlands, Saul lived and came to power.<sup>227</sup> If we add to this the fact that at that time preparations were taking place for the revolt against the Philistines, and that the unit headed by Jonathan was formed in Gibeah of Benjamin (1 Sm 13:2), right 'under the noses' of the Philistines, we can only conclude that the latter at first had no objections to Saul's actions, which were directed against the Ammonites. They realized their mistake only after Saul was crowned and headed the revolt which forced them to retreat to Michmash (1 Sm 13:16); but they did not learn from their mistake and also allowed David to establish his force at Hebron before they became aware of his true intentions.

We learn of yet another Philistine garrison at Bethlehem of Judah from the description of the battles which took place between David and the Philistines in the Valley of Rephaim (2 Sm 23:14). If there was indeed a garrison in this city before the days of David, it would provide an important piece of information

223 On the difficulties of this identification see, Mazar (above, n. 12), pp. 80-83; A. Demsky, 'Geba, Gibeah and Gibeon: An Historico-Geographic Riddle', *BASOR*, 212 (1973), pp. 26-31; J.M. Miller, 'Gibeah of Benjamin', *VT*, 25 (1975), pp. 145-166.

224 Mazar (above, n. 12), p. 82 and n. 11 with literature; idem (above, n. 75), p. 74, n. 20.

225 See Finkelstein (above, n. 158), pp. 56-60.

226 See the literature in McCarter (above, n. 220), p. 441; cf. A. Malamat, 'Doctrines of Causality in Hittite and Biblical Historiography: A Parallel', *VT*, 5 (1955), pp. 1-12.

227 Mazar (above, n. 12), p. 82.



about the system of Philistine rule in the Israelite areas. It would seem that government centers were set up in the central cities of the Israelite tribal units—Gibeah of Benjamin and Bethlehem of Judah. Still, it is difficult to ascertain that this rule applied generally, since we lack information about other government centers. It is not known, for example, from what center the Philistines governed the area of Ephraim, after they destroyed the tribal center in Shiloh. On a broader plane, we may ask how far Philistine control in the north actually reached. Presumably the Philistines did not have any real foothold in the Galilee, and even the extent to which they controlled northern Ephraim and Manasseh is not at all clear. In any event, they certainly maintained their close connection with the Canaanite enclaves in the northern valleys even after the defeat at the foot of Mount Tabor, so that the central Israelite highlands remained surrounded by a Philistine Canaanite ring.

Another question, concerning the system of Philistine government, is the way control of Israelite territory was divided between the Philistine kingdoms: did the Philistine rulers each govern a certain area, or, as seems more likely, were forces allocated to a general staff under the command of an agreed upon army commander?<sup>228</sup> This possibility has textual support in such passages as '... the Philistines gathered their forces for war to fight against Israel...'; 'Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle...' (1 Sm 28:1; 17:1). Who, then, commanded the 'forces' and the 'armies' which were gathered together from the Philistine city-states? The prevailing assumption is that at that time Gath enjoyed the preferential status of *primus inter pares*. Achish is the only Philistine ruler mentioned by name (except for Abimelech, the king of Gerar), and unlike the other Philistine rulers, he is referred to by the title of 'king' (1 Sm 21:10; 27:2). On the basis of this fact, Mazar has conjectured that during this period the Philistine cities, like the Israelite tribes, united into one monarchy.<sup>229</sup> But it is difficult to accept this idea, since the Philistine city-states continued to exist as separate political units until the end of the Iron Age. It may be that the centrality of Gath in the cycle of narratives about David stems from its proximity to Judah and from David's personal connection with it. Therefore, its role here does not necessarily constitute proof of Gath's primacy compared with other Philistine cities. Still, since Achish's authority ranged as far as distant Ziklag, it remains valid to say that the territory of the city-state of Gath was relatively large. Perhaps, because of its long border with Judah, responsibility fell to Gath for all of the 'eastern front'. Beyond these general conjectures, we do not have data concerning the mode of operation of the Philistine kingdoms, which collectively controlled the western

228 The only Philistine army captain mentioned by name (but see above regarding Sisera) is Pichol, who commands the host of Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gn 21:22, 32; 26:26). On the Egyptian and other etymologies suggested for the name Pichol, see below, n. 293. If there is indeed a basis for the supposition that the name is taken from an Egyptian word, it would indicate that during the course of their service in the Egyptian army, the Philistines adopted, among other things, Egyptian military terms.

229 Mazar (above, n. 218), p. 178.

part of Palestine for about fifty years.

This state of affairs continued without any substantial change even after the establishment of the Israelite monarchy. Saul did achieve a number of local successes in his struggle with the Philistines: following the victory at Michmash, he managed to drive them out of the central highlands (1 Sm 14:23), and even in the plain, he was able to limit their activity (1 Sm 17:52). However, his attempt to break out of the Philistine encirclement and create territorial continuity with the Galilee tribes ended in a decisive defeat (1 Sm 31). The Philistines had learned the lesson of Sisera's defeat at Mount Tabor, and wisely avoided being dragged into battle in a hilly setting. After their victory in Jezreel (1 Sm 29:1), they continued to pursue the Israelite army which retreated to Mount Gilboa, and even overtook Saul and his sons (1 Sm 31:2). This victory not only restored total Philistine control of the northern valleys but, apparently, of the highland strongholds as well. This can be learned from the fact that Bethlehem in Judah served as a Philistine garrison during the battles in the Valley of Rephaim (2 Sm 23:14). But the Philistines did not have long to enjoy the fruits of their victory. The person who overturned the situation was actually a former mercenary in their service.

*'I will uproot the pride of the Philistines...'*

#### FROM PHILISTINE TO ISRAELITE RULE

The great Philistine victory in Jezreel, in which Saul and his sons were killed and a large part of the Israelite army was destroyed (2 Sm 1:27), paradoxically marks the beginning of the decline of the Philistines. While the armies of Saul and the Philistine rulers were being worn down in the north, David was preparing to harvest the fruits of his efforts in the south. Upon learning of the disaster, David immediately went up to Hebron and anointed himself king of Judah.

The Philistines did not put up any opposition to this move, and perhaps even approved it, on the assumption that the conflict between David's men and the remnants of the House of Saul would serve their own ends. They recognized their error only when David was crowned king of all of Israel and established his capital at Jerusalem (2 Sm 5:17). But the Philistine attempt to block his growing strength came too late. In the two attacks which were mounted in the Rephaim Valley south of Jerusalem, the Philistines were defeated and driven back as far as Gezer (2 Sm 5:18-25; 1 Chr 14:16). In these battles David's troops were probably fewer in number than the army of Saul which had fought at Jezreel, but David wisely exploited the conditions of the hilly topography and the element of surprise, and he also was well acquainted with Philistine fighting methods.

About subsequent moves in the war with the Philistines there is only unclear information in the story of the heroic deeds of David's men (2 Sm 21:15-22; 1 Chr 20:4-8), and also in the summary in 2 Samuel 8:1: '...and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines'. Instead of 'Metheg-ammah', 1 Chronicles 18:1 has 'Gath and its villages', and scholars have hesitated as to the



relation between these versions.<sup>230</sup> From the general context, it appears that Metheg-ammah refers, in one way or another, to the reins of government which David took from the hands of the Philistines, but the exact meaning of the expression remains unclear.<sup>231</sup> As for the version 'Gath and its villages' in 1 Chronicles, if it has any historical foundation at all, it should not be assumed that the reference is to the city of Achish, who still ruled Gath during the time of Solomon (1 Kgs 2:39). Apparently the reference is to one of the cities of this name in the northern Shephelah — Gath/Gittaim or Gath-Rimmon; this city apparently stands for all the conquests of David in this region.<sup>232</sup> As to the fate of Gezer, the central city in the northern Shephelah, there is no clear information from this period. It may be that the city was conquered during the reign of David<sup>233</sup> and was lost again at the beginning of the reign of Solomon; or, alternatively, that it remained a Canaanite enclave under Philistine protection,<sup>234</sup> until given to Solomon by Pharaoh as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife (1 Kgs 9:16).

With the change in fortune, the Philistine city-states were subdued by David and brought him spoils (2 Sm 8:12). But, except for the northern Shephelah, which did not belong to Philistia proper,<sup>235</sup> there is no evidence that David cut the territories of the Philistine city-states.<sup>236</sup> He did not even station governors in Philistia, as he had done in Edom and in Aram-Damascus. It is likely that David's policy stemmed from the fact that Egypt, at the end of the Twenty First Dynasty, was gradually recovering its strength, and saw Philistia as being within its own sphere of influence. The policy of conciliation toward the large neighbor in the south, which reached its apogee with the royal marriage of Solomon, probably began in the days of David.

Without Philistine support, the Canaanite enclaves in the northern valleys fell into David's hands, as did Dor of the Sikila. Except for the archaeological evidence, there is no direct information about this conquest. The Canaanite enclaves were included as separate units (the fourth and fifth districts) in Solomon's administrative division, which had its beginnings during the rule of David.<sup>237</sup> Thus, more than one thousand years of Canaanite national existence in Palestine came to an end.<sup>238</sup>

230 For the literature see S. Mittmann, 'Die "Handschele" der Philister', M. Görg (ed.), *Fontes atque Pontes: Eine Festgabe für Hellmut Brunner*, Wiesbaden 1983, pp. 327-341.

231 See the suggestion of Mittmann, *op. cit.*

232 See Malamet (above, n. 149), p. 219.

233 Aharoni (above, n. 151), pp. 302-304.

234 Malamet (above, n. 149), p. 219.

235 Singer (above, n. 29), pp. 114-118.

236 This in contrast with Bright (above, n. 159), p. 199.

237 See Na'aman (above, n. 29), p. 167, with earlier literature.

238 As Alt had recognized (above, n. 108, p. 223, n. 133), in the new ethno-political situation which emerged, with the remnants of the Canaanite population under the control of Israelites and Philistines, the blessing and curse of Noah actually came to pass (Gn 9:25-27): 'Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers; Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem; and let Canaan be his slave. God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave.'

### *Philistines in the Service of David*

One of David's first steps in organizing his kingdom, which indicates political wisdom and foresight, was the establishment of a corps of bodyguards not from among his own people. It is almost certain that 'Cherethites and Pelethites' comes from *Kreti* and *Plethi*, which were used synonymously in the Bible.<sup>239</sup> David probably began mobilizing these mercenaries, at whose head he put Benaiah ben Jehoiada of Kabzeel, while still in the service of Achish, king of Gath. They were professional soldiers, whose loyalty to David stood the test of the turbulence which his kingdom experienced.

In one of the passages the word 'Carite' is found in place of 'Cherethites' (2 Sm 20:23). It may be that the author had in mind the Carian mercenaries who served during later periods in the Egyptian and other armies, including that of Judah (2 Kgs 1:4, 19).<sup>240</sup> The substitution finds its explanation not only in the similar spelling but also in the nature of the two groups.<sup>241</sup>

Other groups that came from Philistia also joined David's camp. During the revolt of Absalom, 600 men of Gath joined him, headed by Ittai the Gittite (2 Sm 15). From the instructive conversation between David and Ittai, we find much resemblance between the group of Gittites and the group which gathered around David at the time of his flight from Saul. Contrary to the prevailing opinion,<sup>242</sup> the men of Gath were not a mobilized military unit, such as the Cherethites and the Pelethites, but rather a group of exiles (v. 19), who had left Gath for unknown reasons. They came with their children (v. 22) to find shelter with David, as he had previously found shelter with Achish in Gath. In David's words to Ittai, we feel his sincere identification with the latter, probably stemming from the similar fates of the two. David advises Ittai not to endanger himself in a struggle for the crown whose results cannot be foreseen, and suggests to him that he return with his men to the king (v. 19). He is probably referring to Achish, king of Gath, who still ruled during the time of Solomon (1 Kgs 2:39), and not to the pretender to the throne, Absalom, as most exegetes have presumed.<sup>243</sup> When Ittai remains adamant about joining his fate to that of David, he is appointed commander of one-third of the army (2 Sm 18:2, 5). This episode contains instructive evidence of the social mobility which characterized this turbulent period in the history of the

239 But cf. Albright (above, n. 102), p. 521, n. 2.

240 J.D. Ray, 'The Carian Script', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 208 (1982), pp. 77-90.

241 The language of the Carians who, according to Herodotus, reached southwest Anatolia from Crete, was discovered recently to be close to the Luwian languages of Anatolia: Ray, *op. cit.*

242 See, for example, Bright (above, n. 159), p. 199, n. 31.

243 See, for instance, K. Budde, *Die Bücher Samuel*, Tübingen 1902, p. 272; W. Nowack, *Richter, Ruth und Bücher Samuels*, Göttingen 1902, p. 211; H.W. Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel: A Commentary*, Westminster 1964, p. 342; A. Caquot, 'L'histoire de David dans les livres de Samuel', *Annuaire du Collège de France*, 79 (1978-1978), p. 467. In some of the new translations a 'new king' is even produced from out of nowhere: 'Go back and stay with the new king...' (NEB).



country. With the overturn in the political and military fortune, it was not long before change also appeared in Philistine society. When they assumed power, the Hebrew bands of yesterday<sup>244</sup> became institutionalized; and at the same time, groups of 'Philistine Hebrews'(!) came out of defeated Philistia. The biblical writer was undoubtedly also aware of the symbolism of the episode: David, who had himself been a refugee in Gath, now bestows his protection on a refugee from Gath.<sup>245</sup>

#### *Decline in Philistine Sea Power*

Along with the decline in their power on land, the Philistines found themselves increasingly restricted in the 'Sea of the Philistines'. We do not have direct information about this process, but it would seem logical that already in the early phases of the rise of the Phoenician coastal cities, there was competition between the latter and the Sea Peoples in Palestine.

The only document which is likely to shed a certain amount of light on this issue is the account of Wen-Amon's expedition to the Levantine coast. This document has an important role in reconstructing the events of that period, since, along with information about the Sikila who had settled in Dor, it also contains instructive testimony about commercial practices in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean in the eleventh century BCE.<sup>246</sup> In the dialogue between Wen-Amon and *Zkr-B'l*, king of Byblos, the latter reports on twenty of his ships which maintain commercial relations with Smendes, the ruler of Lower Egypt, and on the fifty ships of Sidon which trade with *Wrkr*.<sup>247</sup> Albright suggested western Anatolian etymologies for this name and for two additional names (*Wrt* and *Mkmr*) which are mentioned at another place in the document, and thought it likely that all three were rulers of Philistine cities.<sup>248</sup> Many have accepted his proposal,<sup>249</sup> and Mazar even suggested that *Wrkr* was the ruler of Ashkelon.<sup>250</sup>

This double assumption is the basis for the reconstruction of the role of the Philistines in the thriving commerce which took place along the shores of the Levant and Egypt. But a careful study of the text shows that Albright's conclusions lack a solid basis, and that there is no way to determine that the three

244 For a summary of this subject see N. Na'aman, 'Habiru and Hebrews: The Transfer of a Social Term to the Literary Sphere', *JNES*, 45 (1986), pp. 271-288.

245 Gath also appears as a place of refuge in the story of Shimei Ben-Gera, whose slaves fled there in the third year of the reign of Solomon (1 Kgs 2:39-40).

246 See Mazar (above, n. 218), p. 173; Albright (above, n. 102), pp. 515, 520.

247 W.F. Wentz, 'The Report of Wenamon', W.K. Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, New Haven 1973, p. 147.

248 W.F. Albright, 'The Eastern Mediterranean about 1060 B.C.', G. Mylonas (ed.), *Studies Presented to David Moore Robinson*, St. Louis 1951, pp. 228-229; idem (above, n. 102), p. 513. The idea is already hinted at in Macalister (above, n. 108), p. 81.

249 See, for instance, de Vaux (above, n. 173), p. 509.

250 Mazar (above, n. 75), p. 68; idem (above, n. 218), p. 173.

people mentioned above resided in Philistia.<sup>251</sup> The comparison which *Zkr-B'l* makes between Smendes and *Wrkr* actually lends support to the hypothesis that the latter was a merchant from the Levant who resided in the Delta of Egypt and conducted business with Sidon from there.<sup>252</sup> This suggestion is also only conjectural, but it emphasizes the weakness of Albright's assumption and of the far-reaching historical reconstructions which are based on it. We are not able to determine the identity of *Wrkr*, *Wrt*, and *Mkmr*, who are mentioned in the document without any indication of their locations; thus, we also lack evidence to determine what part the Philistine cities played in maritime commerce.<sup>253</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the Phoenician and Philistine cities competed with one another to enlarge their share of the flourishing trade. A possible dim echo of this struggle has been preserved in the tradition cited by Justinian, according to which people from Sidon rebuilt Tyre one year before the destruction of Troy, after previously being defeated by the king of the Ashkelonites.<sup>254</sup> It may be that this tradition actually reflects the invasion of the Sea Peoples during the reign of Ramesses III, and that 'Ashkelonites' in this context is used generally to refer to the Philistines.<sup>255</sup> This tradition also contains a reference to the beginning of the renewal of Tyre, which would later develop into the central metropolis in Phoenicia and become the chief sea power in the Mediterranean. The strong alliance which developed between Tyre and the House of David brought about the complete encirclement of the Philistine cities from both land and sea.

#### *Philistia and Egypt*

Nothing is known of relations between Egypt and the Philistine city-states during the time-span between the Egyptian withdrawal from Canaan and the tenth century BCE. We have information attesting renewed Egyptian involvement in Philistia only at the end of the Twenty First Dynasty (Siamun), and especially during the reign of Shishak from the Twenty Second Dynasty.<sup>256</sup> This period lies

251 The Anatolian etymologies suggested by Albright are also doubtful; no close parallel has yet been found in the Anatolian onomasticon for even one of the names. By the same token it is also difficult to confirm the Semitic etymology suggested for these names; see H.J. Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, Jerusalem 1973, p. 60, n. 92. Green even goes so far as to identify these as place names on the Lebanese coast(!): M. Green, 'm-k-m-r und w-r-k-t-r in Wenamon-Geschichte', *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, 113 (1986), pp. 115-119.

252 Wilson in Pritchard (above, n. 15), p. 27, n. 18; Helck (above, n. 17), pp. 356, 430-431; Katzenstein, op. cit., p. 60, n. 92; Green, op. cit.

253 There are also no data in the archaeological findings which would corroborate Albright's assumption, according to which the Sea Peoples controlled commerce with the Aegean region, while the Phoenicians traded with Egypt: W.F. Albright, 'The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization', G.E. Wright (ed.), *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Garden City 1961, pp. 438-487.

254 And see Mazar (above, n. 75), p. 68.

255 Eissfeldt (above, n. 108), p. 25; Katzenstein (above, n. 251), pp. 59-61.

256 For detailed discussion with additional literature, see Malamat (above, n. 149), pp. 211-222.



beyond the scope of the present study; here, I will only relate to a unique Egyptian inscription which may perhaps contain the first hint of renewed political ties between Egypt and Philistia.

The inscription is engraved on a statue kept in Baltimore.<sup>257</sup> The statue itself belongs to the Middle Kingdom, but the inscription engraved on it is probably dated to the Third Intermediate Period. The engraver is *P3-dl-3st s3 'py*, who carries the title of 'emissary of Canaan of Philist(ines)' (*wꜣꜣꜣꜣ n ꜣꜣ-ꜣꜣ'ꜣ n ꜣꜣꜣꜣꜣꜣ*). The father's name would appear to be Semitic (comparable to Ephai in Jer 40:8) but the emissary himself has a distinctly Egyptian name. The exceptional geographical combination in his title is the first Egyptian mention of Philistia as a political or geographical term. There is disagreement as to the exact significance of the term, as well as the status of the engraver. 'Canaan' with the addition of the definite article (*ꜣꜣ-ꜣꜣ'ꜣ*) appears from the time of the Nineteenth Dynasty onward with a double meaning—as the name of the country as a whole and as the designation for Gaza, the capital of Egyptian Canaan.<sup>258</sup> Thus, Alt suggested that the intention is an 'emissary of Philistine Gaza' (literally: 'of Gaza of the Philistines'), or an 'emissary of Philistine Canaan' (literally: 'of Canaan of the Philistines').<sup>259</sup> In contrast, Weippert preferred to regard *Pꜣꜣꜣꜣ* as an Egyptian emissary, who was on a mission in Philistia.<sup>260</sup> Either way, the inscription testifies to renewed 'diplomatic' ties between Egypt and Philistia.<sup>261</sup>

It is difficult to determine the exact time of the inscription on the basis of paleographical considerations, and it would seem that primarily historical ones (the campaign of Shishak) have led to the accepted dating to the Twenty Second Dynasty. Although this dating is possible (unlike the dating to the Twenty Sixth Dynasty which some have suggested),<sup>262</sup> an earlier date would not be out of the question.<sup>263</sup> Of the different suggestions for understanding the combination 'Canaan of Philist(ines)', the most acceptable would seem to be that which sees it as a geopolitical designation,<sup>264</sup> referring to all the Philistine city-states, i.e., to that part of Canaan which remained in Philistine hands. It may perhaps be compared with the combination 'Canaan, land of the Philistines', which appears in Zephania 2:5, parallel with 'you inhabitants of the sea coast, you nation of the Cherethites'.

257 G. Steindorff, 'The Statuette of an Egyptian Commissioner in Syria', *JEA*, 25 (1939), pp. 30-33. The inscription was already commented on by Macalister (above, n. 108), p. 82.

258 S. Ahituv, *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents*, Leiden 1984, pp. 83-85.

259 A. Alt, 'Ein gesandter aus Philistia in Aegypten', *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 9 (1952), pp. 163-164; see also M. Valloggia, *Recherche sur les 'messagers' (wꜣꜣꜣꜣ) dans les sources égyptiennes profanes*, Geneva 1976, p. 188.

260 M. Weippert, 'Semitische Nomaden des zweiten Jahrtausends: Über die 3ꜣꜣꜣꜣ der ägyptischen Quellen', *Biblica*, 55 (1974), pp. 265-280, 427-433.

261 A group of small objects, which reveal Egyptian influence of the Twenty-First Dynasty, were found in the new excavations at Ekron: Dothan (above, n. 100), p. 217.

262 For the literature, see Ahituv (above, n. 258), p. 155, n. 439.

263 Valloggia (above, n. 259), p. 188.

264 Contra Ahituv (above, n. 258), p. 85, n. 135, who suggests that it refers to the Phoenician coast.

### *The Period of Philistine Supremacy in Historical Perspective*

For about 150 years after the Egyptian withdrawal from Canaan, the Philistines were the strongest element in western Palestine. But it was only during the last part of that period, for about fifty years, that they were able to establish their control in the region.

Even though they were a new element on the Canaanite scene, the Philistines immediately adapted to the way of life in Egyptian Canaan and became its heirs. Their government was based on two foundations: from the Canaanites they adopted the socio-political structure of the city-state, and from the Egyptians they adopted administrative and military organization. In this sense, the period of their rule may be regarded as a kind of diminished epilogue to the 400 years of Egyptian imperial dominion in Canaan. However, despite their military might and their vitality, the Philistines did not possess the power to replace such an empire as Egypt. Thus, the expression 'Philistine empire' coined by Albright does not suit their regime in Palestine.<sup>265</sup>

The period of Philistine hegemony lacks most of the characteristics of imperial rule. No central imperial metropolis emerged in Philistia, and the territory subject to the authority of the Philistine principalities was quite limited in comparison with any of the empires in the ancient world. Even at the height of their power, their rule did not extend much further than the northern valleys, and it would appear that even in areas of central and southern Palestine, Philistine control was tenuous and intermittent. We do not have information about the degree of economic exploitation of areas subject to Philistine rule,<sup>266</sup> a prominent attribute of any imperial government. Actually, Philistine efforts were directed chiefly toward blocking the expansion of the hill country tribes into the coastal regions and the valleys, rather than expanding and deepening their own hold on additional territories.

In historical perspective, it is possible to say that the Philistines, as continuers of the Egyptian rule, rejuvenated for a short time the structures of the *ancien régime* in Canaan and delayed for several generations the powerful processes which were to change the face of the eastern basin of the Mediterranean. In the course of these processes, the large imperial structures gave way to centralized national states.

After they were forced back by David to the bounds of Philistia proper, the Philistine principalities continued to exist as separate political units for the next 400 years, until the Babylonian exile, but their influence on the history of the region was marginal. Ironically, the deepest imprint left by the period of Philistine

265 Albright (above, n. 253), p. 468; idem (above, n. 102), p. 516; cf. Alt (above, n. 108), pp. 175, 182. The translation 'their extensive empire' in the English version of the article is misleading; Alt himself used the expression 'Machtbereich' ('sphere of control') and even emphasized the relatively limited extent of the sphere of Philistine government: *ibid.*, p. 181.

266 It is doubtful whether the citations indicated by Alt (above, n. 108), p. 181, n. 19; p. 182, n. 26) contain clear evidence of the economic exploitation of the Israelite territories.



rule was actually on the history of Israel. There is no doubt that the Philistine threat provided the chief impetus for the crystallization of the Israelite nation and the latter's transition to a monarchy. Indirectly, the Philistines also influenced the results of the power struggle between the rival factions in the Israelite camp. The man who won the throne was he who had built up his power in Philistia and who, during the period of his rule, put into practice no small amount of what he had learned in the Philistine camp.

'... Make it plain upon tablets, so he may run who reads it'

#### CULTURAL ASPECTS—WRITING IN CANAAN AND PHILISTIA

An important development in Canaanite culture in its twilight years was the increased Egyptian influence. While two-way cultural interchange between Egypt and Canaan had indeed persisted for hundreds of years, it reached its peak during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties as a result of augmented Egyptian political involvement in Canaan. This phenomenon found expression in art, religion, and thought.<sup>267</sup> Its most far-reaching consequence, whose importance goes beyond the boundaries of time and space considered here, was the birth and beginnings of the alphabet in Canaan. This is not the place to review this broad subject; I should like only to make a few basic comments concerning the wider cultural contexts of the evolution of the Canaanite alphabet.<sup>268</sup>

Since the source of the Canaanite alphabet is in Egyptian writing, it is natural that it originated in a region subject directly to Egyptian influence. As to the idea at its root, Canaanite writing is mainly a selective adoption of Egyptian writing, i.e., accepting the single-consonant series of the Egyptian syllabary, while foregoing the wealth of multi-consonant signs and logograms. Also in the sphere of graphics, we find the influence of Egyptian pictography, even though the Canaanite graphic system is a separate one. In light of this, it is difficult to define the creation of the Canaanite alphabet as a new invention, since the idea in its entirety had long been latent within the complex structure of Egyptian writing. But in order to 'extricate' the alphabet from within the complicated system of Egyptian writing, an external innovator was needed, one who was free of the confining weight of the ancient tradition of Egyptian writing. The Canaanites, who were exposed for hundreds of years to the influence of Egyptian culture, and

267 For a summarizing discussion, see K.A. Kitchen, 'Interrelations of Egypt and Syria', M. Liverani (ed.), *La Siria nel Tardo Bronzo*, Roma 1969, pp. 77-95 and additional literature there.

268 For general surveys on this subject, see F.M. Cross, 'The Evolution of the Proto-Canaanite Alphabet', *BASOR*, 134 (1954), pp. 15-24; Kitchen, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-87; A.R. Millard, 'The Ugaritic and Canaanite Alphabets: Some Notes', *UF*, 11 (1979), pp. 613-616; J. Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, Jerusalem 1982; E. Puech, 'Origine de l'Alphabet', *RB*, 93 (1986), pp. 161-213; idem, 'The Canaanite Inscriptions of Lachish and Their Religious Background', *Tel Aviv*, 13-14 (1986-1987), pp. 13-25; see also B. Sass, *The Genesis of the Alphabet and Its Development in the Second Millennium B.C.*, München 1988.

whose language was suited to the consonantal structure of Egyptian writing, fulfilled this condition. For a long period, the Canaanites used the Akkadian cuneiform script for the exchange of letters and for administrative, legal, and religious correspondence.<sup>269</sup> But the peoples of Canaan were not overly constrained by the cuneiform writing tradition and were receptive to the idea of developing 'national' scripts, which would be clearly preferable not only in their adaptation to the Canaanite phonetic system, but also in their ingenious simplicity.

It is not possible to determine where in Canaan alphabetical writing originated, and it may have arisen simultaneously in several centers. In any event, its beginnings should be sought in places where Canaanite eyes came in contact with many Egyptian inscriptions, such as the coastal city of Byblos, the mining district in southern Sinai, and the Egyptian administrative centers in Canaan. Many of the (proto-)Canaanite inscriptions<sup>270</sup> were discovered in the southern part of the country (Gezer, Beth Shemesh, Lachish, Tell el-Ḥesi, Tel Nagila, Tel Ḥalif, Tell el-'Ajjul, Qubur el-Walaida), in areas of conspicuous Egyptian influence.

Two late inscriptions from Lachish are of special interest: their meaning is more-or-less understood, and the vessels on which they were inscribed have been preserved in their entirety. These circumstances (which are not usually the case for the rest of the Canaanite inscriptions) make possible a tentative hypothesis as to the cultural background for the beginning of the use of the Canaanite alphabet. On the ewer from the Fosse Temple appears the inscription "min šy [lrb]ty 'lt", 'given as a gift [to] my [lad]y elat';<sup>271</sup> and on a bowl of the kind used to receive offerings, on some of which are inscribed hieratic dedication inscriptions, we find engraved "bššt...";<sup>272</sup> The two vessels apparently were used as offering vessels, so that it is possible to conjecture that the need for Canaanite writing arose among those people in Lachish who were responsible for religious services or religious

269 For a review of the types of inscriptions, see I. Singer, 'Inscriptions from Aphek', *Cathedra*, no. 27 (1983), pp. 19-26 (Hebrew); D.O. Edzard, 'Amarna und die Archive seiner Korrespondenten zwischen Ugarit und Gaza', J. Amitai (ed.), *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984*, Jerusalem 1985, pp. 248-259. See also M. Anbar and N. Na'aman, 'An Account Tablet of Sheep from Ancient Hebron', *Tel Aviv*, 13-14 (1986-1987), pp. 3-12.

270 The addition 'proto-' (which was derived by analogy with the term 'proto-Sinaitic') is superfluous and misleading, since its referent is not something antecedent to the writing which should appropriately be designated as 'Canaanite'.

271 In Ugaritic, 'Elat' is a synonym for the goddess Asherah, the consort of El; see F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, Cambridge MA 1973, p. 32. The fact that the inscription appears on an object found in the Fosse Temple can be of help in identifying the goddess (or goddesses) of Lachish; see R. Heistrin, 'The Lachish Ewer and the Asherah', *IEJ*, 37 (1987), pp. 212-223. For identification of the goddess who appears on the golden plaque from the Stratum VI temple in the upper city, see C. Clamer, 'A Gold Plaque from Tel Lachish', *Tel Aviv*, 7 (1980), pp. 152-162.

272 One may suggest, with some hesitation, that parallel to the hieratic inscriptions, the word bššt relates to the number of years of the Pharaoh, most probably Ramesses III. Following the word bššt a number of unclear signs appear (see Puech, above, n. 268—1986), whose meaning is all but impossible to decipher.



administration.<sup>273</sup> Perhaps it began as an imitation of the Egyptian dedication inscriptions, which were widespread in the city at that time. If this hypothesis is correct, it can illuminate the cultural milieu which brought about the evolution of the Canaanite alphabet. In this connection, it should be mentioned that some of the Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions are also engraved on cult objects and have the character of dedicational inscriptions.

According to the number of Canaanite inscriptions which have thus far been discovered, the alphabet which slowly developed in Canaan over a period of several hundred years did not become widely known in the course of the Canaanite period itself. It matured and was broadly disseminated mostly thanks to the Phoenicians, the heirs of the Canaanites. Gradually, alphabetical writing also became more widespread among the other peoples in the region—the Israelites, the Philistines, the Arameans, and the Greeks. Since this was the case, even though the Canaanites ceased to exist as a political-ethnic entity in Palestine, their cultural heritage continued to flourish among the peoples who inherited their land. This is not the place to discuss either the cultural indebtedness of the Israelites and the Philistines to the Canaanite heritage, or the reasons for the decline of the Canaanites in Palestine as opposed to their ability to survive and prosper in Phoenicia. At any rate, I feel it would be a mistake to attribute that decline to the moral decadence of the Canaanites.<sup>274</sup>

The Philistines adopted the Canaanite cultural assets, in both the material and spiritual spheres, to the extent that it is very difficult to distinguish the original Philistine components. In light of this, much importance is attached to the discovery in recent years that the Philistines brought with them, apparently from the land of their origin, their own original writing. Thus far we have at our disposal only isolated finds, some of which have not yet been published. Two seals, one cylindrical and the other pyramidal, on which writing signs are apparently engraved, have been found in Ashdod.<sup>275</sup> One small fragment of a clay tablet with linear writing signs was found in a Philistine context in Aphek.<sup>276</sup> Most important of all are the clay tablets from Tell Deir 'Alla in the Jordan Valley. Even though there has still been no real advance in deciphering these inscriptions,<sup>277</sup> it would appear that the type of writing on the tablets resembles the linear scripts of the Aegean region. If it is found that these tablets were indeed inscribed by one of the groups of Sea Peoples which reached Palestine, it would constitute a significant contribution to the discussion about their origins. These rare finds raise hopes that more discoveries may be in store in the excavations taking place in Philistia (and perhaps in Dor and in Acco as well).

273 Puech (above, n. 268—1986), pp. 177-182; idem (above, n. 268—1986-87), suggests additional readings (some quite doubtful) of the Canaanite inscriptions from Lachish, which are probably related to the religious life in the city.

274 As did the founders of the American schools of thought, both fundamentalist (Albright [above, n. 253], pp. 452-453) and sociological (Mendenhall [above, n. 78], p. 225).

275 Dothan (above, n. 8—1989), p. 65; Dothan (above, n. 104), p. 45.

276 Kochavi (above, n. 7), pp. 80-81; Singer (above, n. 269), p. 26.

277 For a summarizing discussion with earlier literature, see Masson (above, n. 166).

The 'Philistine' writing did not remain in use for very long and made way for the preferred Canaanite alphabet.<sup>278</sup> We do not know when this shift occurred, since most of the inscriptions from Philistia do not precede the eighth century.<sup>279</sup> Exceptions are two early inscriptions, which were found in Philistia—in Qubur el-Walaida and in Revadim.

The 'Proto-Canaanite' inscription from Qubur el-Walaida<sup>280</sup> was engraved subsequent to firing on a bowl, whose sherds were found inside a pit with Philistine pottery.<sup>281</sup> The inscription comprises what appear to be personal names (*šmp'l*, *'y'l*). The words are separated by means of vertical lines, similar to those on the tablets from Tell Deir 'Alla and the sherd from Aphek. If it is found that the inscription dates to the beginning of the Philistine settlement at the site, it would indicate the earliness of the adoption of the Canaanite alphabet. But it is necessary to await the full publication of the excavation results.

The scaraboid seal with the inscription *'b'*, which was found in the fields of Kibbutz Revadim, leads to a similar conclusion. The suggested dates for the seal range between the twelfth and ninth centuries BCE.<sup>282</sup> Judging by the place where the seal was found, near ancient Ekron (and also on the basis of the comparison of the pictorial representation on it to that engraved on the cylindrical seal from Ashdod), there is reason to suggest that the owner of the seal was a Philistine from among the inhabitants of Ekron or its vicinity.<sup>283</sup>

While these meager data are insufficient to establish with certainty exactly when the Philistines adopted the Canaanite alphabet, the hypothesis that this occurred not long after their settlement in Philistia would appear reasonable. But only additional epigraphic finds from the early Iron Age will provide a reliable answer to this question and to the question of the place of origin of the original 'Philistine' writing.

As for the subject of the Philistine language, our knowledge is no less rudimentary. Our Philistine 'vocabulary' actually consists of two words, and even they are not completely certain.<sup>284</sup> The term *seren* (prince), which appears in the

278 Mazar (above, n. 75), pp. 69-70.

279 J. Naveh, 'Writing and Script of Seventh-Century B.C.E. Philistia: The New Evidence from Tell Jemmeh', *IEJ*, 35 (1985), pp. 8-12. Naveh succeeded in identifying a special ductus, unique to Philistia, which differs in a number of details from the regular Hebrew writing which prevailed at the end of Iron Age II.

280 F.M. Cross, 'Newly Found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Script', *BASOR*, 238 (1980), pp. 2-4; Naveh (above, n. 268), p. 36; Puech (above, n. 268—1986), p. 174.

281 R. Cohen, 'Qubur el Walaida', *IEJ*, 28 (1978), pp. 194-195.

282 See the literature in B. Sass, 'The Revadim Seal and Its Archaic Phoenician Inscription', *Anatolian Studies*, 33 (1983), pp. 169-175; Puech (above, n. 268—1986), pp. 167-168.

283 In Stratum V in nearby Timnah (Tel Batash) a Philistine bulla was found, which may have been used to seal a scroll; Mazar and Kelm (above, n. 188), p. 19.

284 The remaining suggestions for identifying Philistine words, such as *argāz* and *pilegeš* (for literature, see Brug, above, n. 92, p. 197), are very much in doubt. This is also the case concerning the suggestion to identify the term *napa* (in the combination *napai-Dor*) as a Sikkite word used by the Sea People who settled in Dor: M. Ben-Dov, 'נפא—A



Bible always in the plural (*seranim*, *sarnēi*), is used specifically in referring to the Philistine rulers,<sup>285</sup> so that it is reasonable to presume that it was brought by the Philistines from their place of origin. The word may be derived from the Luwian word *tarwanis*, a title conferred on neo-Hittite governors.<sup>286</sup> It may be that the Greek word *τύραννος*, which also originated in Asia Minor, is related to this term.<sup>287</sup> The word *k/qoba* ('helmet') is apparently derived from the word *kupaḫi* which is well-known throughout the entire Anatolian-Aegean region and is used in all the languages to denote a head covering of some sort.<sup>288</sup> To these two words should be added the ethnic designation *Plst*—'Philist(ine)'. Although we do not know how the Philistines referred to themselves, it may be assumed that this ethnic term, also mentioned in the Egyptian sources, was brought by them from their place of origin. There are reasonable grounds for the old theory which connects the Philistines with the Pelasgians—a pre-Hellenic autochthonic people dispersed throughout the Aegean and Adriatic region.<sup>289</sup>

The Philistine onomasticon also does not contribute much to understanding the language, since in their new country the Philistines quickly adopted local names. Of the dozen or so names of Philistines which are mentioned in the Bible and in the Assyrian sources,<sup>290</sup> it is possible to identify only two whose origin appears to be northern—Achish and Goliath. The name Achish ('Αχχους in the LXX), king of Gath during the time of David and Solomon, is comparable to the name Ikausu, king of Ekron during the reign of Ashurbanipal; and they both resemble the name 'Αγχίσις, one of the Trojan heroes.<sup>291</sup> The name Goliath has been compared with the Lydian name Alyattes, apparently derived from the Anatolian

Geographical Term of Possible "Sea People" Origin', *Tel Aviv*, 3 (1976), pp. 70-73. For the rejection of this suggestion, see Na'aman (above, n. 29—1986), p. 184, n. 26.

- 285 The biblical citations are from the period of the Judges and the days of Samuel. Beginning from approximately the establishment of the monarchy in Israel, Philistine rulers are also referred to by the title 'king'. See F. Pintore, 'Seren, Tarwanis, Tyrannos', O. Carruba, M. Liverani and C. Zaccagnini (eds.), *Studi Orientalistici in Ricordo di Franco Pintore*, Pavia 1983, p. 297.
- 286 See Pintore, op. cit., with earlier literature. Alternately, Ugaritic and Egyptian etymologies have also been suggested; for the literature, see Brug (above, n. 92), p. 197.
- 287 If our assumption is correct (Singer, above, n. 80, p. 247) that *Bdr*, the name of the ruler of Dor in the tale of Wen-Amon, is taken from the Luwian word *piduri* (which apparently means 'governor'), it would be yet another instance in which a title of Anatolian origin was used specifically to denote governors from among the Sea Peoples.
- 288 Hittite—*kupaḫi*, Hurrian—*kuwahi*, Greek—*κῠβαχός*; for the literature, see J. Tischler, *Heitilisches etymologisches Glossar*, Lfg. 4, Innsbruck 1983, pp. 640-641.
- 289 See Singer (above, n. 77), pp. 2-3; idem (above, n. 92), pp. 241-242 and the literature there. The etymology of the ethnicon itself is still unclear. According to one of the suggestions, two components have combined in the word 'Philistine' (Phylisinoi in the Greek writings)—*Phyle* in the sense of 'tribe' and *Histie*, the name of the goddess of the hearth; see A.H. Jones, 'The Philistines and the Hearth: Their Journey to the Levant', *JNES*, 31 (1972), pp. 343-350. As we know, the hearth is a central element in Anatolian-Aegean architecture. In this connection, it is interesting to note the hearth constructions which have been uncovered recently at Tell Qasile and Ekron.
- 290 See list in Brug (above, n. 92), pp. 198-199; Naveh (above, n. 279), p. 9.
- 291 Thus already in F. Hitzig, *Urgeschichte und Mythologie der Philistiner*, Leipzig 1845, p. 80.

root *walwi/a*.<sup>292</sup> The other Philistine names are clearly Semitic,<sup>293</sup> as are most of the identifiable names which appear in the inscriptions discovered in Philistia.<sup>294</sup>

It would seem, therefore, that during the last fifty years our knowledge of the Philistine language has barely grown, and we are not even able to be certain to which family of languages it belonged. While the common assumption that it was an Indo-European language from the Anatolian-Balkan region is quite probable, there are those who have raised doubts even about this.<sup>295</sup> In any case, it is of course impossible to undertake a serious discussion on the basis of less than half-a-dozen words and names which are thought to be Philistine. Another important question which has not yet been answered is: until when did the Philistines continue to speak their original language, before adopting that of their new country.<sup>296</sup> In the Bible, there is no hint of any difficulties in communication between Israelites and Philistines. It is hard to think that the 'language of Ashdod' of which Nehemiah speaks (Neh 13:24) is still related to the original language of the Philistines. It is more likely that it was an Aramaic dialect which the people of Ashdod spoke.<sup>297</sup>

#### EPILOGUE: SEE UNDER 'PHILISTINE'

The search for solutions to many basic issues in the study of Philistine culture has only just begun, and it is still too early to assess the Philistine contribution to the culture of Palestine. Nevertheless, it is already clear that the opinion which was prevalent for a long time, that the Philistines and the other Sea Peoples were barbarian invaders who tore down and destroyed everything that came in their

- 292 See the literature in Görg (above, n. 180). He himself suggests an Egyptian etymology.
- 293 The name of Phichol, the captain of Abimelech's army, is an exception. An Egyptian etymology is usually suggested for it, based on the identification of the prefix *p3*, the Egyptian definite article; for a review, see M. Görg, 'Die Begleitung des Abimelech von Gerar (Gen. 26, 26)', *BN*, 35 (1986), pp. 21-25. Görg even points to close parallels among the Egyptian names in use during the Twentieth Dynasty (e.g., *P3-krry*). However, his suggestion that the name is derived from the Egyptian word meaning 'policeman' or 'soldier', to fit the title 'captain of the host' borne by Phichol, would seem forced (the same is true for the Egyptian etymology suggested for the name 'Achuzzath' mentioned in the same episode). A reconstructed Anatolian etymology, *πικολδος* or *πιγολλος*, with an ending commonly used in names from Caria, has recently been proposed for the name 'Phichol': J.D. Ray, 'Two Etymologies: Ziklag and Phichol', *VT*, 36 (1986), pp. 355-361. It may be possible to bridge the gap between the two views and suggest that the name means merely 'the Carian' (and see above, n. 240, on Carian mercenaries).
- 294 A. Kempinski's suggestion ('Some Philistine Names from the Kingdom of Gaza', *IEJ*, 37 [1987], pp. 20-24) that there are Anatolian names among those which appear on the ostrakon from Tell Jemmeh (published by Naveh, above, n. 279, pp. 11-15), is most doubtful. For a different identification of these names, see N. Na'aman, 'The Negev in the Last Century of the Kingdom of Judah', *Cathedra*, no. 42 (1987), pp. 9-10, n. 12 (Hebrew).
- 295 Görg (above, n. 180).
- 296 Of course, this question is not necessarily equivalent to the question of when the Canaanite alphabet was adopted.
- 297 See Eissfeldt (above, n. 108), p. 33 with earlier literature.



path, is now obsolete. This negative image, although referring to historical and archaeological sources, was surely not free of prejudice, originating from the biblical attitude toward the Philistines. It is enough to mention the pejorative use in European languages of the concept 'philistinism' to indicate ignorance, narrow-mindedness, boorishness. Obviously, the transformation of an ethnic group into a lexical term brands that group with a 'mark of Cain' which is not easily removed.

Of course, in seeking to balance the negative image, we must take care not to go too far. At times this tendency has led to an opposite extremism, which has attempted in every way possible to emphasize the superiority of the Philistines, bearers of the developed 'Western' culture, and their decisive role in advancing the culture of the Semitic populations of Canaan.<sup>298</sup> At times this approach, too, has been influenced by chauvinistic attitudes. The Philistines were not vandals who lay waste the culture of the East, nor were they Crusader knights who spread European progress. To the extent that the study of the Philistines and the other Sea Peoples is able to free itself of the emotional charge of being 'for' or 'against' (which is itself, without a doubt, of great interest to modern historiographic research), it will then be based on the firm foundations of unbiased historical and archaeological research. Only thus will we obtain a reliable picture of the Philistine contribution to the unique cultural synthesis of East and West, the beauty of Japheth in the tents of Shem.

298 A prominent exponent of this approach is Macalister, who attributed various innovations to the Philistines, including the invention of the alphabet (Macalister, above, n. 108, p. 130; and see citation above, n. 108, in which Macalister compares the Philistines with the Crusader knights). An interesting blend of two opposing approaches in Philistine research is found in the monograph of Eissfeldt, in which he compares the fate of the Philistines and the Phoenicians: the Phoenician seafarers, whose prowess lay in commerce and finance, retained their culture and even disseminated it throughout the Mediterranean region, whereas the Philistine 'knights', who lusted for conquest, constituted a foreign element in the country, and so they quickly lost their cultural and military advantage, and eventually, their national identity as well.

## Subsistence Economy in Iron Age I

BARUCH ROSEN

The topic of the subsistence economy of the Iron Age I settlements has been widely discussed recently.<sup>1</sup> In this article, I will try to reexamine previous hypotheses and to suggest several subsistence models for the early Israelite villages.

The sites which furnish the raw data for this model-building exercise are located in the hill country of western Palestine. The resources used by the population of the highlands for manipulating the environment—man-made tools, domestic plants and animals as well as survival strategies—already had been brought into equilibrium during the Bronze Age. New elements were introduced cautiously and gradually into this existing well-interlocked system. The processes by which past elements were deleted from the system were also quite slow. Extreme conservatism, even some reactionary trends, seem to characterize the Iron Age I subsistence patterns.

From this point of view, practically nothing was added in Iron Age I. The strategies and most of the tactics for survival were well known, almost instinctive. Even the rhythm of life was already centuries old. Men, animals and plants subsisted in unison in a well-recognized polycultural system.

### ANIMAL RESOURCES

The faunal assemblages from excavated Iron Age I sites are dominated by ovine bones.<sup>2</sup> It has been argued that the dominance of sheep and goats influenced the

- 1 I. Finkelstein, *Izbit Sarjah: An Early Iron Age Site near Rosh Ha'ayin, Israel (BAR International Series, 299)*, Oxford 1986; A. Zertal, *The Israelite Settlement in the Hill Country of Menasseh*, Haifa 1988 (Hebrew); A. Mazar, 'The Israelite Settlement in Canaan in the Light of Archaeological Excavations', J. Amitai (ed.), *Biblical Archaeology Today, Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem April 1984*, Jerusalem 1985, pp. 61-71.
- 2 S. Hellwing and Y. Adjeman, 'Animal Bones', in Finkelstein (above, n. 1), pp. 141-152; L. Kolska Horwitz, 'Faunal Remains from the Early Iron Age Site on Mount Ebal', *Tel Aviv*, 13-14 (1986-87), pp. 173-189; S. Hellwing and M. Sadeh, 'Animal Remains: Preliminary Report', in I. Finkelstein (ed.), 'Excavations at Shiloh 1981-84: Preliminary Report', *Tel Aviv*, 12 (1985), pp. 177-180; E. Tchernov and I. Drori, 'Economic Patterns and Environmental Conditions at H̄irbet el-M̄šaš during the Early Iron Age', V. Fritz and A.