

Of Philistines and sea peoples

Ralph S. Pacini

Historians stake their entire case for the twelfth century BC origin of the Philistines on the identity of the 'Sea Peoples' depicted in the battle scenes of the mortuary temple of Ramses III of the 20th Egyptian dynasty. These scenes are a central feature of every book and article about the Philistines published in this century, and the reign of Ramses III has become the chronologic reference point of all discussions about the Philistines. But Immanuel Velikovsky has convincingly shown that Ramses III belongs in the fourth century, and the 'Sea Peoples' were Persians who, in typical Persian fashion, had organized an enormous expedition to attack Egypt by land and by sea in an effort to regain control of Egypt. The wildly mistaken identification of fourth century Persians as twelfth century Philistines began in the last century and continues to this day, bringing into question all existing literature on the subject of the Philistines.

Introduction

In a previous publication, I attempted to show how Immanuel Velikovsky (1895-1979) found the proper place in secular history for the Amalekites of the Bible.¹ His historical revisions also provide enlightenment about the Philistines, another people of the Bible. As in the story about the Amalekites, this discussion will focus on Egypt since the modern view of the Philistines derives from the interpretation of ancient Egyptian records. Like the Amalekites, the Philistines of the Bible were unknown in secular history until the present century. Also, as in the story about the mysterious Amalekites, this story involves a comparison of peoples and events which appear to be separated by many years — in this case over eight centuries. Following Velikovsky, I will attempt to convince the reader that the twelfth century Philistines/Sea Peoples of the historians and archeologists were really fourth century Persians — bringing into question virtually everything that has been published about the Philistines over the past century.²

It is said that the science of Egyptology was born in the late nineteenth century with the ability, finally, to read ancient Egyptian records and monuments.³ Among the

heretofore illegible inscriptions were those attributed to Pharaoh Ramses III of the twentieth dynasty whose reign is conventionally assigned to the early twelfth century, ca 1182-1151 BC.⁴ The great mortuary temple of Ramses III at *Medinet Habu*, was described by the famous Egyptologist, Sir Alan Gardiner, as *'the best preserved and most interesting of all the funerary sanctuaries on the western side of Thebes.'* On its walls are numerous *'pictures of warfare'* which *'supplement the written legends in the most valuable fashion. ...'*⁵

Those strange battle scenes depicted in bas reliefs on temple walls and described in monumental texts and papyri of the 20th dynasty are notable for the confusing and changing complexity of the combatants. There are scenes of Egyptians fighting Libyans (Figure 1), and Egyptians fighting 'Sea Peoples' on both land and sea. In some scenes the Sea Peoples seem to be allied with archaic Aegeans (Figure 2). The land armies of the Sea Peoples include carts carrying women and children (Figure 4). The scenes of naval battles between the Egyptians and the Sea Peoples have been of particular interest to scholars (Figure 3). The war which occurred in the eighth year of Ramses III, conventionally ca 1175 BC, resulted in the defeat of the Sea Peoples and their Aegean allies. These defeated Sea Peoples were identified on the monuments by a variety of strange names including *dnn, tjkr, skls, trs, wss, srdn, and prst* — all recorded without vowels. When written with added vowels they are usually presented as *Denyen* or *Denien*, *Tjeker* or *Theker*, *Shekelesh*, *Teresh*, *Weshesh*, *Sherden* or *Sardan*, and *Pereset*. It is the last name, *Pereset*, that riveted the attention of scholars. Since the letter *R* may be pronounced as *L* in Egyptian script, it was reasoned that *prst = Pereset = Peleset = Philistine*. The world finally had a secular handle on this strange people of the Bible and we now have a century of scholarly publications expounding on this theme, all hanging from the interpretation of the Egyptian inscription, *'prst'* — a

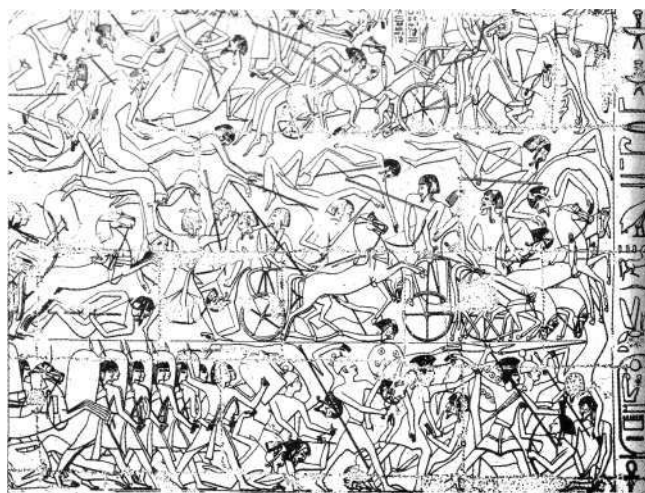


Figure 1. *The Egyptians, supported by the Pereset and the Peoples of the Sea, assault the Libyans (from Velikovsky, Peoples of the Sea).²*

situation which Charles Taylor described in the words of Isaiah as 'reliance on "the staff of this broken reed ... Egypt" (Isaiah 36:6).⁶

The Philistines of the Bible

According to the book of Genesis, the Philistines were already a settled, relatively peaceful agrarian people when Abraham arrived in Canaan, and he was living among the Philistines when Isaac was born.⁷⁸ By the time of the Conquest they had become a major military obstacle to the Israelites (Exodus 13:17) and remained a military threat throughout the period of the Judges. Their land was called a 'Pentapolis' because it was dominated by five cities, namely Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gath, each of which was ruled by a *seren* or tyrant with limited authority resulting in a vaguely 'federated' system of government. The Philistines willingly mingled with and allied themselves with Amalekites and other peoples, probably a significant factor in their eventual loss of a cultural identity.⁹ Although they managed along with their Amalekite allies to kill King Saul, they were finally subdued by King David early in his reign, and disappear as a people after the Babylonian destruction and captivity. In contrast, the Hebrews managed to rebuild Jerusalem and retain their unique identity.

Scripture is rather cryptic about the origin of the Philistines but seems to identify these early settlers in Canaan as immigrants from the Nile Delta, of the family of Caphthor, son of Mizraim, the founder of Egypt.¹⁰ However, the meaning of the word Caphthor as it is used in Scripture has been argued among Bible scholars for centuries. Most believe it refers to the island of Crete: others say it means the island of Cyprus, or the islands of the Aegean, or Cappadocia in Asia Minor. Velikovskiy favored Cyprus and expressed the belief that the Philistines in Canaan in the time of the Judges had arrived only a few years before the crossing of the Jordan by the Israelites. Referring to The Jewish Encyclopedia, he argued,

'If Caphthor was not Cyprus, then no name for Cyprus and no mention of the island would be found in the Scriptures, and that would be very unlikely because Cyprus is very close to Syria. The islands

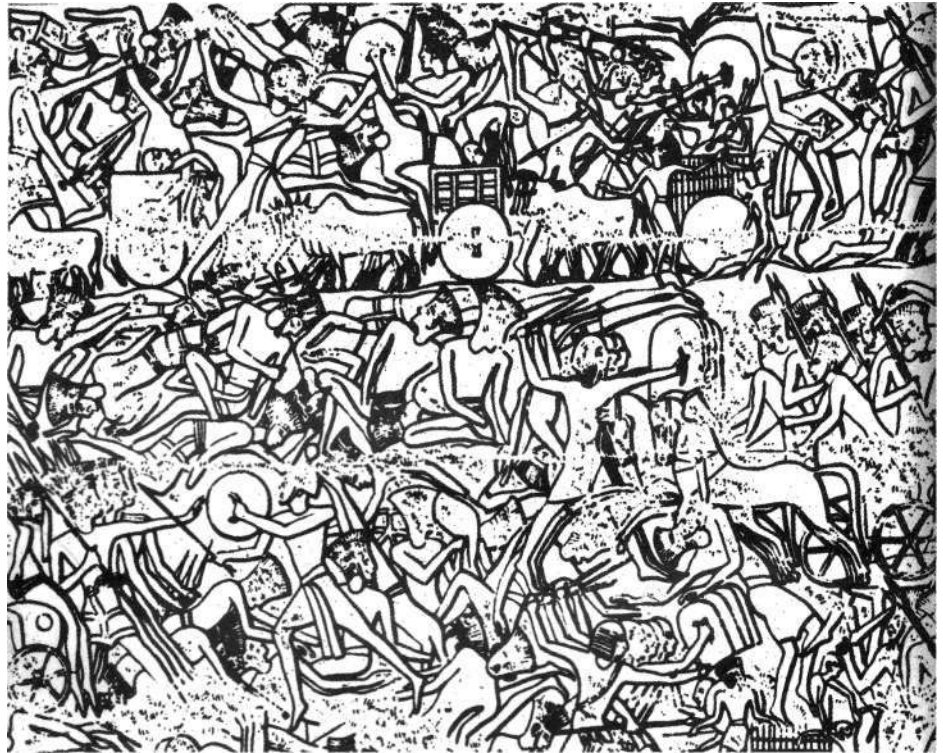


Figure 2. *The Egyptians fight, with the assistance of the Peoples of the Sea, against the soldiers of the Pereset. This reflects the situation when Chabrias was in the Egyptian service and the Persians were ejected from the country (from Velikovskiy, Peoples of the Sea).²*

of Khittim (Jeremiah 2:10; Ezekiel 27:6), usually identified as Cyprus, signified all the islands and coastlands of the west, even Macedonia, and even Italy.¹¹

He also supported his position by citing a Jewish legend about King David's investigation of covenants made by the patriarchs (Genesis 21:22-32 & 26:28-31) before attacking the Arameans and the Philistines.¹²

'... he (David) had charged the Sanhedrin to investigate carefully the claims of the two nations. The claims of the Philistines were found to be utterly unfounded. In no sense were they descendants of those Philistines who had concluded a treaty with Isaac; they had immigrated from Cyprus at a much later date...'¹³

Bible commentators seem to agree that these people were uncircumcised, but their names were mostly Semitic, despite the claim of Aegean or Eurasian origin. Of those favoring Cappadocia some claim it had 'a Semitic population side by side with Mongols at least as early as the time of Moses.'¹⁴ Goliath's weapons and armor, especially the greaves, are thought to support the idea of a very early Aegean or Mycenaean influence.¹⁵ In any event this Mycenaean influence eventually became very strong as indicated by the pottery and other artefacts unearthed by archaeologists. This confusing state of affairs, with the Bible as the sole source of information about the Philistines, supplemented by limited

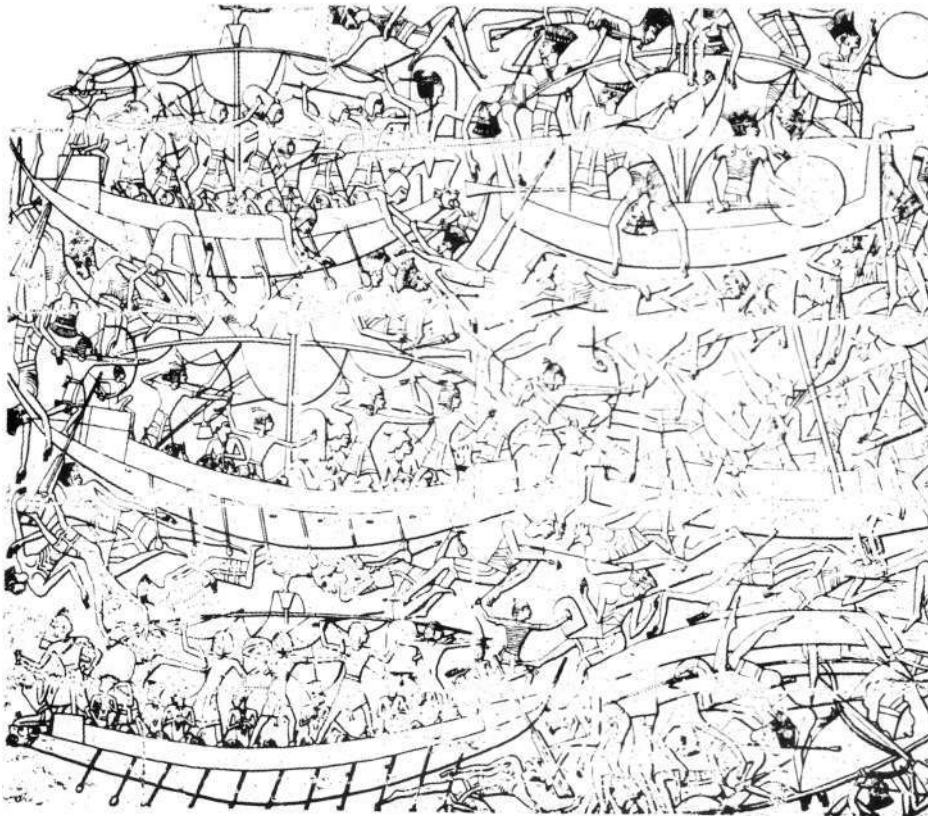


Figure 5. The Egyptian fleet of Ramses III destroying the fleet of the Pereset. The Peoples of the Sea are, at this stage, allies of the Pereset. The helmets of the People of the Sea have horns but not the disks between the horns (from Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*).

archaeologic findings, prevailed until the nineteenth century.

The Philistines of history and archaeology

While demonstrating intense interest in the war records and battle scenes of Ramses III, some nineteenth century historians expressed reservations about the identity of the *prst*. For example, in 1870 George Rawlinson concluded that the *Turusata (prst)*, like most of the other tribes named, remain an enigma for future ages to unriddle.¹⁶ And in 1881 Heinrich Brugsch did not list Philistines among the people vanquished by Ramses III.¹⁷ Nevertheless, by the twentieth century the identification of *prst* as Philistines had become entrenched. No one seemed to question the twelfth century setting for Ramses III, and all accepted the idea of massive thirteenth and twelfth century migrations of peoples from north to south in the eastern Mediterranean. By 1909 the famous American historian and Egyptologist Henry Breasted (1865-1935) wrote:

The people involved were probably the Cretan Peleset, a settlement of whom later became the biblical Philistines. ... Owing to pressure from uncertain sources without, large numbers of these peoples, accompanied by their wives, children, and belongings, in clumsy ox carts, left their homes, and

moving eastward along the coast of Asia Minor, penetrated Syria. They were accompanied by a strong fleet also. In the author's opinion, this movement was really a "Volkerwanderung", (migration of a nation) not merely an invasion, with a few families of the chiefs. They were strong enough to hold all northern Syria at their mercy; from Carchemish, through the Syrian Hittite conquests to the coast, as far south as Amor, they plundered the country. They had a central camp somewhere in Amor.¹⁸

Today's leading authorities on the subject of the Philistines appear to be the Israeli archaeologists Trude and Moshe Dothan. Their book, *People Of The Sea*, published in 1992, provides a scholarly review of our present state of historical knowledge supplemented by extensive archaeological data, and accurately reflects the views of

leading historians of the past century. *Biblical Archaeology Review* has published about a dozen articles about the Philistines by the Dothans and others over the past fifteen years.

The Sea Peoples, including the Philistines, first appeared in the eastern Mediterranean in the second half of the 13th century BC. At the time, the Egyptians and the Hittites were in power in the Levant (the Hittite Empire centered in Anatolia), but both were weak, politically and militarily. The Sea Peoples exploited this power vacuum by invading areas previously subject to Egyptian and Hittite control. In wave after wave of land and sea assaults they attacked Syria, Palestine, and even Egypt itself. In the last and mightiest wave, the Sea Peoples, including the Philistines, stormed south from Canaan in a land and sea assault on the Egyptian Delta. According to Egyptian sources, including the hieroglyphic account at Medinet Habu. Ramesses III (c. 1198-1166 BC) soundly defeated them in the eighth year of his reign. He then permitted them to settle on the southern coastal plain of Palestine. There they developed into an independent political power and threat both to the disunited Canaanite city-states and the newly settled Israelites.

*The Philistine camp was composed of three separate units: non-combatant civilians, chariotry, and infantry. The non-combatants ... included men, women and children riding in slow moving, two wheeled carts, each harnessed to a team of four oxen. These carts were very similar to transport wagons still in use today in some parts of Turkey. This picture of the Sea Peoples, invading both by land and by sea, reflects their purpose — to occupy and settle lands they overrun.*¹⁹

Neal Bierling, an associate of the Dothans, has published an interesting monograph about the Philistines in this decade titled *Giving Goliath His Due* which attempts to correlate current thinking about the Philistines with Old Testament events.²⁰

Prst according to Velikovsky

Immanuel Velikovsky published *Peoples of the Sea* twenty-two years ago. This startling revision of the history of the Late Kingdom of Egypt took up the meaning of *prst* in the second chapter. It seems that during the Persian occupation of Egypt which began in 525 BC, Egyptian references to Persia were recorded *Prs*. Interestingly, *Prs*, or *Paras* also mean Persia in Hebrew. Furthermore, in 238 BC under Ptolemy III, a decree was cut in stone by a conclave of priests. Like the Rosetta stone, it was inscribed in Greek, Egyptian hieroglyphic, and Egyptian demotic script. It was known as the Canopus Decree after the place in which the conclave took place and refers to Persia as *Prstt*. According to Velikovsky's footnote a double t is not unusual in this script, and other geographic locations in the text of the Canopus Decree also have a second t.^{21, 22} Velikovsky also explained that although there is no letter *L* in Egyptian script, and the letter *R* may be pronounced also as *Z*, in almost all cases where *R* appears, it is pronounced *R*, and thus we read *Ramses*, not *Lamses*.²³

The fourth century wars of the Greeks

The Greek historian Diodorus lived in Sicily during the first century before Christ and spent several years in Egypt. He is credited with writing a history of the world, understandably paying special attention to the wars of the Greeks. Keeping in mind the confusing Egyptian battle scenes and our identification of the *Pereset* as Persians, we turn to Diodorus for a description of the military battles involving Greeks and Egyptians that took place from the mid-fifth to the mid-fourth century BC. The reader is reminded that Persia had conquered Egypt in 525 BC and controlled the entire eastern Mediterranean coast. In those turbulent times, Persian intrigue played a major role in maintaining hostilities among the various Greek peoples. Athens and Sparta, seemingly always at war with each other, managed to cooperate enough to avoid outright Persian occupation. According to Diodorus and other

Greek authors, beginning in the mid fifth century before Christ and just half a century before the death of Socrates, Greek mercenary warriors became involved in a most interesting series of military events in the Nile Delta region. This was a time when Carthage was at the peak of its power in the mid-Mediterranean, and Persia enlisted its Egyptian subjects and Greek mercenaries in repelling Libyan forces in the western Nile Delta. Taking advantage of dynastic succession problems in Persia during the 'Golden Age of Pericles' (460-429) several Egyptian princes managed to achieve some transient regional independence from Persia with help from Greek mercenaries. Herodotus traveled in Egypt shortly after 450 BC during a period of relative peace. Early in the fourth century Egypt managed to regain its complete independence from Persia, again with the help of Greek mercenary warriors, this time under the command of a skilled General named Chabrias. The Persian crown pressured Athens to recall Chabrias and his troops and began preparations to reconquer Egypt. These preparations took several years, complicated by continuing dynastic succession problems. This gave Egypt plenty of time to prepare its defenses. The Persians gathered a huge force of two hundred thousand 'barbarians' under the command of Pharnabazus made up of Persians and various eastern Mediterranean peoples subject to Persia, supplemented by twenty thousand Greek mercenaries led by a brilliant general named Iphicrates. Noting that Pharnabazus had wasted much time in preparations, Iphicrates complained that in talk he was clever but he was sluggish in action. Pharnabazus replied that he was master of his words, but the king was master of his actions. This army assembled at Acco in Palestine and marched slowly along the coast toward Egypt accompanied by a fleet of five hundred ships. The initial battle at the 'Mendesian' mouth of the Nile was won by the Persians and Greeks, but then '*discord set in among the commanders*'. Iphicrates had learned from captives that the strategic Egyptian city of Memphis was



Figure 4, Detail of ox cart (from BAR, July/Aug. 1982).

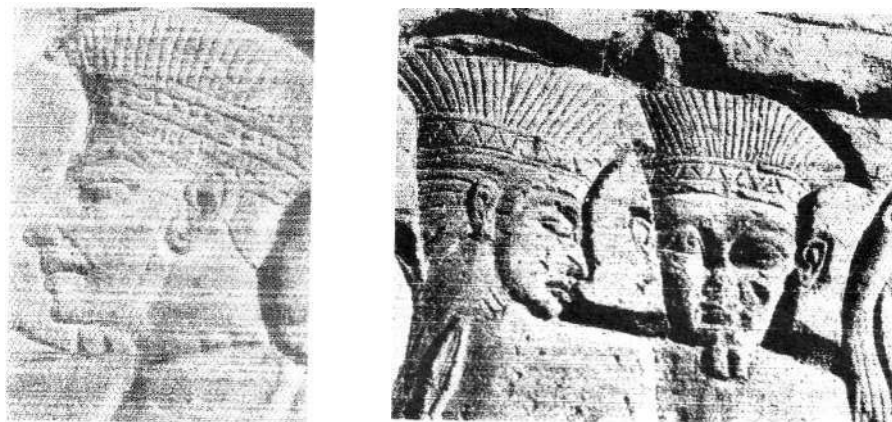


Figure 5. Examples of the head-dresses worn by the Pereset from the bas-reliefs in the mortuary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu (from BAR 1992 (left), 1993 (right)).

undefended and wanted to proceed immediately upstream to Memphis. Pharnabazus insisted on waiting for the rest of his forces to arrive, and was also alarmed that Iphicrates would take Egypt for himself. The delay gave the Egyptians plenty of time to arrange for an adequate defense of Memphis and to proceed with the rest of their forces to the Mendesian mouth of the Nile. The Egyptians were aided by rising flood waters with the result that the Persian commanders decided to withdraw from Egypt. Iphicrates, fearing he would be blamed, managed to slip away at night and return to Athens. After commenting on the admirable character of Iphicrates and his 'natural genius' for inventing tools of war, Diodorus closed this story with the statement, 'So the Persian expedition against Egypt, for all its huge preparations, disappointed expectations and proved a failure in the end.'²⁴ For Egypt it meant another three decades of independence before being re-conquered by Persia in 343 BC.

The battle scenes

Referring to the fourth century setting as described by Diodorus, Velikovsky clarified the confusing battle scenes where participants seemed to change sides. In his own words:

'There was something odd in the relations between these peoples, the Egyptians, the Pereset, and the Peoples of the Sea. When the pharaoh at the beginning of his reign made war against intruders from Libya, the Peoples of the Sea with the horned helmets and the Pereset with tiaras helped him and his army and one may see them killing Libyans (Figure 1). Thus their first appearance is not that of enemies but of allies of Egypt.'

Later on, in the second act, the Pereset are seen as the main foes of the Egyptians; in the war against the Pereset, the Peoples of the Sea aid the pharaoh, showing examples of heroism, a few going into battle against many

(Figure 2).

*But in the great battle at the mouth of the Nile the Peoples of the Sea with horned helmets — now without discs between the horns — appear on hostile vessels and the Egyptian fleet puts to rout the vessels of the Pereset and the Peoples of the Sea alike (Figure 3). A number of the Peoples of the Sea and of the Pereset are on the Egyptian vessels but they are fettered captives.'*²⁵

In the fourth century when Carthage still dominated the western Mediterranean, and Libyan invasion from the west could have resulted in a Punic threat to the Persian empire, it is readily understandable that the first battle scene (Figure 1) shows the Persians (Pereset), and their Greek mercenaries (Sea Peoples) helping Egypt repel the Libyan threat from the west. Velikovsky's 'second act' (Figure 2) shows Greek mercenaries under General Chabrias helping the Egyptians repel the Persians from Egypt; in this act the Horned helmets of the Greeks have a disc between the horns. In the great battles at the mouth of the Nile (Figure 3), the Greek mercenaries are allied with the Pereset/Persians attempting to reconquer Egypt. These Greek troops were not the same troops that had been under the command of General Chabrias; they had been recalled by Athens. These troops were commanded by General Iphicrates and appear with horned helmets without a disc between the horns.

It is of interest to note that the Dothans, in *People of the Sea*,¹⁶ and Neal Bierling, in *Giving Goliath His Due*,²¹ both use the same bas relief used by Velikovsky in his 'second act' (Figure 2). They both describe the scene as a battle between Ramses III and the Sea People. But the Sea People wearing the horned helmets (i.e., Greeks) are shown attacking the Pereset as allies of the Egyptians! In the Dothan book, all but one of the Sea People warriors with the horned helmet have been cropped; the one that remains is attacking an unseen foe with his sword. Bierling, on the other hand, shows the whole panel that reveals these helmeted Sea People attacking Pereset/Persians, including the one remaining in the Dothan illustration who is attacking a group of Pereset/Persians — illustrating Velikovsky's statement (above), 'a few going into battle against many'.

The combatants

When the Persians invaded Egypt, their forces included contingents of all their various subject peoples of Asia Minor and the Aegean Isles — the 'Peoples of the Sea' —



Figure 6. Bodyguard of Cyrus (from Grolier Society Book of History, 1915. Vol V).

accounting for those strange names which correspond quite well with the fifth and fourth century peoples subject to Persia. Pharnabazus, the commander of the Persian forces, came from a province which

*'... was known in Persian as "Tyaly Dray-ahya" or "Those [or the people] of the Sea."*²⁸ As for the carts of women and children, which convinced historians that this was not "merely an invasion", but

*the "migration of a nation", Herodotus wrote that the Persian army was "... followed by litters wherein rode their concubines, and by a numerous train of attendants handsomely dressed"*²⁹ (Figure 4).

The Pereset/Persians appear in distinctive apparel, especially the headdress, which has been the basis for their identification. This likeness is reproduced in almost every publication about the Philistines (Figure 5). It comes as a surprise, therefore, to discover illustrations in several standard history texts of ancient Persian soldiers wearing a headdress that bears a startling resemblance to those of the Pereset depicted on the walls of the temple at *Medinet Habu* (Figures 6 & 7).

The Greek warriors depicted on the walls of *Medinet Habu* are clean shaven, in keeping with fourth century Greek military custom, certainly **not** applicable before the sixth century. Their headdress, shields, and weapons are also in keeping with the fourth century.³⁰

Scholars have noted that the ships of the Sea People are fitted with a loose footed sail — a 'revolutionary' advanced rigging which enabled the ship to tack into the wind. These ships also had crows nests on the masts, and composite stone and wood anchors which provided better mooring in sandy or muddy sea bottoms. In summary, the Sea People/Philistines were credited with the twelfth century creation of the prototype for the well known Phoenician ship called *hippos* by the Greeks.³¹ The fact that the Egyptian ships were similarly rigged did not appear pertinent.

Twelfth century Ramses III

According to Velikovsky,

'When rich monumental material was found regarding the reign of a pharaoh for whom historiographers selected the name of Ramses III, he was not identified with any king in the lists of Manetho. Not being found in these lists, he was assigned to the Twentieth Dynasty, probably because the kings of that dynasty are unnamed in

*the dynastic lists of Africanus and Eusebius ... and it seemed safe to place Ramses III and succeeding Ramses in this dynasty.*³²

As for the placement of Ramses III in the twelfth century, Velikovsky wrote:

'The fact is that Ramses III was placed in the twelfth century before Champollion's reading of hieroglyphics and, thus, before any monumental inscriptions would justify such an allocation.'



Figure 7. Persian soldier (from Rawlingson, G., 1880. Five Great Monarchies, vol II).

A Scottish psychiatrist stated in a publication in 1819 — **two years before** Champollion's first reading — that Ramses III started his reign in 1147 BC. In 1839 the brother of Jean Francois Champollion placed Ramses III in 1279 BC, each of these dates offered without explanation. When the *Medinet Habu* texts were interpreted to read that Ramses III had fought the Philistines, this seemed to fit well with the twelfth century dating and the time of the Judges.³³

Looking at the temple at *Medinet Habu*, the best preserved of the ancient mortuary temples in Egypt, Velikovsky pointed out the striking architectural similarity to temples of Ptolemaic times.³⁴ (Figures 8, 9 & 10) Probably the most compelling evidence for placing Ramses III in the fourth century is found in the ruins of his palace. The area is strewn with glazed tiles on the back of which were imprinted modern Greek letters, presumably placed there by workmen before firing; the glazed faces of the tiles are typical of the Persian period.³⁵³⁶

Fourth century Nectanebo I

The fourth century Egyptian king who defeated the Persians in the wars described by Diodorus, was known to the Greeks as Nectanebo I, and Manetho, the third century Egyptian priest and scribe, placed him in his 30th dynasty. Historians and archeologists who sound ecstatic about the exploits of Ramses III who defeated the 'Sea People' almost completely ignore this remarkable king who actually defeated the mighty Persian Empire that attacked Egypt with a vast land and sea armada including all her Asian auxiliaries plus Greek mercenaries! We are expected to believe that there are no Egyptian records of this king's extraordinary military campaigns conducted in the fourth century,³⁷ but by some miracle we are awash in exceptionally well preserved written records and monuments of an Egyptian king who defeated a leaderless horde in the twelfth century. Neither the sarcophagus nor the mummy of this amazing king, Nectanebo I, has been

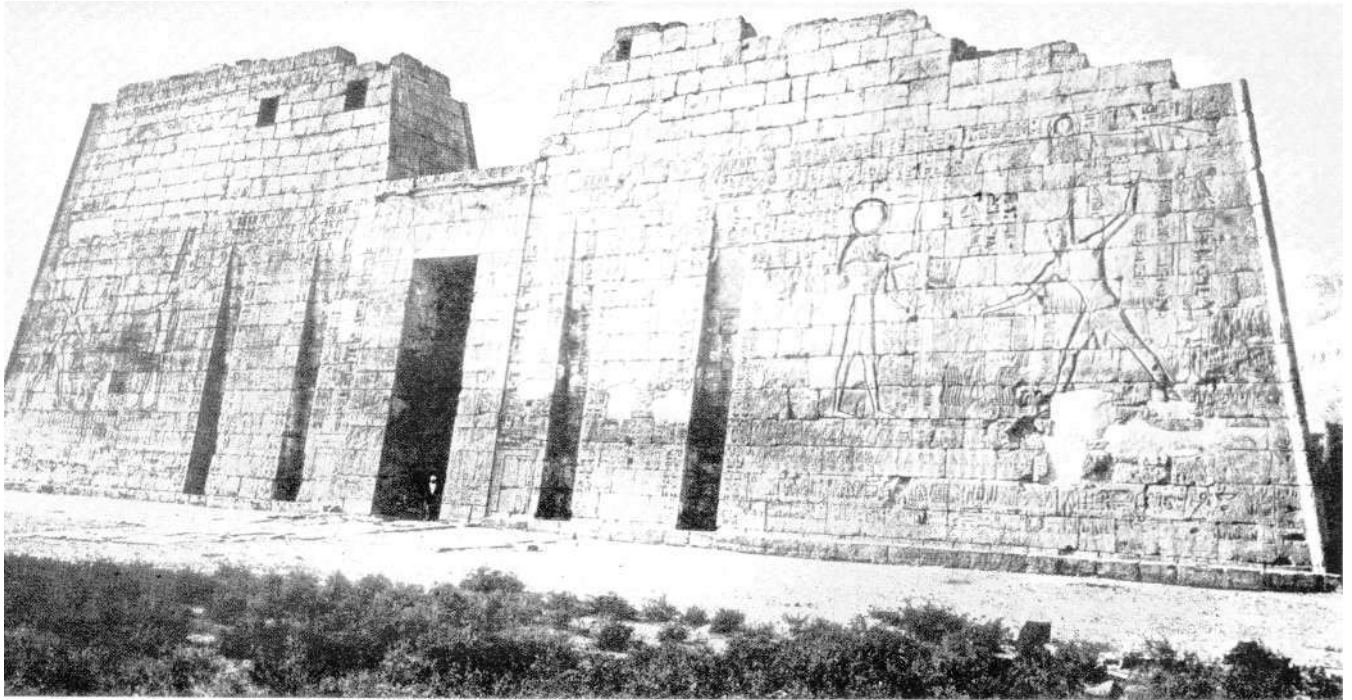


Figure 8. Portal of the Temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu (from Velikovskiy, Peoples of the Sea)

found. The sarcophagus and mummy of Ramses III are proudly displayed in the Cairo Museum. This situation makes it difficult to set aside the inference that Nectanebo I and Ramses III were the same person.

Alexander at the oracle

Alexander's visit to the southern oasis at Siwa is legendary, and has been described by a number of Greek writers with access to eyewitness accounts. However, there appears to be no Egyptian record of his visit to the Siwa oasis. This is very strange because Alexander was greatly revered by the Egyptians to the point of naming him Pharaoh of both upper and lower Egypt. Of course, no one thought of looking at the records of the 21st dynasty because that dynasty supposedly followed the 20th and is dated 1100-1020 BC. The Maunier Stele, which was found in Luxor, now in the Louvre, has been described as one of the most prominent documents of the period of the 21st dynasty. Velikovskiy discovered that this stele, which is poorly preserved and considered difficult to read, in fact told a story which compared point by point with the stories recorded by the Greek historians about Alexander's visit to the Siwa oasis.³⁸

Conclusions

Were the Pereset twelfth century Philistines or fourth century Persians? In either case there are serious problems. If the Pereset were Philistines as the historians and archaeologists claim, then there are serious problems of Bible credibility. Biblical references to Philistines in the

time of Abraham must be a Jewish fiction. This also means the Exodus has to be delayed by at least two centuries, or abandoned as another Jewish fiction. The period of the Judges has to be reduced to about a century and a half, and the Hebrew culture of the time of the Judges is saddled with an eight hundred year handicap. This creates the appearance that Jewish culture was borrowed from their neighbors in Canaan, in effect denying the Jewish people their proper place in history.

On the other hand, if the Pereset were really fourth century Persians, there remains the enormous problem of unraveling a whole century of Bible scholarship based on the mistaken 'Philistine-Pereset' connection. Obviously, the goal of this article has been precisely to persuade the reader that Velikovskiy was right in his identification of the Pereset of Ramses III as fourth century Persians. This



Figure 9. Khonsu Temple erected during Twenty-first Dynasty (from Velikovskiy, Peoples of the Sea).²



Figure 10. Temple of Edfu from Ptolemaic time (from Velikovsky, *Peoples of the Sea*).²

says nothing about the origin of the Philistines of the time of Abraham and Isaac, and does not rule out the Aegean origin of some, or even all of the post Exodus Philistines. But it is a far cry from confusing the Philistines of the Bible with fourth century Persians!

I share the firm belief that the religious message of Scripture is inseparable from its historical reliability. Responding to contemporary notions of secular history, Bible scholars in this century have mistakenly rushed to identify errors in the books of the Old Testament. But serious students are well aware of the need for drastic revision of ancient secular history, especially the history of Egypt. They take issue, not with archaeological data, but with the interpretation of the data. Aside from the works of Velikovsky or Courville, the interested Christian reader is urged to read Charles Taylor's *Rewriting Bible History (According to Scripture)*, probably the best and most concise overview available on the subject of the historical credibility of the Bible.

Finally, it is a sad commentary on contemporary scholarship that, except for Charles Taylor, not a single reference to Velikovsky's *Peoples of the Sea* was found in publications reviewed in the preparation of this manuscript.

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Ralph S. Pacini received his M.D. degree from the University of Illinois College of Medicine, and completed post-graduate training in internal medicine and gastroenterology before serving in the US Army Medical Corps in Korea, and as Chief of Medicine in the Veterans Administration Hospital in Grand Junction, Colorado. His years of study of biblical chronology, and the works of Velikovsky and Courville, confirmed for him the absolute veracity of Genesis.