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## **Ancient Europe and America**

### **Part 3**

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#### **Philistine Religion and Pantheon**

The little we knew of Philistine religion came from Biblical sources. Because of the lack of reliable material, this biased or distorted information went unquestioned throughout time as it was maintained in the academic circles.

We do know however that Philistine religion could not differ from the general IE ethic order in that it was structured along the same lines.



A Philistine cylinder stamp (circa 1600 to 800 BCE) Probably representing a mythological motif rarrating the Crane goddess Maia of the Pleiades cycle. The other figures include a flying duck, dog, twins and a seated dignitary attended by a messenger moving left with the seal. The artifact measures about 7 to 8 inches. The elements depicted bear much resemblance to other examples of ancient Celtic Art. Compare with a detail of the Gundestrup Cauldron and engraved scale weight bellow.



The Crane Goddess. Detail from the Gundestrup Cauldron.



## **The Philistine cult and practice**

In many of the papers on Philistine religion, it is bluntly stated that they abandoned their Hellenic (i.e. Indo-European) practices and completely assimilated into the local culture. This view, insist biblical scholars, is illustrated by the fact that they solely worshiped Semitic gods such as Dogon, Baal and Astarte. Since these scholars were drawing upon exterior sources, it is more likely that the Philistine gods were simply interpreted according to the standards of their clamorous neighbors. Archaeology has yielded a rich array of religious grounds and artifacts. Temple plans hint on ritual, devotional practices and sacred theater. Since Indo-European religion was highly ritualistic and codified, it should come as no surprise to find hints of this in Philistine archaeology.

Figurines were also dug up and designated as «Ashdoda» by archaeologist because one complete doll object was found at Ashdod.



The Indoeuropean Goddess of Sovereignty or « Ashdoda» pottery seated figurine (17 cm high) from the Ashdod philistine period of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. **Photo from the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Meidad Suchowolski.**

Detailed drawing showing the motifs of the decorated figure incorporated into a four-legged seat. The artwork is of typical Danubian linear minimalistic graphic style.



Other objects yielded by archaeology include the many ceramic finds such as vessels, pots, lamps and libation cups or rhytons. Of these ceramic objects are the distinctive Cyprus-style votive vessels labeled as «kernos» which can be described as a hollow pottery ring found at the Beth-Shean and Beth-Shemesh sites.

Photo of a "kernos" (with a bull's head, bird and miniature jar attached to the hollow "kernos" ring) found by Aren Maeir's team in the 2007 season digs in the Philistine Iron Age cultic area. After a photo by Aren Maeir, <http://gath.wordpress.com/>.

Drinking cups and horns were also very decorative and were crafted in many forms and shapes. Similar objects were also found in Mycenaean archaeological sites at Knossos on Crete. Libation ceremonies were central in all of the IE peoples' sacred rituals. Their mythologies all speak of the importance of mead (Ambrosia, Amrita or Soma), as the sacred drink of the gods. Liquids were poured into the ring cup and served from the lip of the tubular ring.

Hittite silver libation vessel (BIBRU?) in the form of a stag. Drawing after a photo by Diffendale on Flickr.

Divination was also an integral practice of Philistine religion. Oracular mysteries were performed from within a small or hidden room at the rear of the temple and were audible for the participants in the main hall. The tenants of Judaic faith were strongly discouraged to seek Philistine prophesiers.

«Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. » (Isaiah 2:6, King James Version)

“And he said unto him, thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to enquire of his word? Therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.”(2 Kings 1, King James Version)

There are strong indications that, not unlike the other IE peoples, divined by the stars, birds and letters of their alphabet. But soothsaying was not the only aspect of Philistine beliefs which set them apart from the mosaic Jews and Hebrews. The fact that they consumed pork and went uncircumcised set them even more apart. Just these differences strongly indicate that the Philistines did not follow the religious rules and interdictions of their neighbours and that they maintained their own practices separately.

## **Funerary rites and practice**

Contrary to their neighbors of the Judean and Israeli highlands, the Philistine did not practice burial rites with entombment in cemeteries or large mausoleums. It can be assumed that this was not only due to the lack of territory and ground but also due to cultural practices involving cremation and sea burial rites. Ashes were deposited in ceramic urns and sizes and artistic detail varied according to class and rank. Bodies awaiting cremation were embalmed and stored encapsulated in large earthen coffins. The artistic style of the large ceramic sarcophaguses reminds of Mycenaean funeral masks and figurines. Lords and heroes of the warriors' caste were represented with the typical plume fluted headdress of the Sea Peoples.



Philistine Anthropomorphic Sarcophagus (1000 BCE).

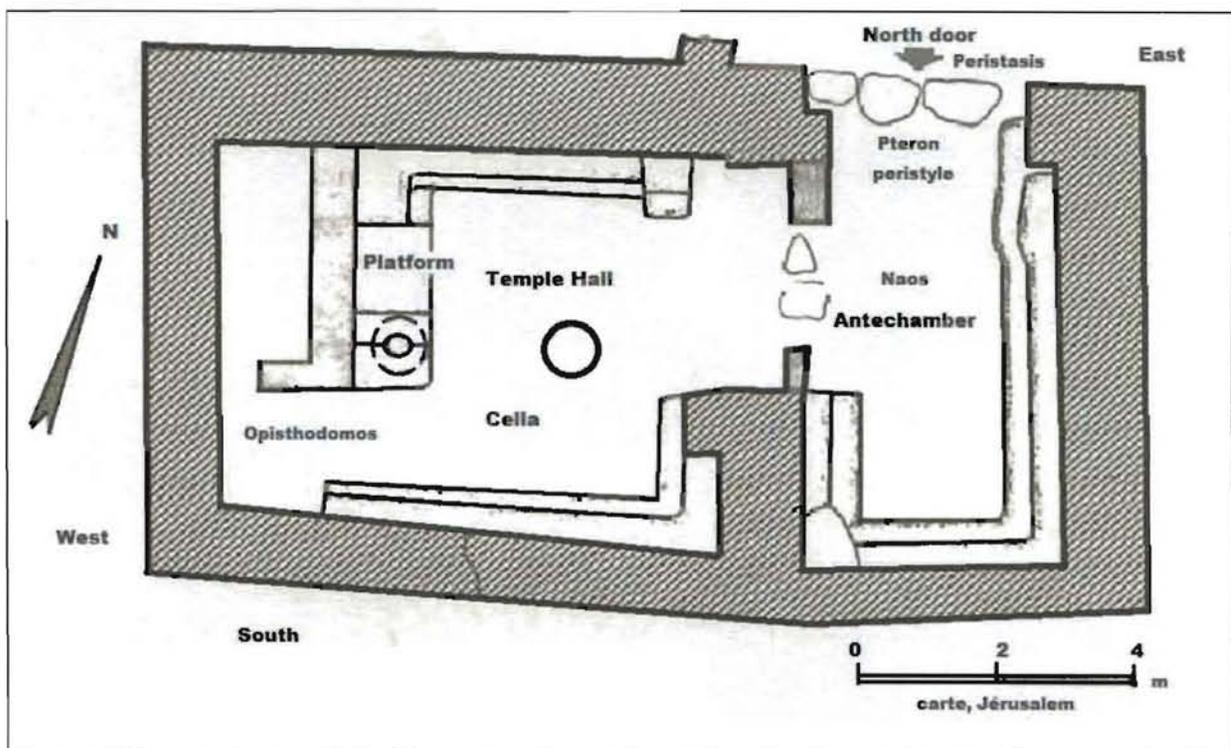
Philistine pottery coffin preserved at the Rockefeller Museum of Jerusalem from the Beth-Shean site. The coffin is the size of an adult. The removable lid bears a stylised face grossly imitating the likeness of the deceased. This object, along with other artifacts proves that the Philistines occupied Beth-Shean at this time; thus attesting their presence further east from the coast.

Photo by Barry Bandstra, June 1979.

## **The Philistine temples and sacred space**

In Antiquity, sacred space was defined according to strict astronomical rules. The science of archaeoastronomy was of major importance when planning and constructing monuments and religious structures. In the IE world, almost all of the major structures and temple sites were oriented towards the east. Following this rule, ancient buildings such as the Hittite

and early Greek temples, mostly faced east. Hittite temples were thus aligned for particular events such as the winter's solstice. Philistine temples were not much different from other early examples. Starting from the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Mediterranean temples developed from small wooden or mud brick structures on stone foundations into monumental stone buildings. However, due to reasons related to certain cultic ritual practices, certain elements such as entrances and openings were oriented in other directions. In Greek examples, the temple of Artemis at Ephesos was oriented west and temples of Arcadia faced north. Note that the west side was marked by dusk with the setting of luminaries and the north side marked by the fixed stars and night skies. The north side was believed to be the realm of the gods and the ancestral spirits and was reserved for its metaphysical qualities involving divination, sacred communion and other magical activities. Participants had to turn at a right angle facing west in order to access the main hall in direction of the ceremonial platform or podium. The rite official or celebrator priest faced east from the podium. This plan differed from Canaanite temples which were always planed with the entrance aligned with the rooms.



Plan of the Philistine temple at Tell Qasile. This first example of a Philistine temple was excavated during a 1972 dig. The structure was built of sun-dried mud bricks laid on stone foundations. The brick walls, covered with light brown plaster, measure about four feet in width. It has two larger rooms and a third smaller one at the western side. The entire building averages 26 feet in width by 47 feet in length. The doorway was situated to the northeast indicating that participants and officials ritually entered with the ancestral northern spirits.

Further archaeological digs have exposed other temples; two at Tel Migne of Ekron in particular. The Ekron examples show the standard early temple design with the main door flanked by a set of columns. This detail confirms the Bible story (Judges 16:25-29) in which Samson destroys the temple by pulling the columns apart. Therefore, Philistine temple design was therefore not much different from those of Cyprus, the Aegean islands and Anatolia.

The floor plans of the Tel Migne temples both shared a similar design consisting of a large hall adjoined by smaller rooms.

A typical feature of the main hall was marked by the presence of a large stone slab which in biblical terminology was called a behemoth (from Hebrew be-ma, Canaanite b'môt). It is not known what the name was in Philistine.



Aren M. Maeir, "Prize Find: Horned Altar from Tell es-Safi Hints at the Origins of the Philistines," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, January/February 2012. Photo from Aren M. Maeir, <http://gath.wordpress.com/>.

Philistine two horned altar from the Tell es-Safi site of Gath.

The PIE root for «step platform» was \*gwā-, altar was \*āsā, the Hittite *hassa*-«fire-place, hearth, fire-altar» was from PIE root \*h<sub>2</sub>eh<sub>x</sub>-s-eh<sub>o</sub>-. Latin *ara* «fire altar» was from another root. The PIE word for «platform» was *stātloom* (Latin *catasta*). A peculiar aspect of Philistine altars was that they were designed with two horns. The celebrant would place his hands on the horns and address the resident deity. This detail reminds us of the Gaulish altar which was called *cornos* «horn». A Greek equivalent for «horn» is *kornos*, a term used for drinking horn. In Indo-European culture, the bull's horns represented the lunar crescent and were the attribute of the «Bull of days», the totemic animal of the Sky God.

## Gods of the Philistines

What is known of the Philistine pantheon is resumed but by a few theonyms, three gods: Dagon, Bel (also spelled Baal according to the Semitic name) and Marna and three goddesses: Anu, Astarte and Derceto.

Dagon was the father of Baal, one of four sons born to Anu, and companion of Derceto described as a mermaid. Derceto was most likely a diviner similar to the Greek Pythia of Delphos or Moirai fate goddesses.

The Tel-el-Amarna letters (1480-1450 BCE) also mention the namesake of Dagon. In these letters, two rulers of Ashkelon, Yamir Dagan and Dagan Takala, were entered. Beth Dagon was a temple site in the Philistine land

captured by the Israelites and mentioned in the Bible (Joshua 15:41 and 19:27).

### The Philistine Pantheon

Philistine known gods	Indo-European cognates And equivalents	Semitic parallels or paronyms
Dagon “(divine) Good”	Dagan-zipas (Hittite), Dagda (Irish)	Dagan (Assyrian, Canaanite, Hebrew, and Phoenician), Dagona / Daguna (Akkadian), from Ugaritic Dgn “grain”, cf. Hebrew dāgān, Samaritan dīgan.
Yamir Dagon and Dagon Takala, the Dioscuri	Ymir (Germanic), Yama (Sanskrit), Emain (Irish)	
Anu “Grandmother”, the Earth Goddess	Anu / Ana (Irish), Anahita (Persian), Anna / Na (Gaulish), Anna Perenna (Latin), Annapurna (Vedic), Hannahannah (Hittite) from hannas “grandmother” (no etymological link to Hebrew Hannah).	Anat / Anath (Hebrew, Phoenician), Anāt (Ugaritic), Anta / Antu (Akkadian), probably from root ‘n for “spring (of water)”.  No link to:  Inanna (Sumerian) from nin-an’ “sky lady”.
Bel < Belos “Bright” Spelled Bhls < *Bh <sup>e</sup> los in the philistine records	Belos (Gaulish), Belos (Greek), Beli (Welsh), Bel, Bilé (Irish), Belus (Latin), Balomain /	Ba’al (Phoenician), Bà’al (Hebrew), Bēlu (Akkadian) “Master, Lord, Owner, Husband”,

	Balumain (Kalasha)	from <i>ba'al</i> "he took possession of," or "he married; god of rain, thunder and agriculture.
Taautos, Tauutos «Tribal-agent, Tribe-official»	Teutatis, Toutatis (Gaulish), Hermes (Greek)	Toth (Egyptian), from <i>Dḥwty</i> , the arbitrator god of the moon and of wisdom and learning.
Marna, Marnas "Great One", tutelary god of Gaza	Mars (Latin), Marut (Sanskrit); the Greeks compared him to Kronos	
Derceto "Seer"	Dercetia (Gaulish), Dercetis (Greek)	Atar'ateh (Aramaic), Hellenized as Atargatis
Astarte "the Star"	Astárté (Greek), Astghik (Armenian), Austija (Baltic), Eostre / Ostara (Germanic) Sirona / Sdirona (Gaulish)	'ttrt or Aṯtart / Athtart (Ugaritic), Ashtart (Phoenician), Ashtoret (Hebrew), Ishtar (Akkadian), no known Semitic etymology; from Indo-European root <i>*ster-</i> , probably borrowed from Persian <i>setār-</i> .

## Anu

Ana, Anu is from the P.I.E. root *\*ane-* "to breathe, to blow", as with Latin *anima* "breath and Celtic *anatlo* "breath" or *anamon* "spirit, soul". Ana or

Anu, who also went by the name Dana, Danu or Danua, was the mother goddess of the ancient Indo-European gods and mortals. The Latin goddess Anna or Anna Perenna was Dido's and Pygmalion's sister and lover of the Trojan hero Aeneas. In Greek and Latin mythology, Dido was said to be the founder and queen of Carthage, a Phoenician city on the northern coast of Africa. It was also said that she was the daughter of Belus (or Mutto), a king of Tyre in Phoenicia. Most likely that at a later period Philistia was confused with Phoenicia. Anna Perenna has a Vedic counterpart called Annapurna devi, the goddess of nourishment and food. The Celtic mother goddess Anu or Ana is also linked to food and agriculture. In Ireland, the Paps of Anu in Co. Kerry were named for her.

### **Astarte**

The ancient astronomy of the Hittites and Persians became quite favorable with the Mesopotamian cultures. So it does not come as a surprise to find the Indo-European Dawn Goddess in most of the Levantine and Mesopotamian Semitic pantheons at a very early date. The Philistine name for her was probably Astarte and became known as Ashtarot (pl. Ashtarot for "Morning" and "Night" stars) by the Hebrews, Astart by the Phoenicians, Athtart by the Ugarit and Astartu by the Akkadians. All these names hint at borrowing from the Old Greek name Ἀστάρτη (Astarté) akin to the Gaulish goddess Sirona > ðirona "Stellar" companion to the god Grannos, the "Beaming Sun". The Star Goddess was also known by the Old Armenians as Astghik, by the Old Germans as Eostre or Ostara and by the Old Balts as Austija. She also had a masculine consort as found in Irish mythology with Starn < Sdironos < ðironos. The English words *astral*, *astronomy* and *astrology* all stem from the Greek root *aster* "star, generally designating the morning star (Venus)".

To testify, the Indo-European root \*(a)s-tér- meaning "heavenly body, star," is found in most if not all of the daughter languages: Hittite, šittar ; Greek, astēr ; Armenian, astł / astğ/asdğ ; Gaulish, sdira > sira ; Old Irish, sera ; Tocharian, śre / ścírye ; Latin, stella ; Proto-Germanic \*sternô, Gothic,

stairno ; Sanskrit, t̄aras ; Persian setāre ; Kalashi, istari, tari ; Osseti, sthaly ; Kurd, stérk / estére; also compare with astare (adj.) «pure», *astare yām-* «purify».

## Bel

The Philistine Bel is more often rendered in the Semitic form of Baal (from Ba'al) and is spelled as Belos in Greek and Belus in Latin. On the Philistine tablets, the name is expressed in the correct manner as Bhls if one is to omit the short vowels. Belos is from the P.I.E. root \*B<sup>h</sup>elos «Bright». Indeed, Belos is the standard and correct western I.E. spelling for Bel. In the different Celtic mythologies the name is written thus: Belos in Gaulish, Beli in Welsh and Bilé in Gaelic (both from Belios). The Gaulish divinities Belenos (= Apollo) and Belisama (Minerva) also share this etymology. Another Hellenized version of his names could have been Tautos which compares well with the Celtic name Toutates or Teutatis "Tribal agent". Bel is therefore a solar deity whose equivalents are the Greek Helios and Apollo.

## Dagon

Dagon, chief god of the Philistines could be from the P.I.E. root \*dheg<sub>h</sub>-: "to burn", later meaning "day" yielding Baltic degù, dègti 'burn' (trans. and intrans.), dègtas 'burnt', dègtinas 'what is to be burned'; Old Indian dáhati, av. dažaiti 'burns' (= lit. degù, Old Church Slavic žegō, Albanian djek), participle Old Indian dagdhá-ḥ 'burnt'; Old Celtic dagis, degis "fire", dageto "blaze". In Old Celtic the root dag- has given the adjective dag-os/-a/-on "good, morally good, heartily" along with other derivatives dagia "goodness", dagis "kindness", dago, dagu "goodness" and Dagdos "learned". The etymology for the Irish god Dagda is also from the same root: Dago- "well, right" and deuos "god". The Philistine Dagon and Hittite Dagan could very well be from the same root also: Dago-n(os) "The (fiery) good one". Then again, Dagon is simply Dagon, the neuter of Dagos. The neutral form to designate the Supreme Being is a common practice within I.E. theologies, for example: Brahman versus Brahma. The Greek commentators of Philistine religion maintained that Dagon was born of Ouranos (Uranus) and Gaia (Gaea, or Ge) and that he had three brothers: Elos, Kronos and Baetylos. The Greeks also called him Σίτων (Sitôn), σῖτος (sitos), "wheat, corn". He is identified with Zeus Arótrios ("God of

Farming”), this being, that Dagon was like Zeus and Jupiter at the head of the pantheon. Dagon also shares traits with the Roman and Celtic god of Death and Rebirth Dis Pater / Dis Ater, « Father of Destruction ».

Yamir Dagon and Dagon Takala, the Dioscuri, the twins.

Takala < Tacallos “Other Chief”.

### **Derceto**

Derceto < Dercetis “Seer” was a goddess of springs. The Gaulish Dercetios (or Dercunos), also linked to sacred wells, was most certainly an oracular god. Dercéto or Dercétis (ancient Greek Δερκετώ / *Derketô* or Δερκετίς / *Derketís*) was the name given by the Phoenicians to the great goddess of northern Syria who was worshiped in a sanctuary in the pagan holy city of Hierapolis Bambyce (the actual town of Mambiji north of Alep). Her Aramaic name was Atar’ateh and was later Hellenized as Atargatis. According to the French scholar Olivier Rayet, Atargatis and Derceto were one and the same. No matter how hard we try to compare their differences, the Syrian Atargatis shares identical traits with the Philistine goddess of Ascalon. From the little information we have through the authors of Antiquity, it is clear that the two cults were almost identical. This tends to show that Atargatis was originally the IE star goddess Astarte adopted into the Semitic pantheon.

Furthermore, Derceto, like the Roman Minerva, Greek Athena, Gaulish Brigindo and Indian Sarasvati, was goddess of Sovereignty. She had sovereignty, not only over the land but also over the bodies of water, rivers and sea. And not unlike the Celtic Morigena, an aspect of Brigindo, she was portrayed as a mermaid, a naiad or water nymph. According to Diodorus of Sicily, she was said to reside in a pond near the city of Ascalon. He also reported that the envious Aphrodite, wishing vengeance upon her, made her fall in love with a young hero for whom she bore a daughter called Semiramis. Following the birth, humiliated, she threw herself to the bottom of the lake and took the shape of a fish.

In respect for the old Philistine cults and in conformity with Alexandrian politics, the Hellenic kings of Palestine Syria tried to restore the local pantheon. They were also conscious of the importance of these gods for the maintenance of Antique wisdom. After all, was there not devotion to

Atargatis (Astarte) in Ptolemaic Egypt, Syria, Cappadocia, Media, Persia and Macedonia?

## Marna

Mar-na(s) < mar-no(s) «great one», from \*mōros / \*mēros «great, renowned»; connoting: \*mer-, \*mer- «to die»; \*mer-, \*mer-s- «to anger, bother, disturb, etc». The feminine name Marna / Morna is also found in Old Celtic and has the meaning of “Mound or Hillock”. In I.E. Celtic theonomy, topological denominators are most common, i.e.: Telo “Spring (of water)”, Berguos “the Mountain” and Beda “the Pit”. Marna was most likely a second function war god similar to the Roman Mavors > Mars or Vedic Marut (who came in group) deriving from the P.I.E. root \*Mawort- (connoting mau-ro- “dark”)... Therefore, \*Maworts / \*Mawrtòs (< mā- «good » + \*wrt- “turn (of fate, destiny)”; c.f. Germanic \*wurthi- > wyrd «turn: destiny, fate ») is not exactly of the same root as Marna but probably parallel in derivation. The Greeks equated Marnas to the Titan Kronos, god of time and the ages. Kronos or Cronus was succeeded by Zeus Kretagenes “born of Crete” and Zeus Aldemios or Aldos, an agrarian aspect of the god, which they assimilated to the Phoenician god El “Master”. During the Hellenistic period of Gaza, there was a shrine called the Aldioma which was dedicated to Zeus Aldemios in his capacity to generate rain (Macalister in the Philistines, 1913). Marna is one of those Philistine gods who was hastily given a Semitic pedigree before it could be established that the Philistines did not borrow their entire beliefs, stock and barrel, from other peoples’ myths. For two months no rain fell, notwithstanding their prayers to Marna ('whom they say is Zeus') in his capacity of lord of rain. There was a place of prayer outside the city, and the whole of the heathen population frequented this for intercession to the κύριος τῶν ὄμβρων. This place was no doubt a sanctuary with an ancient tradition; most probably to be identified with the Aldioma, or place of Zeus Aldemios. This, according to the *Etymologicon Magnum*, was the name of the chief god of Gaza, and a god of fertility; probably therefore identical with Marna.

## Additional theonyms from the Philistine records

Uisios “The knower“	Irish Fis < Uesos “Knower “, Vedic Vishnu
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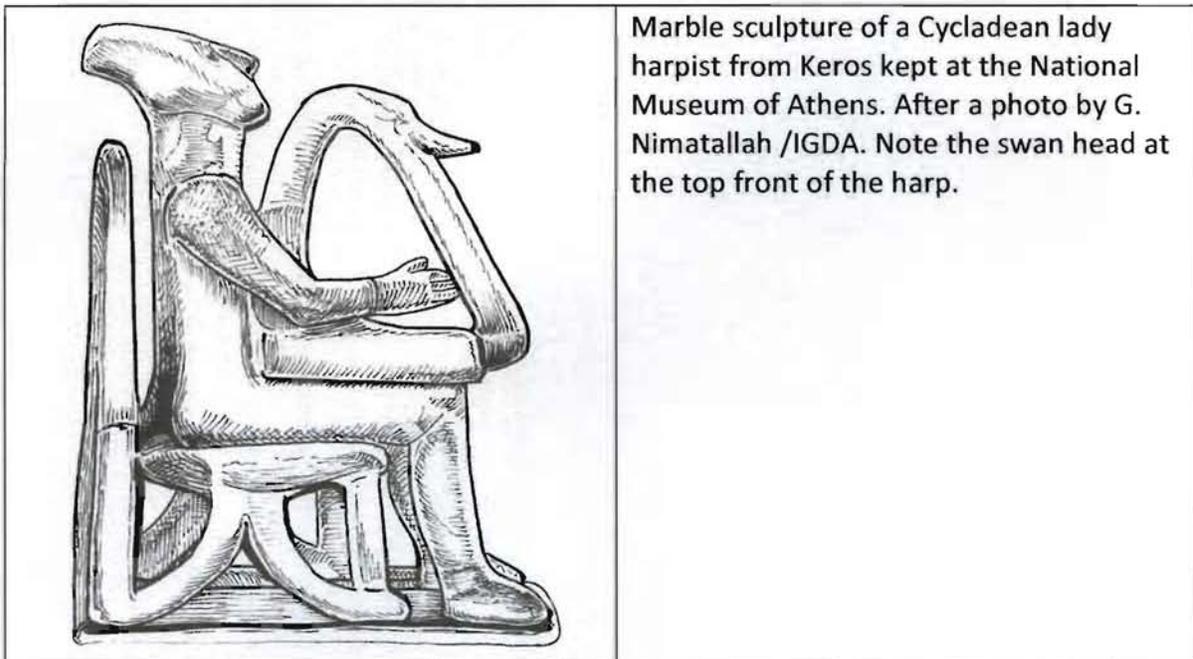
<b>Esuros</b> "Greatly well"	Gaulish Esus "Very well"
<b>Rieia</b> "Lady"	Celtic Reia, Reia, Riia, Germanic Freya

### Philistine coins or the Hellenic period

	
<p>GAZA – MARNA – ÉPI-DRR Gaza – Marna – ÉPI-D(o)RR</p>	<p>Drawings from R.A.S Macalister, <i>The Philistines</i>. M - GA – Lic M-GALis</p>

\*TARANOS / \*TENROS (thundering), god of War, storms and dragon slayer. He was a deity belonging to the second warrior's class. He was called Tahrin in Hittite, Taranis in Celtic, Thor / Donar in Germanic, Thundra / Indra in Indo-Aryan and Indar in Old Iranian Aryan. He was also called Perkunos / Perkwonos (the Striker): Perun / Piorun in Slavic, Perkuons / Perkunas in Baltic and Perëndi in Albanian. He also went by the name of Mawort(t) : Mars / Mavors in Latin, Marut in Indo-Aryan, Marte in Albanian and Martins in Baltic. Heroes were his demi-god incarnations and came in two categories: the brutal antisocial spear throwing warmongers and the smart sociable archers. This dual nature of heroes was an integral part of the storm god's very personality.

Indra, the “resistance-breaker” (Vrtra-hàn-) exercises his warlike powers at once in the world of men, as at the entry of the Aryans into India, and in the universe; his “resistance-breaking”, re-interpreted as the “murder of the demon (Vrtra)” (Benveniste, Renou 1934), is at the centre of a creation-myth which explains the conquest of essential goods, the waters, etc. He is assisted by the Marut (whose name is identical with that of the Latin god Mars).



Marble sculpture of a Cycladean lady harpist from Keros kept at the National Museum of Athens. After a photo by G. Nimatallah /IGDA. Note the swan head at the top front of the harp.

## The Philistine Language

Scholars can read and translate just about any Near Eastern or Middle Eastern language but some, like Linear B of Crete and Philistine writing, remain either undecipherable or incomprehensible. When the Czech linguist Bedřich (Friedrich) Hrozny (1879 – 1952) pondered in a selected sentence over the ideogram ninoa, for "bread" before the noun wa-a-tar "water", little did he know that he was to pull the thread that would unravel the entire text? Back in the mid nineties, judging from names of the Sea Peoples, Joseph Monard had the hunch that these languages were at the root of certain extinct or ancestral European languages. He supposed

that the Denen of the Merneptah Stele were the same as the Tuatha Dé Dannan of the Irish myths. The Philistines could therefore be descendants of Cyprian Proto-Celts originally from the Pontic region.

The Hellenized Jewish author, Philo of Byblos (c. 64-141 CE), maintained that the three major gods of the Philistines were each symbolized by a sacred letter... These being: Tauutos, Kronos and Dagon. Kronos was Marnas and Tauutos must have been Bel. In Philo of Byblos' *Phoenician History*, Greek and Avestic myths are confused with Phoenician and Egyptian gods where Taautos or Tauutos, the inventor of writing and a recipient of Kronos, is identified with Toth. In all likelihood, the two names, which refer to two different cultures, were confused and fused into one and the same. Indeed, tauutos could very well be a Philistine name taking root in P.I.E. \*tewtéh < \*teutā / \*toutā (cf. Lithuanian tauta, Irish túatha, Gothic þiuda, Old High German diota, Old English þēod) "tribe, people, clan, nation, race".

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".

*Koba'* was the word for Goliath's headgear (quoted in Samuel I, 17:5). The *koba'* was a leather cap (or feathered headdress maybe), a term which linguists compare to Hittite *kupahhi*, "helmet" (cf. Greek *kephalos* or Latin *caput*, both for "head"). The Proto-Celtic etymon is: \*cappa / \*cappo for "cape, hub, and cap".

'Argaz, for "box," or "crate," (in Samuel I, 6:8) word which has long baffled scholars takes on a new light using Proto-Celtic etymology: ar- / are-, "on, upon, with, against, before", and cuđdon < cosson "recess, hiding-place" or "secretive, concealed"; therefore, 'argaz < \*arcuđdon "with recess".

The Hebrew Tell, as with toponym Tell Aviv, is probably from Philistine (compare with Proto-Celtic Telo “spring, water hole”, or Tulla “mound, big heap”).

R.A.S. Macalister in *The Philistines*, [1913] mentions that “Μεινω, Meinô for 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.

From R.A.S. Macalister in *The Philistines*, short a list of Philistine terms which have leaked into the Hebrew language are given. In this opus of 1913 he wrote: “That there should be such borrowing is *a priori* not improbable: we have already shown that the leaders among Hebrew speakers must have understood the Philistine tongue down to the time of David at least.” The following is quote from Renan in *Histoire du peuple d'Israël* by Macalister:

parbār or parvār	“a suburb”; compare with peribolus.
m <sup>e</sup> kōnah	“a machine”, something with movable wheels: compare machina.
m <sup>e</sup> khērah	“a sword”: compare μάχαιρα.
caphtōr	“a crown, chaplet”: compare capital.
pīlegesh	“a concubine”: compare pellex.

He goes on to add that: “A further comparison of the name of Araunah the Jebusite, on whose threshing-floor the plague was stayed (and therefore 'the place in Jerusalem from which pestilential vapours arose'!), with the neuter plural form *Averna*, need hardly be taken seriously.”

### Indo-European etymologies for the Hebraicized Philistine terms

parbār or parvār < *paraballa "before the rampart"; Proto-Celtic para- "near, facing, before" and balla "wall rampart, enclosure, walled place, surrounded".
m <sup>e</sup> kōnah < <i>mekhane</i> , a Doric variant of Greek <i>makhana</i> "device, means," related to <i>mekhos</i> "means, expedient, contrivance," from PIE *maghana-

"that which enables," from root <i>*magh-</i> "to be able, have power".
m <sup>e</sup> khērah < maxaira "blade", Greek.
Caphtōr < QaDQoaD, Hebrew for crown, head of crown, PIE root <i>*kaput-</i> «head», Latin caput «head, chief, crown».
Pilegesh < <i>*pareikâ</i> , PIE root for «servant girl»; modern Hebrew Pileges, Geek pallake, Latin Pellex «concubine», Breton Plac'h «servant girl».

The list of Philistine personal names generally known to scholars and given by R.A.S. Macalister as follows:

### **Achish or Ekosh**

Achish or Ekosh is a standard Philistine name, like 'Jacob' for the Jews or 'Jack' for the English. It has been compared to the old Aegean form Anchises. A similar name occurs twice in the tablet of Keftian personal names and in the Assyrian tablets there is mention of an Ikausu.

The etymology can either be: Achish < Acesios "poet" literally: "intuitive, inspired, acute poet" or Ekosh < Eccaios "rider, cavalier, horseman, knight".

In the tablets, the name is spelled either Ecios or Eceos.

### **Badyra**

Badyra, king of Dor, in Wen-Amon's report does not translate as Semitic. Badyra < Baedaros, Baedaros "boar". The boar was symbolic of the I.E. warrior class.

### **Delilah**

Delilah, probably not Philistine according to Macalister or to the contrary, it could certainly be an I.E Proto-Celtic personal name; compare with Celtic Dillila, diminutive of Dilla "Faithful, Dependable, Beloved".

### **Goliath**

Goliath, a Philistine champion. Compare with the Gaelic name Golamh, the original name of Milesius. Goliath Galiatis "strength agent, jet-power agent, agent of capability, faculty"; or from Uelatos "big chief, warlike, gallant"; Ualetis "hospitable, welcoming"? The Bible (1 Sam. 17:5-7) offers a good description of him and his armament: «He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went before him. »

### **Ittai**

Ittai, David's faithful Gittite friend, also Philistine. Compare with Gaelic name Ith, son of Bregon, a companion of Milesius. Ittai < Itos < letos < letuos "thirst"; Itus "corn, wheat-grain"; Itios "low, inferior". The Gittites "*belonging to Gath*", were the inhabitants of this Philistine citadel. The Bible (2 Samuel 15:18-2 Samuel 15:19) mentions of 600 men from Gath who followed David under Ittai, the Gittite warrior, who ensured his protection. Obed-edom "the Gittite" may have been so named from the town of Gittaim in Benjamin, or from Gath-rimmon (2 Samuel 4:3; Nehemiah 11:33). The Gittites were reported to have been remarkable for their great stature.

### **Makamaru**

Makamaru, a merchant, mentioned by Wen-Amon. Compare with Celtic Maccumaros "Great warrantor".

### **Maoch,**

Maoch father of Achish, king of Gath. Unexplained and most likely Philistine. Compare with Celtic Mauocos "Swift, Lively, Fleetly One".

### **Phicol**

Phicol, a general of *Abimelech*, the king who had dealings with Abraham. The name is not explained as Semitic and is thought to be a Philistine name adopted by the Biblical narrator. If Philistine: Phicol < Picolos “one who pricks; from picos “point, spike”.

### **Warati**

Warati, a merchant, mentioned by Wen-Amon. Warati < Uaretios “of the circuit path, who walks the rounds”.

### **Zaggi**

Zaggi, a person signing as witness an Assyrian contract tablet of the middle of the seventh century B.C. found at Gezer. The name is not explained, and may be Philistine. Zaggi < Sagios “savage, cruel”; Sagios “eager, greedy”; Sagio “executioner”.

### **The Ekron Early Hebrew Inscription**



After a photo from CojsWiki

Translation from the Hebrew text by Aaron Demsky:

"The temple (which) Achish, son of Padi, son of Ysd, son of 'Ada', son of Ya'ir, ruler of Ekron built for Pt[n]yh, his Lady. May she bless him and ke[e]p him and prolong his days and bless his [l]and."

### List of the Philistine names

Achish, Hebrew spelling for Ecios or Eceos "Rider, Horseman".

Padi < Padis "fir tree" (Proto-Celtic);

Ysd < Usdi(o)s / Osdi(o)s, "the kermes oak"; also ethnonym Usdiai (Proto-Celtic);

Ada', Hebrew spelling for Adas(tos) "correct, legal" (Proto-Celtic)?;

Ya'ir, Hebrew spelling for Earos "denier, negator, one that denies" (Proto-Celtic);

Pt[n]yh, Hebrew spelling for Ptiania "she of the peat clod"; also ethnonym Ptianioi (Proto-Celtic).

### The Philistine Alphabet

At the time, the Canaanite alphabet was certainly not be only existing script. The Luwian script developed in southwest Anatolia in the kingdom of Arzawa and was in use from around 1400 BCE to 700 BCE. The Egyptian Hieratic script, developed around 3400 BCE, was used as shorthand for everyday use and was in usage until the 26th Dynasty. After this, the Demotic script developed from it around 660 BCE. The Proto-Sinaic script, from sometime around 1800 BCE, is attested from two sites, one in Central Sinai and the other at Byblos. At first glance, they appeared as a form of pseudo-hieroglyphic transcribing a Canaanite dialect but it was not certain if they were alphabetical. The tablets found at Biblos suggested a logo-syllabary of

120 symbols depicting animal plant, architectural and abstract shapes. A few Egyptian type symbols were found but for the most, the script borrowed more from Cretan writing. This script was in use onto the XIII<sup>th</sup> century BCE when it evolved into the Phoenician alphabet. It has long been argued that the script originated in Sinai during the thirteenth dynasty between 1900 and 1700 BCE when Hieratic was adapted to the needs of Canaanite. It seems more likely, however, that the script was the creation of Semitic Canaanites under the influence of mixed Indo-European agents. Its creation coincides with the mention of a Hyksos presence in Egypt. It is generally proposed that the Hyksos were forced upon Egypt as they were pressured by bordering Indo-European war clans such as the Hurrians, Mittanis and Kassites moving into Assyria and Babylon. Another possibility is that the Canaanites became their allies and gained through cultural and technological transfers.

At that time, the Egyptian Pharaoh Aamehmet III imported foreign workers for important building works. With them came the Hyksos warlords who took camp on the eastern shore of the Nile Delta and largely contributed to the weakening of Egyptian governance.



Source William Foxwell Albright, *The Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions and Their Decipherment* <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~imaging/negev/Origins.html>

Date c. 1500 BCE; photo c. 1916

Right to left: T-L-'B-L-T-M /

Up and down: T-'G

Reading order from left to right : M-T-L B-'-L-T / G-'-T

T-L < tel, Old Hebrew meaning «mound, hill, knoll»;

'B-L < 'Abel «mourner, one who mourns or sorrows, mourning»; or maybe: Ba'al, «master, owner, lord», theonym, the Canaanite and Phoenician god Baal.

T-M < tam, Old Hebrew meaning «perfect, complete, one with great physical strength and beauty, ethically and morally pure»;

G'T < Gat or Gath, a Philistine place name.

TL 'BL TM – G'T : Tel 'Abel tam – Gat

As for the origin of the Hyksos, here also there has been much speculation. Were they Semitic or Indo-European? The names of their chieftains such as: Salitis (Šā'ûl «asked for»), Yaqoub-Har (Ya'aqov-bar «son of Jacob»), Khyan (kōhēn, «priest») and Apophis, betray a Semitic origin. Apophis (Αποφίς) is the Greek spelling for the Egyptian Apepi (Aramaic Abed «servant»).

Hyksos is also the Greek spelling of an Egyptian form rendered as such: hk' kh'st, that is, Heka-khasut meaning «foreign kings». However, this name is could be the Egyptianizing of the Anatolian name \*Ekkus for «horse». Were not the arts of chivalry and light chariot warfare innovations of the Indo-European Anatolians and Indo-Aryans? Another warring people mentioned in the Egyptian records were the Apiru or Habiru (from Egyptian ibr < 'pr, pl. 'pr.w «horse»). Again, it is debatable whether these people were Semitic or Indo-European. The name was used to refer to both Semite and non-Semite marauding cavaliers including Ugarites, Akkadians, Canaanites and Hittites. However, much like the Hyksos, it is generally agreed upon that they were of Canaanite origin. The name Habiru is probably not of the same etymology as the name Hebrew which is from Ibri, pl. Ibrim, meaning «to cross, traverse or to pass over».

The Hebrew name for «horse» was sus and in Biblical times, horses were not in favour with them. There are very few mentions of the horse in the Bible or Tora and are usually associated with Egyptian chariots. In Deuteronomy (17:16), God forbids future kings of Israel from going down to Egypt to acquire and accumulate any large number of horses.

In short, the Near eastern Levant lands of the Sidonians or Tyrians (Phoenicians and Canaanites), being right on the main road to Egypt through which the armies and traders of the neighbouring empires passed, were in great insecurity. This eminent threat of invasion from all parts prompted the need for new modes of communication and cutting-edge technology. This new technology required mining expertise and metallurgical craftsmanship. And those who had this knowhow came from the North. So, at the end of the second millennium, the Levantine people came into contact with the Anatolians and later, with the Mycenaeans and

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Aegeans. The alphabet was just one of these innovations that would structure and consolidate this mobile and volatile society.

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