

# THE BEGINNING OF PHILISTINE SETTLEMENT IN CANAAN AND THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF PHILISTIA

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## THE BEGINNING OF PHILISTINE SETTLEMENT

The best evidence for establishing the beginning of Philistine settlement in Canaan is still the Egyptian documentation on Ramses III's battle against the Sea Peoples in the eighth year of his reign, either 1180 (Krauss 1977:154; 1978:203) or 1175 B.C.E. (Gardiner 1961:446; Wente and van Siclen 1976:218). The inscriptions and reliefs from Medinet Habu describe his great victory over the land- and sea-borne intruders in northern Canaan.<sup>1</sup> The Great Papyrus Harris, written under his successor, adds the well known passage describing how Ramses settled thousands of prisoners in Egyptian fortresses and allotted clothing and provisions to them from the royal treasuries and granaries (*ANET*: 260–262). Although the text is not explicit with regard to the location of these strongholds, most scholars have assumed that the recruits, or at least some of them, were sent to Egyptian military posts in Canaan, where they served as garrison troops defending Egyptian interests against further sea-borne invasions and hostile elements in Canaan itself (Edgerton and Wilson 1936:35 ff.; Alt 1944:18–19 = *KS I*:228; Helck 1962:244–245, but see n. 1). This was not a novelty in Egyptian policy. Sea People “mercenaries” served in the Egyptian army at least from the reign of Ramses II on (see below). However, this trend now grew into unprecedented proportions.

The Harris Papyrus provided further support to Alt's thesis (1944) regarding the history of the southern coast of Canaan in the beginning of the 12th century. The textual evidence he cited shows that in a last-ditch effort to keep their grip on Canaan, the kings of the 19th and 20th Dynasties imposed direct rule over large parts of the coastal plain extending south of the Yarkon River (*ibid.*:13–14 = *KS I*: 226). Recent archaeological research in this region corroborates Alt's theory. (For a general survey, see Na'aman 1982a:251; 1983:30–31; see also Oren 1984; Goldwasser 1984.)

He further noted that there is a marked correspondence between the territories annexed by the Egyptians and the region that was later settled by the Philistines. He therefore concluded that Philistine settlement in Canaan, at least in its initial stages, was accomplished with the tacit consent of the Egyptians, or perhaps even at their own initiative (Alt 1944:17–18 = *KS I*:227–228; cf. *TBM I*:58). It was not too long, however, before the situation reversed itself. The Sea Peoples, who probably continued to stream into Canaan, threw off the Egyptian yoke and even started to impose their rule over adjacent territories. These radical political

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1 We reject Stadelmann's theory (1968), recently accepted by Helck (1971:229–230; 1979:141–142; revising his earlier view in 1962:244–245) and Bietak (1985:216–217; see n. 2), that both the naval and land battles were fought in the eastern Delta after Canaan was already plundered by the Sea Peoples. This view does not take full account of the archaeological evidence, which attests for strong Egyptian presence in Canaan after Ramses III's eighth year.

upheavals no doubt involved violent conflicts that should leave their marks on the archaeological record. Alt's theory, according to which the Philistines were settled in Egyptian garrisons in Philistia after Ramses III's eighth year, has met with general acceptance (see, e.g., Albright 1975:511; Noth 1960:36; Helck 1962:244; Aharoni 1967:246; de Vaux 1978:509; B. Mazar 1980:152; T. Dothan 1982a:3).

This chronology, based on the historical reconstruction of the process of Egypt's withdrawal from Canaan, has been challenged in recent years. According to their differing interpretations of the archaeological data, some scholars maintain that the incursions of the Sea Peoples into Canaan started before Ramses III's reign (*Ashdod II-III*:20; M. Dothan 1972:6; T. Dothan 1973:376; 1982a:295; 1985:173); others claim that the Philistines did not seize the southern coastal plain before the mid-12th century, but only after the collapse of Egyptian rule in Canaan (Aharoni 1979:268; 1982:181 ff.; Oren 1984:56; Ussishkin 1985:223). The evidence from Ashdod, so far the only city of the Philistine Pentapolis extensively excavated, plays a central role in the arguments of both sides. The debate focuses around the chronological and cultural implications of a particular ceramic type that first appeared in significant quantities at Ashdod: Mycenaean IIIC 1b ware, commonly designated "Monochrome" pottery. Its closest parallels come from Cyprus (T. Dothan 1973; 1982a:96; 1982b:32), but according to neutron activation analysis of the clay, it was locally manufactured (Asaro, Perlman and Dothan 1971; Asaro and Perlman 1973).

The Monochrome pottery appears at Ashdod in the first phase of Stratum XIII (XIIIb) and is gradually replaced by Bichrome Philistine pottery in the second phase of this stratum (XIIIa) (M. Dothan 1972:5; 1981b:152-153; T. Dothan 1982a:96, 294). A similar ceramic development was noted in the new excavations at Ekron/Tell el-Muqanna' (T. Dothan 1982b:32; 1983:103; 1985:173). The excavators of Ashdod and Ekron ascribe the Monochrome pottery to an early, "pre-Philistine" wave of Sea Peoples who were responsible for the destruction of the Canaanite city of Stratum XIV before the reign of Ramses III (*Ashdod II-III*:20; M. Dothan 1972: 6; T. Dothan 1973:376; 1982a:295; 1985:173). The arrival of the Philistines at Ashdod occurred, in their view, in the second phase (a) of Stratum XIII.

The concept of two incursions of Sea Peoples into Canaan, each with its own distinctive pottery, fits into the general "two-wave theory" of the Sea Peoples that enjoyed wide acceptance in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Wright 1966:72-74; Waldbaum 1966; Barnett 1975:366; Kitchen 1973:60; de Vaux 1978:514-515), and is still current in Cypriote studies (Catling 1975:209 ff.; Karageorghis 1982:87-88).

The proponents of the two-wave theory refer to Merneptah's battles with the Lybians and the Sea Peoples as a possible historical context into which the first migratory movement can be fitted (Albright 1968:141-142; *Ashdod II-III*:20; T. Dothan 1982a:289). However, this battle took place in the western Delta, and the Sea Peoples participating in it can hardly be considered as an independent ally collaborating with the Lybians, as commonly assumed. More likely, they served as mercenaries in the Lybian forces, just as their compatriots did in the Egyptian army (Helck 1976:11-12). Hence, this source does not provide any historical backing for an early invasion and settlement of the Sea Peoples in Canaan. Moreover, in the extant Egyptian documentation dated to Merneptah that has some relevance to Canaan — namely, the "Israel stela," the Border Journal (Papyrus Anastasi III) and now the reliefs at

Karnak that have been redated to his reign (Keel 1975:456 ff.; Yurco 1978; Stager 1985:61\*) — there is not a single hint pertaining to Sea Peoples in the east.<sup>2</sup>

We may briefly note that also in northern Syria, which was part of the Hittite Empire during this period, there is no evidence for two waves of Sea Peoples.<sup>3</sup> As for Cyprus, on which we have very few historical data, it is still debatable whether the archaeological record indeed provides conclusive evidence for two separate waves of invasion and settlement (Muhly 1984:51). In any case, a direct inference should not be drawn from Cyprus to the Levant, which is well documented historically.

There is one reservation regarding the conclusions summarized above that requires a brief clarification. As mentioned, mercenary units of the Sea Peoples served in the Egyptian army long before Ramses III's reign. However, this was quite a different social phenomenon (Helck 1976:7–12; 1979:132–136). In an Amarna letter (EA 38) and in texts of Ramses II there are references to piratical activities along the Egyptian coast (cf. Habachi 1980:30). The intruders were captured and recruited into elite corps of the Egyptian army. These mercenaries — the Sherdani being the best known among them — were the forerunners of the Carian and Ionian mercenaries in the first millennium. Indeed, they originated, I believe, from the same regions (Singer forthcoming:a). We do not have sufficient data on their numbers within the Egyptian forces, but we may infer something in this respect from data provided by Merneptah in his accounts of the war against the Lybians and the Sea Peoples (Helck 1976:11–12). In the lists of dead and captured enemies the ratio between the Lybians and the Sea Peoples is approximately five to one. If we assume a similar proportion of mercenaries in the Egyptian army, then we should expect quite a large number of Sea Peoples wherever Egyptian garrisons were stationed, including Canaan. It is not impossible that this reality should find some expression in the archaeological record, in burial customs, for example.

However, a clear distinction should be drawn between this phenomenon, which left little if any tangible evidence, and the vast migratory movements on land and sea reflected in the Medinet Habu reliefs and inscriptions, in the wake of which large territories were settled by newcomers. This process is clearly and abundantly reflected by the archaeological evidence, first and foremost by the appearance of a new type of pottery. We are dealing here with two cultural phenomena, differing both in dimension and essence; the historian and the archaeologist should be able to distinguish between them.

2 Bietak (1985:216–217) has attempted to find evidence for activities of the Sea Peoples in the eastern Delta in an obscure passage at the beginning of the Great Karnak inscription of Merneptah. However, not only is the passage in a very fragmentary state, but, as Prof. A. Schulman informs me, the geographical identifications on which Bietak bases his assumption are highly questionable: "Bietak gives no evidence for his location of the *Jtj* waters other than textual evidence, and this is unsatisfactory, since the text here (line 7) connects the *Sheken*-canal (location unknown) with the *Jtj*-canal and links both with *Per-Berset*, which has nothing to do with Bubastis or Belbeis on the eastern edge of the Delta but is rather in the western Delta."

3 One of the pillarstones of the "two-wave theory" in the north has been the early date, around 1230 B.C.E. for the destruction of Ugarit maintained by Albright (1968:235–236), Wright (1966:72–73) and others. This early date has meanwhile been universally abandoned (Astour 1965:254; Schaeffer 1968:666 ff.; Drower 1975:145–148; Liverani 1979:1312–1313).

The only invasion and settlement wave of the Sea Peoples into Canaan that is attested both historically and archaeologically is the one that arrived after Ramses III's eighth regnal year. There is no evidence, as far as I know, to indicate that the Monochrome pottery in Philistia and the strata in which it was found antedate Ramses III's reign in the second quarter of the 12th century B.C.E. Therefore a different interpretation is required for the appearance of this pottery than the one proposed by the excavators of Ashdod and Ekron.

Monochrome pottery was the first ceramic ware produced by the Philistines after their settlement in Philistia (A. Mazar 1980:60, already hinted at in 1977:335). In the course of time the Philistine potters adopted local ceramic traditions and started to manufacture the Bichrome (or "classical") Philistine pottery. Since this was a gradual typological evolution, it is not necessarily paralleled by a sharp stratigraphical distinction. The new settlers of Ashdod Stratum XIII were Philistines, just like their descendants in Stratum XII.<sup>4</sup> Hence it is advisable to abstain from the terminological confusion emanating from making a false distinction between "Philistine settlement" and "Philistine pottery." If we define "Philistine pottery" as the pottery manufactured by the Philistines, and it seems to me that this is the clearest definition, then we should designate the Mycenaean IIIC Ib pottery produced in Philistia as "Monochrome (or early) Philistine pottery" and the Bichrome ware as "classical (or later) Philistine pottery." In this way we avoid the artificial distinction between the historical process of Philistine settlement and its direct archaeological expression in the form of successive stages of Philistine pottery development.

It is interesting to note that a similar transition from Aegean type monochrome pottery to bichrome pottery adapted to local tradition is also present at Ugarit and Ras Ibn Hani (Courtois 1973; Bounni a.o. 1978:280-282; 1979:245-257).

At present, we know very little regarding the distribution of Philistine Monochrome pottery in northern Canaan, but the picture will no doubt become clearer as the excavations at Dor, Acco and other coastal sites continue (for Acco and Tell Keisan, see M. Dothan 1985:10-12; Balensi 1981). It should be added that the terminology proposed here for Philistine pottery can be adapted for the pottery of other groups of Sea Peoples that settled along the Levantine coast.

Another approach challenging the general consensus on Philistine settlement during Ramses III's reign was developed by Aharoni in his later years. His conclusions (1979:268; 1982:181 ff.), which are a revision of his earlier views (1967:246), are summarized by the following (1982:184-185):

It is obvious, therefore, that the Philistine pottery does not arrive in the country before the middle of the twelfth century, and if one does not accept the forced assumption that the Philistines came first, only to be followed later by a family of potters who brought with them their particular vessels, then the middle of the twelfth century must be the date of the Philistines arrival in the land. Hence, it is clear that they were not settled by the

<sup>4</sup> The same conclusion was reached by Stager (1985:62\*). However, I cannot accept his statement that "Late Bronze Age Ashdod (Stratum XIV) was destroyed by Sea Peoples (probably Mycenaeans), who brought with them Mycenaean potting traditions." For the origin of the Philistines, see my summary in *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* (Singer, forthcoming:a).

Egyptians but actually replaced them with the collapse of Egyptian authority. And this event must have taken place about thirty to forty years after they were beaten by Ramses III.

It is perhaps an indicative example for the subjectivity of the interpretation of archaeological "facts" that Aharoni's "low chronology" for Philistine settlement (see also de Vaux 1978:507 and n. 77) is based on the same data from the Ashdod excavations from which Dothan deduced his "high chronology" for the arrival of the Sea Peoples in Canaan.

A. Mazar (1980:60) in reviewing Aharoni's book has come to grips with some of his arguments. We shall therefore concentrate on Aharoni's main thesis, namely, that the Monochrome pottery at Ashdod does not belong to the first phase of the Mycenaean IIIC 1 ware (a) but to its second (b). This leads to his above-cited conclusions. Without dwelling on the complicated problems of defining the various phases of Mycenaean IIIC pottery (Iakovidis 1979; Kling 1984), we shall stress two basic facts. First, since Mycenaean IIIC 1a is a local type in Greece and has not been recognized in the East (Iakovidis 1979:460; Kling 1984:36), it obviously cannot serve as a chronological indicator at Ashdod. And second, the dating of Mycenaean IIIC 1b is in itself largely anchored on the conjectured date of Philistine settlement in Canaan (Hankey and Warren 1974:148 ff.; Iakovidis 1979:460), and one can easily fall into the vicious circle of cause and effect. I very much doubt whether the Monochrome pottery can serve as an independent chronological indicator in the controversy over the beginning of Philistine settlement.

Some more accurate data are ostensibly provided by dated Egyptian objects found in Philistine contexts. However, one quickly discovers that this evidence is also far from being conclusive. In the "governor's residence" at Tell el-Far'ah a vessel with the cartouche of Seti II (1199-1193) was found. The same area produced some Philistine pottery, but the stratigraphical situation is not very clear (McClellan 1979:71-72; T. Dothan 1982a:28; Oren 1984:47-48). At Tell Deir 'Alla in the Jordan Valley a cartouche of Queen Tausert (1186-1185) was recovered from a sanctuary destroyed at the end of the Late Bronze Age. The level above it yielded derivative Philistine pottery (T. Dothan 1982a:84). A scarab of Queen Tausert has recently been found at Tell Acco in an area which also yielded Philistine Monochrome pottery (M. Dothan 1981a:111; 1985:11). Inscriptions of Ramses III came from Philistine contexts at Ashdod, Tell Jemmeh, Beth-shemesh and Gezer (T. Dothan 1982a:34, 51, 219), and of Ramses IV at Tell el-Far'ah and Aphek (*ibid.*:30, 89).

These and other Egyptian finds indicate the general chronological horizon in which Philistine settlement should be placed, but they hardly lead to a clear choice between the "high", "middle" or "low" chronology, i.e., whether before, during or after the reign of Ramses III. One should also remember that these Egyptian objects provide no more than a *terminus post quem*, and scholars tend to interpret their meaning according to their own preconceived ideas.

Another line of argumentation for lowering the date of Philistine settlement has recently been put forward (Oren 1982:166; 1984:55-56; Ussishkin 1985:222-226; see also McClellan 1979:72-73); it is based on archaeological contexts clearly dated to Ramses III, such as Lachish Level VI and Tel Sera' Stratum IX, both of which lack Philistine pottery. However, the relevance of this argument is very limited in my view. Lachish lies outside of Philistia, and Tel Sera' (Ziklag), which is on its fringe, was first settled by the Philistines in Stratum VIII of

the 11th century (Oren 1978:1065; 1982:166). To establish the beginning of Philistine settlement we should first look to sites within Philistia proper, especially along the coast, where the earliest Philistine pottery should naturally be expected. But as already mentioned, these coastal sites have not yet provided any conclusive data.

It seems that, despite the vast accumulation of archaeological data within and without Philistia during the last forty years, historical reasoning is still the best road to follow in establishing the beginning of Philistine settlement. The archaeological evidence is, I believe, in full accordance with the historical thesis established by Alt, Albright and others, which pleads an imperative Egyptian-Philistine "symbiosis" that developed after Ramses III's eighth year.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, an alternative historical thesis has not yet been put forward that can satisfactorily explain the collapse of Egyptian authority in southern Palestine and the takeover by the Philistines of the main Egyptian centres on the southern coast. It should also be recalled that the close ties between Philistia and Egypt were soon revived after the recovery of the latter in the 21st Dynasty (see Malamat 1983:182-193). Therefore, the "chronological pendulum" should be set back in its initial position: Philistine settlement did not start later than the reign of Ramses III, and there was no settlement of the Sea Peoples prior to his reign.

This conclusion is further supported by the uniform appearance of Mycenaean IIC 1b pottery, the hallmark of the Sea Peoples' diaspora, throughout the eastern Mediterranean, from Cyprus and Cilicia to Philistia (for references, see Stager 1985:64\*, n. 37). In the north this pottery appears immediately after the fall of the coastal areas of the Hittite Empire at the turn of the 13th century (Singer, forthcoming:b). It would be extremely difficult to date its counterparts in Philistia forty or fifty years later.

#### THE DISTRIBUTION OF MONOCHROME POTTERY AND THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF PHILISTIA

After having defined Monochrome ware as the earliest pottery that the Philistines produced after they were settled by Ramses III, we shall now proceed to examine the distribution of this ware in southern Israel. It should be emphasized that the evidence is still scanty and hence our conclusions remain tentative until corroborated by further archaeological research. Nevertheless, it seems that there is a distinctive distribution pattern with important geographical-historical implications.

So far monochrome pottery was found in significant quantities in three of the towns of the Philistine Pentapolis: Ashdod (*Ashdod II-III*:20; M. Dothan 1972:5; 1981b:152-53), Ekron (T. Dothan 1982b:32; 1983:103; 1985:173) and Ashkelon (T. Dothan 1982a:294; also found in the 1985 season; personal communication of L.E. Stager). From the remaining two towns of the Pentapolis — Gaza and Gath (Tell eš-Safi) — we still lack sufficient archaeological data (T. Dothan 1982a:35, 48-50).

On the other hand, no Monochrome pottery was found, to the best of my knowledge, in any of the excavated sites between the Sorek brook (Wadi eš-Šarar) and the Yarkon River (Nahr

5 See now A. Mazar (1985), which was published after this article was already in press. I find it most satisfying that on the basis of the archaeological evidence, Mazar has arrived at very similar conclusions to those presented in my study, which are based primarily on historical considerations.

el-'Odsha). This includes the excavations of Gezer, Azor, Jaffa, Tel Jerishe and Tel Qasile.

Why does Monochrome pottery appear south of the Sorek brook and is absent to its north? Unless additional data should change this picture substantially, the chronological conclusion is clear: in its initial stage Philistine settlement did not extend north of this geographical line. The northern Shephelah came under Philistine domination only later.

This observation seems to provide an archaeological confirmation to the conclusion derived by some scholars from the biblical sources (Albright 1954:113; Mazar 1975:273). The more current view, however, is that the Philistines settled the entire zone extending south of the Yarkon River (Alt 1944:16–17; Noth 1960:36; de Vaux 1978:509; Aharoni 1979:273; T. Dothan 1982a:296 [but cf. p. 16]).

In several boundary descriptions in Joshua, the approximate line of the Sorek brook demarcates the northern limits of Philistia. In the description of “the land that yet remains” in Josh. 13:3, the boundary of Ekron marks the northernmost district of the Philistines (cf. Judg. 3:3).

A more detailed description of the same boundary appears as the northwestern border of the territory of Judah in Josh. 15:10–11. It runs along the Sorek brook from Beth-shemesh westward to Jabneel and the sea. Thus, according to the “maximalistic” view, the Philistine plain was included within the territory of Judah, contrary to the description of “the land that yet remains” and contrary to historical reality (Na'aman 1982b:156).

The same boundary line is also comprised within the Danite list of towns in Josh. 19:40–46. We cannot cover here all the complicated problems regarding the date of composition and the historical background of this list (Cross and Wright 1956:209–211; Mazar 1975:92–100; Strange 1966; Kallai 1967:304–342; Na'aman 1975:78–87; Galil 1984) and shall present only the main points relevant to the question of the northern boundary of Philistia.

As noted by Cross and Wright (1956:210), the Danite list includes, in addition to the enumeration of towns, fragments of boundary descriptions. One of these is the border that runs along the Sorek brook and delineates the southern limits of Dan (vss. 40–46). (For a detailed study on the identification of the boundary points, see Mazar 1975:92–100; see also Galil 1984).

Opinions differ on the historical background of the Danite list of towns. Most commentators dissociate this list from the general system of tribal territories, which is rooted in the pre-monarchical period, and date its composition to the United Monarchy (Kallai 1967:306–307; Mazar 1975:97; Aharoni 1976:10; Galil 1984:16–19) or to Josiah (Alt 1925b:110; Noth 1953:92 ff.; Strange 1966). On the other hand, Cross and Wright (1956:210–211), followed by Na'aman (1975:81–82), “reinstated” the Danite list within the rest of the tribal territories and traced its historical background to the pre-monarchical period. It seems that the archaeological evidence presented above supports the latter view in that it defines the territory of Dan within the context of the ethno-geographical reality of the pre-monarchical period.

This immediately evokes the question: What were the historical circumstances under which the northern boundary of Philistia was established? Or, to put it in other words: What prevented the Philistines from settling the rich coastal plain extending between the Sorek brook and the Yarkon basin?

The possibility that the Philistines were prevented from advancing north of the Sorek by the Israelite settlement of the tribe of Dan (Spina 1977) can be ruled out immediately. There is no archaeological evidence for this, and the biblical story also makes it quite clear that Dan never managed to settle the territory allotted to him, except for a small foothold in its eastern extremity in the foothills around Zorah and Eshtaol. Neither can we accept Yadin's revolutionary hypothesis (1968) that the northern Shephelah was settled by another group of Sea Peoples, the Denen/Danuna, identical to the tribe of Dan, who joined the other tribes of Israel,<sup>6</sup> since the Monochrome pottery that marks the arrival of the Sea Peoples throughout the Levant is missing in this region.

The Bible itself provides a clear answer to the question of the ethnic identity of the inhabitants of this region at the time of Philistine settlement. Undoubtedly, the element that stopped, or at least delayed, Philistine expansion northward is the same one that stood up against the pressure of the tribes of the House of Joseph operating from their highland bases (Josh. 16:10), and that "pressed the Danites back into the hill country for they did not allow them to come down to the plain" (Judg. 1:34), namely, the indigenous Canaanite/ Amorite population.

Some scholars who connect the story of the Danite migration with the Samson cycle have suggested mending "Amorite" in Judg. 1:34 to "Philistine" (Schmidtko 1933:181; van Seters 1972:72, 75; Spina 1977). Although it is indeed possible that the Amorite pressure on Dan was a chain reaction to the Philistine pressure on them (Rowley 1950:85), there is no basis for the simplistic equation Amorites = Philistines. Nor is there any reason to question the reliability of the information in this verse, since other biblical traditions also locate a large indigenous element in this region, which is part of the autochthonous belt extending from Jerusalem westwards (Alt 1925a:32-33; B. Mazar 1980:118).

The capital of this Canaanite enclave was Gezer (Judg. 1:29), the major fortified city in the northern Shephelah, which is located at the crossroads of the coastal road and the main route leading up to the hill country (see B. Mazar 1973:465). Na'aman has noted a close resemblance between the borders of the kingdom of Gezer in the Amarna period and the territory covered by the Danite list of towns (1975:78-87). Apparently, the kingdom of Gezer continued to exist as a separate political unit during the settlement period, functioning as a buffer zone between the Israelites and the Philistines.

From the excavations at Gezer, it appears that the town came under Philistine control in the 12th century B.C.E. (Wright 1966:77; Gezer 1970:4; Gezer 1974:50-52). The Philistine pottery from Gezer has been assigned by T. Dothan to the first two phases of the "classical" Bichrome pottery (1982a:53-54). We may therefore conclude that Monochrome Philistine pottery was no longer being produced by the time that the Philistines arrived at this site.

The Philistine takeover of Gezer, which had probably been under Egyptian control ever since its suppression by Merneptah,<sup>7</sup> should most likely be associated with the collapse of

6 Cf. also Alt 1950:69, n. 1, where he tentatively proposes that the *Ṣrdn* mentioned in the Onomasticon of Amenemope settled the area of Jaffa and Aphek. Alternatively, he located them in the plain of Acco (see now M. Dothan 1985:11).

7 An ivory sundial inscribed with Merneptah's name was found at Gezer by Macalister. Other objects

Egyptian authority following the reign of Ramses III. We may therefore assume that the chronological range for the production of Monochrome pottery in Philistia was about twenty to thirty years, approximately coinciding with the reign of Ramses III.

After the loss of its separate political status, the Canaanite enclave of Gezer was divided between the Israelite tribes who took over the foothills at the east (Judg. 1:35) and the Philistines who dominated the lowlands at the west. However, the coastal plain extending between the Sorek brook and the Yarkon valley was never acknowledged in biblical historiography as Philistine territory, and the struggle over its domination continued for a long time,<sup>8</sup> until it was finally annexed by David.

The above reconstruction of the history of Gezer in the 12th century is also supported by comparison of the ceramic assemblage from Gezer with that of other sites. The excavators emphasize the close resemblance between the pottery of Level XIV (Level 12 in Area II) with that of Ashdod Stratum XIIIa and Tell Beit Mirsim Stratum B1 (*Gezer* 1974:51). This pottery all belongs to the transitional phase between the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, but whereas Ashdod-Stratum XIII already contains, in addition to local types, the new Monochrome pottery, the latter ware is absent at Gezer and Tell Beit Mirsim. This means that all three levels are contemporary,<sup>9</sup> but whereas at Ashdod the Philistines had already arrived, at Gezer and Tell Beit Mirsim they had not.<sup>10</sup>

In Level XIII (Level 11 in Area II) at Gezer Bichrome Philistine pottery makes its first appearance (*Gezer* 1974:50–52).<sup>11</sup> But in spite of the Philistine takeover of Gezer, its population remained predominantly Canaanite, as shown by the relatively low percentage of painted Philistine pottery — about 5% according to the excavators' estimate (*Gezer* 1974:54, n. 34, adjusting the earlier impression on the abundance of Philistine pottery in *Gezer* 1970:4).

During the 11th century Gezer retained its Canaanite character under Philistine rule (*Gezer* 1970:4), and even later, when the city was given as a dowry to Solomon by the pharaoh of Egypt, its population was still Canaanite (1 Kgs. 9:16). The indigenous population also

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with his name came from Tell el-Far'ah (S), Beth-shan and Timna' (references in Weinstein 1981:20–21). Macalister also found two cartouches of Ramses III and scarabs of Ramses IV, VIII and IX (see T. Dothan 1982a:52, n. 153 for references).

8 See, e.g., 1 Sam. 7:14, in which Samuel restored the cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and made peace with their Amorite population. Some commentators doubt the historicity of this tradition, which they ascribe to deuteronomistic editing (Budde 1902:12; Noth 1960:172, n. 2; cf. McCarter 1980:147). Others suggest that these military exploits should be assigned to Saul instead of Samuel (Mazar 1975:279; Bartal 1982:85–86). In any event, this tradition probably reflects the ethno-political situation of the northern Shephelah, with both the Philistines and the Israelites competing to dominate the indigenous population.

9 For further archaeological contexts belonging to the same period, see A. Mazar 1977:331–335; Oren 1984:54–56; Ussishkin 1985:225.

10 I therefore disagree with the excavators' conclusion that the similarity between Ashdod Stratum XIII and Gezer Stratum XIV means that the two levels are either pre-Philistine or early Philistine (*Gezer* 1974:51). Both assumptions are unsatisfactory because they are based on the concept that the Philistines arrived at Ashdod and at Gezer at the same time.

11 In Macalister's excavations a faience object with the name of Ramses III was found in a cache of cult objects painted in a technique similar to that of Philistine pottery (T. Dothan 1982a:219–229). If these objects are indeed Philistine, the cache should probably be attributed to Stratum XIII or later.

remained a long time in other cities, such as Aijalon and Sha'alabim (Judg. 1:35) and Gath (1 Chr. 7:21)<sup>12</sup> that belonged to the autochthonous enclave of Gezer.

In conclusion, our suggested reconstruction of the history of the northern Shephelah in the pre-monarchical period provides an appropriate historical background for the composition of the Danite list of towns. Although, as suggested by most commentators, the list was probably composed during the United Monarchy, it is now possible to trace back the earlier history of this enclave that originally fell outside the limits of both Israelite and Philistine settlement and was later "filled in" by the biblical historian with the fictional settlement of the tribe of Dan.

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12 Probably Gath-Gitaim, which was located by Mazar at Ras Abu Hamid near Ramleh (1975:101–109). Cf. however Strange 1966:120 ff. and Galil 1984:5–6, who identify this site with Gath-rimon.

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