

THE SEA PEOPLES

by Michel-Gérald Boutet



Pulasti (Philistine) and Tsakkaras: on Pylon of Medinet Habu. Illustration from *The palace of Minos : a comparative account of the successive stages of the early Cretan civilization as illustrated by the discoveries at Knossos* by Sir Arthur Evans, 1921.

The Philistines

The Philistines were of mixed Indo-European nations mainly of [Proto-Celtic](#) Danubian descent. These Danubians, the Dananoi, or Danauoi in Greek, constituted of a number of Indo-European tribes originally from the [Pontic](#)

Crimean area of the Black Sea that had settled on the western Anatolian coast and eventually on the island of Cyprus.

The Philistines were depicted by the Hebrews in the Bible as warlike and bellicose enemy outsiders.

The Greeks called them the Pelesetes, the Assyrians, the Palastu or Pilistu, and the Hebrew the Pelištīm.

The origin of the name Pelesetes probably derives from the Indo-European root *pel- , pellis “skin, hide”. A Proto-Celtic root hints at a more plausible etymology through pell-os/-a/-on “far away, remote”, thus *pelletes “those from far away”.

The little we have concerning them is from classical Greek and Biblical sources. According to Bernard Sergent (in *Les Indo-européens*, p. 108) picks up from R.A.S. Macalister and argues that “seren, the common name for their rulers, is related to the Greek name Tyrannos. The names Goliath, Achish and Phicol are not Semitic and likewise Indo-European etymologies have been suggested. Therefore, Goliath could be akin to the Lydian name Alyattes or Wylattes.”

Seren was most likely from the Proto-Celtic root ser-os/-a/-on for “aged, fairly old, in the prime of life” as an official name along the lines of *serenos or “seronos for “elder”.

The Book of Samuel mentions the five cities of the Philistines as such: Ashdod (coastal), Gaza (coastal), Ashkelon (coastal), Gath (inland), and Ekron (inland). And from the Bible Samuel 6; 17: "And these are the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the Lord; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one."

Ashdod < Azotos / Azotus < Adzotos (Greek etymon);

Askelon < Asculon “little grazing area, meadow” (Proto-Celtic etymon);

Gath < Gatos “wind-gust, blast, ray, beam of light” (Proto-Celtic etymon);

Gaza < Cadytis (Greek etymon);

Ekron < Acron “the lofty, salient, prominent, dominant in size” (Proto-Celtic etymon);

Sucoth < Sucota « well sheltered » (Proto-Celtic etymon).

R.A.S. Macalister in *The Philistines*, [1913] mentions that “MEINΩ, Minos, is named on some of the coins of Gaza”. This town was called by the name Minoa: and its god Marna was equated to 'Zeus the Crete-born. Marna was therefore the name of the deity of Gaza.

The Sea Peoples were the I.E. peoples who made themselves known to the Egyptians around the XIXth dynasty when its military power was on the decline. The hieroglyphs mention the Tskl ([Sikels](#) of Sicily?), the Denen (Danans of the Iliad), the Shrdn (who later became the Sardinians), and the Prsht (or Plsht, the Philistines) among others. These are the people who latter appear as founders of the Proto-Celtic and Proto-Germanic nations.

The archaic Greeks were in the area of the lower Danube north to the Black Sea in the Pontic area. A bilingual cuneiform tablet found in the [Hattusas](#) archives records the mythological tale of a hunter in the then already dead Hurrian language along with a translation into Hittite. This remarkable discovery gave us the Hurrian word *ashi* from which Homer's *askos*, for "hide" or "fur," apparently stemmed. Before their migration to the Aegean, the Greeks borrowed the Hittite word *kursa*, which by a familiar phonological shift became *bursa*, another synonym for "fleece." These words seem to confirm the Greeks' belief that their ancestors had come from western Asia, as recounted in the myth of Jason and the Argonauts, who sought the Golden Fleece in Colchis, on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. The evidence that the Greeks came thence to their historical homeland puts the Greek "colonies" on the northern shore of the Black Sea in a new light. The colonies may now be considered as very early settlements that were established when the Greeks began migrating to their final home in the Aegean.

We know from the Egyptian records that the Sea Peoples confederacy, of which the Mycenaean were part, led major attacks on the Nile Delta and on the Canaan coast where they finally settled. On the [Merneptah Stele](#) is the pharaoh's prosaic account of this campaign against the Sea Peoples and [Libu](#) is described in prose on a wall beside the sixth pylon at Karnak. Egyptian manuscripts also mention the "infamous" Sea Peoples as the major sea power in East Mediterranean. The most valuable source of linguistic information from Ancient Egypt is the list of names for Sea Peoples.

"Their confederacy consisted of [Peleset](#), [Tjekker](#), [Sheklesh](#), Danu, and [Weshesh](#), united lands, and they laid their hands upon the lands to the entire circuit of the earth, their hearts bent and trustful 'Our plan is accomplished!'"
(Merneptah Stele)

Therefore, the Sea Peoples were a collection of I.E. peoples who made themselves known to the Egyptians (on the Medinet Habu reliefs) around the XIXth dynasty when its military power was on the decline and were vanquished eventually by Ramses III, XXth dynasty. As the three leaders of these invasions the hieroglyphs mention the Denen (Danunas for the Hittites and - later on - Danaoi in the Iliad), the Prsht / Frst or Pulushta (named Pelesetes by the Greeks and Pilistim by the Hebrew, i.e the Philistines) and the Wawaitw (probably proto-venetic). Among their subordinate allies, the Egyptian epigraphy quotes the Tskl (Sicules, settled later on in Sicily), the Shrdn (probably from the city of Sardi, future capital of Lydia and who later became the Sardis), the Sakar (maybe the future Sicilians), among others. These same ethnic groups will later appear in continental Europe as the co-founders of the Proto-Celtic, Proto-Italic, Proto-Illyric and Proto-Germanic nations.

Proto-Celts

The Denen

The Denen or Danuna were one the Sea Peoples mentioned in the Egyptian records.

According the Irish annals, The *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (The Book of the Taking of Ireland), they were said "to reside in the islands of the North and that with them came the primordial Druids, the Tuatha Dè Danan".

Joseph Monard thinks that the Danans and Denen of the Greeks and Egyptians are the one and the same. The Denen after having raided Egypt, are forced back to Cyprus which becomes Dnan. As the Danuna, they contribute to the fall of the Hittite empire. As Danaoi, they mingle with the Achaeans and lead them to the battle of Troy. The apprehensions of Laokoôn were expressed thus, one thousand years later: "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes". It seems that they were with others such as the Lusacians of mixed Proto-Illyrian and Proto-Celtic origin who at that time were hardly distinguishable. It also seems that they were detrimental in the indo-europeanisation of their Hyperborean Proto-Finish neighbors of the North Baltic who eventually became the Germanic. Thus, this People of the Sea, was labelled "Atlantean" by Plato. Indeed, the geographers of antiquity maintained that Cap Skagen in Denmark was called Celtica Lytarmis.

The Proto-Celtic ancestors to the Goidels therefore, came from Denmark (J. Monard 1995). The Vedas knew them as the Danavas in Sanskrit.

The Danavas were seen as a class of demonized ancestors often identified with the Daityas or Asuras and held to be implacable enemies of the gods or Devas, were in fact a very ancient Aryan people. This fact has been brilliantly demonstrated by David Frawley (Vamadeva Shastri) in his book, *The Rig Veda and the History of India*. The Danavas, described as children of Danu and Kasyapa, sometimes reckoned as 40 in number in the Maha Bharata, probably refer to a number of tribes at the origins of the Indo-Aryan peoples. The Greeks, Celts, see themselves as descended from the goddess Danu thus calling themselves children of Danu or Danawoi in Greek and Danunas or Danauoi in Celtic. Kasyapa was eponymic of the Caspian Sea and its region. This is exactly where the old European Aryan culture was said to origin. The Vedic texts distinguish two categories of these mythical ancestors: the Danava proper and the Su-Danava or "Good Danavas".

Celto-Illyric

The Prsht

The Prsht / Frst, Pulushta, Pelesetes or Philistines, who prompted the Aegean maritime culture at the beginning of the 12th century BC, had spread, from their homeland in southern Greece and the Aegean islands to the shores of the Mediterranean. At some time in their early history, these people, because of the erosion of the outer banks by the encroaching sea, were faced constantly with the need to abandon some of their settlements. These were the Frisir, as J. Monard believes, the Frst of the Egyptian hieroglyphs. According to Jürgen Spanuth (in *Das enträtselte Atlantis*), their capital was situated around the island of Helligoland... this nibbled isle being the location of its upper city later known as Hertha by the Germanic peoples. Plato (*Kritias*, 115) named the capital of his "Atlantis" as "Basilea" which in Greek means "The Royal (City) ». The homeland of these Prest (Frst or Prsht on hieroglyphs, later germanised as Frisir) was projected along the shore by a long sea-front bank of dunes destroyed by the encroaching sea. As residual remnants, the three broken chains of the Frisian Islands:

- Western chain, from Texel / Tessel to Rottumeroog and to the north of the Netherlands;
- Eastern chain, from Borkum to Wangerooge, to the north of Ostfriesland in Germany;
- Northern chain, from Amrun and Sylt to Fanø, to the west of Schleswig (Germany) and of Jutland (Denmark). (J. Monard 1995)

The Philistines settled along the eastern Mediterranean coast at the time when the Israelites settled in the highlands of Judaea. Politically independent, they maintained their Aegean traditions, which were clearly related to those of the Mycenaean culture. Architectural features and many finds indicate this relationship.

Celto-Venetic

The Wawaitw

Identified by Caesar as a Gaulish maritime nation, the Uenetai were probably other than Celtic. Most likely, they were the celticised descendants of Sea Peoples identified as the Wawaitw by the Egyptians. They were most likely the ancestors to the Lusacians. The Venetes mentioned by Caesar gave their name to the region of Vendée in Poitou France and should not be confused with the latter Vanetais of Vannes in Brittany, although it is quite possible that they were descendants of the same people. The Breton Vanetais were originally from Gwynedd in the north-western kingdom of Wales, which includes Ynnys Mons. It is also possible that the Venetians of north-western Italy were somewhat related. In this case the Venetians or Uenetoï were of the Venetian linguistic group, closely related to the Illyrian, Celtic and Italic families (C. Renfrew 1987). This language, latter on died as it merged with Celtic and Illyrian, because of their maritime ramblings; they became split into these two linguistic families (J. Monard 1995).

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