

Summary
Goliath's Legacy
Philistines and Hebrews in Biblical Times

In the twelfth century BCE in the eastern Mediterranean there were revolutionary changes and major population movements. One element of this complex process was the appearance on the coast of the Middle East of a warlike people who came from the west. Those people, who used to be called collectively the Sea Peoples, were probably a collection of different ethnic groups. Among the groups that we know of according to a few specific sources – Sherdena, Shekelesh/Tjekker and Danuna, the most important seem to be Philistines. This people was well documented in the Old Testament and certainly played a significant role in the history of Canaan. It is not an accident that the name of the region – Palestine comes precisely from this ethnonym.

My task in writing this book has been to examine the impact of the Sea Peoples, especially the Philistines on the local population, particularly the Hebrews.

The starting point was the consideration of theoretical issues related to the study of ethnicity in antiquity and the mechanisms of interaction between groups with different identities. Appropriately, the study begins with an overview of ancient sources, in which the names “Palestine” and “Philistines” appear. The essence of this phase was to determine what area the Philistines occupied, and how to define the boundaries of influence of these people. Since the sources show a fairly broad understanding of the term “Palestine”, it was necessary to reconstruct in detail the process of their settlement and expansion to be able to identify the periods and regions where contact with the Hebrews could have occurred.

The next chapter is devoted to the analysis of biblical references to the peoples (nations) living in Palestine. The biblical narrative cre-

ates an image of Israel as the people coming from outside Palestine, and thus confronting the Chosen People with the indigenous peoples. First, I managed to point out the structural similarities between the people originally living in Palestine – the Canaanites and Philistines. Both were hostile to Israel, and in several places in the Old Testament seemed to be in alliance. This identification may result from both the narrative technique of biblical writers, who use a *topos* of an enemy, or – as shown by some data – the existence in the early Iron Age of a real symbiosis between indigenous peoples (the Canaanites), and strangers from across the sea (the Philistines). Continued research on the biblical “ethnic” groups was ordered by the division of the peoples into two groups: pseudo-Hebrews and pseudo-Canaanites. It appears, however, that the peoples of Palestine from the earliest times mentioned in the Bible, can be divided into those who are part of the indigenous population of Canaan, or those who have been incorporated into the community of Israel. The first group, which the Bible describes as the “enemy”, includes the Hittites, Perizzites, Amalekites, Geshurites, Jebusites, Hivvites and the Amorites. In the second group, and therefore that which is presented as associated with the Hebrews, are the Danites, Levites and the tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Simeon.

The next chapter aims to show the times when the influence of the Philistines on the Hebrews may be particularly important. To determine this chronological sequence, it was necessary to present the biblical narrative in a synthetic way, and thus the role of the Philistines in the history of Israel “from the patriarchs to the monarchy”. The next section discusses the relationship between the areas of Philistia and Judah in the days of the monarchy. These considerations complement the study of geography, in which toponyms are discussed to establish a range of the Philistines’ impact. When looking for the Philistia-Hebrew border, I came to the conclusion that at some time, probably very early, almost the whole of the future kingdom of Judah could have been under the cultural and political influence of the Philistines. Concerning the likely duration of the most severe impact of the Philistines on the Hebrews I was able to identify two periods: the early Iron Age (ca. 1150–900 BCE) and the domination of Assyria (ca. 750–650 BCE).

The next part of the book consists of a discussion of the culture of the Hebrews, known from the Bible, and which may have its roots in the heritage of the Philistines. These phenomena have been divided into thematic groups, among which the most important are: the temple of Jerusalem, the *molk* sacrifice, divination, and the elements of culture, which so far have been explained as being of Hittite origins. This chapter also discusses the terms, which – according to some researchers – are foreign borrowings in Hebrew, and therefore could have entered Hebrew through the language of the Philistines. A discussion of biblical literary topics, which may have their origins in the culture of the Philistines, and a list of proper names used in the Bible to describe the Philistines close these considerations.

To make the source material clearer for the reader, the book also contains an appendix, which is the body of epigraphic sources from Philistia.

The conclusions of the book state that the impact of the Philistines on the Hebrews was much larger than previously thought, and was not connected only with Judah's and Israel's response to the presence of a hostile neighbour. Several components of Hebrew culture and some literary motifs in the Bible seem to derive specifically from the Philistines' culture.