



THE PLACE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SEA PEOPLES MIGRATION IN ANCIENT HISTORY

Deniz Kavimleri Göçü'nün Eskiçağ Tarihindeki Yeri ve Önemi

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Öz

Deniz Kavimleri Göçü ya da diğer ismiyle Ege Göçleri, MÖ 13. yüzyılın son çeyreği ile 12. yüzyılın ilk çeyreği arasında vuku bulmuş büyük bir kavimler hareketidir. Bu göçe iştirak eden kavimlerin büyük bir kısmı, Ege ve Akdeniz adaları ile Anadolu'nun batı ve güney kıyılarında oturan denizci kavimlerdi. Kıtık, toprak yetmezliği ve açlık gibi nedenlerle başlayan bu göçün başlangıç noktası Yunanistan'dır. Egeli kavimlerin ulaşmak istedikleri hedef ülke ise bir bolluk memleketi olan Mısır'dır.

Bu göçler, karadan ve denizden olmak üzere iki yoldan gerçekleşmiştir. Mısır ve Ugarit kaynakları, bu göçler hakkında son derece ayrıntılı bilgiler vermektedir. Ege Göçleri'nin özellikle MÖ 12. yüzyılın başlarında vuku bulan ikinci dalgası, Hitit, Mitanni ve Kas (III. Babil) krallıklarının yıkılmasına neden olmuştur. Mısır firavunları Merneptah ve III. Ramses, bu göçmenlere karşı çetin bir mücadele vermişlerdir. Deniz Kavimleri Göçü, Tunç ve Demir devirlerini birbirinden ayıran bir ayraç gibidir. Bu göçler sonunda Tunç Devri'nin temsilcileri tarih sahnesinden çekilirken, onların yerini Demir Devri'nin temsilcileri almıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deniz Kavimleri, Göç, Yunanistan, Anadolu, Mısır.

Abstract

The Sea Peoples Migration, also known as the Aegean Migrations, is a great peoples movement that took place between the last quarter of the 13 th century BC and the first quarter of the 12 th century BC. Most of the peoples that participated in this migration were maritime peoples living on the Aegean and Meditterrenian islands and the western and southern coasts of Anatolia. The starting point of this migration which started due to famine, land shortage and starvation, is Greece. The target country that the Aegean peoples want to reach is Egypt, a land of abundance.

These migrations took place in two ways, by land and by sea. Egyptian and Ugaritic sources give extremely detailed information about the said migrations. The second wave of Aegean Migrations, especially in the early 12 th century BC, caused the collapse of the Hittite, Mitanni and Kassite kingdoms. Egyptian pharaohs Merneptah and Ramesses III put up a fierce struggle against these immigrants. The Sea Peoples Migration is like a separator separating the Bronze and Iron ages. At the end of these migrations, while the representatives of the Bronze Age disappeared from the stage of history, they were replaced by the representatives of the Iron Age.

Keywords: Sea Peoples, Migration, Greece, Anatolia, Egypt.

Introduction

Before discussing the Sea Peoples Migration, which turned the Near East World upside down in the 2 nd Millenium BC and caused many destructions, it is necessary to reveal the main lines of what was going on in the Ancient Near East World after the 15 th century BC, at least, in order to bring integrity to the subject.

At the end of the 15 th century BC, the powerful states of the Ancient Near East geography were the Egypt, Hittite, Mitanni and Third Babylonian kingdoms. Especially the Amarna Age, dated between 1400-1350 BC, is considered a period when international relations began in real terms.¹ In the first half of this 50-year period illuminated by the documents of the Amarna archive, the control of the Near East world is in the hands of Amenophis III who was a pharaoh of XVIII th Dynasty of Egypt. However, the political balances will change during the time of his son, Amenophis IV, who succeeded him after his death. Because this pharaoh would focus on religious matters rather than politics and would attempt to reform the Egyptian religion. Indeed, as soon as he took the throne of Egypt in 1370 BC, he would establish a monotheistic religion. Amenophis IV, who left the capital Thebes in order to spread this new religion called “Atonism” in a more comfortable environment, will have a new capital city called Akhetathon built on the site where the Amarna Letters have been found.² However, since it was not possible to dismantle the deep-rooted beliefs in the soul of the people at once, the religious reform of Amenophis IV was not successful, and after the death of the pharaoh, it was returned to the polytheistic religion system.

The fact that the Egyptian pharaoh was only busy with religious affairs was most beneficial for the Hittites. Indeed, the powerful king of the Hittites, Suppiluliuma I, not only recaptured the sovereignty of Northern Syria at the end of his Syrian campaigns, but also put an end to the political existence of the Mitanni Kingdom. But the collapse of the Mitanni Kingdom also had bad consequences for the Hittites. Because the Assyrian Kingdom, which was previously under the rule of the Mitanni Kingdom, became independent again and even managed to be one of the great kingdoms of the period towards the end of the Amarna Age. Suppiluliuma, who was not slow to see this danger, re-established the Mitanni Kingdom as a buffer state dependent on the Hittites. Thus, it was saved from being a border neighbor with the Assyrian Kingdom, which was an extremely dangerous enemy.³ In 1296 BC, due to the domination of Northern Syria, the Hittite and Egyptian armies faced each other in the Battle of Kadesh. However, both sides could not achieved the expected result from this war. Hittite domination over Northern Syria continued after war as it was before the war. In 1280 BC, a peace treaty based on equal conditions was made between the Hittite king Hattusili III and the Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses II.⁴ This treaty, signed by two great kingdoms, brought peace and tranquility to the entire Ancient Near East world. This environment of peace, which lasted for nearly 50 years, will end with a great migration movement which occurred between the end of the 13 th century BC and the beginning of the 12 th century BC. Ancient historians called this great movement “the Sea Peoples Migration”.

Resources Providing Information On Sea Peoples Migration

¹ For more information about Amarna Age, see: Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi*, Ekin Yayınevi, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p. 106-108.

² Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Medeniyetleri Tarihi*, Ekin Yayınevi, 5. Baskı, Bursa 2019, p. 83.

³ Ekrem Memiş-Cemil Bülbül, *Eskiçağda Göçler*, Ekin Yayınevi, 2. Baskı, Bursa 2019, p. 106.

⁴ Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi*, p. 130.

It is possible to examine the sources giving information about the Sea Peoples Migration under two headings as written and archaeological sources.

At the beginning of the written sources are the inscriptions written by the Egyptian pharaohs. The first stage of migrations took place during the reign of the pharaoh Merneptah. We have two documents describing the migrations that took place in this period, one of which is the Karnak Inscription and the other is the Israel Stele. In both documents, the struggle of the mentioned pharaoh against the Aegean peoples and his victories are told. These documents are from the late 13 th century BC. There are also Ugarit Letters among the documents that give information about the first stage of migrations. While three of them provide information indirectly, the other two Letters are directly related to these migrations. The first of the letters directly related to the migrations was sent to the Ugarit king Ammurapi by Pagan, the king of Alashia. The second letter contains the reply of the king of Ugarit to the king of Alashia.

The second wave of migrations took place in the early 12 th century BC. The struggle of the pharaoh Ramesses III (1198-1167 BC) against this second migration movement is revealed in detail on the Medinet Habu Victory Inscription and the Great Harris Papyrus.

As for the archaeological documents; the most important of these are the reliefs located right next to the Medinet Habu Victory Inscription, on which the clothing and war equipment of the Sea Peoples are depicted. In addition, the thick ash layers in the settlements of the late 13 th century BC and the beginning of the 12 th century BC in the geographies where migrations took place are also counted among the archaeological findings.

Causes and Development of the Sea Peoples Migration

As it is known, the Sea Peoples Migration is a great peoples movement that took place in two stages, the last quarter of the 13 th century BC and the first quarter of the 12 th century BC.⁵ Ugaritic and Egyptian documents give important information about these migrations. In addition, in the archaeological excavations carried out in the settlements of the late 2nd Millennium BC, material evidence of the destruction caused by the said migrations was found.⁶

There are various reasons of the Sea Peoples Migration. However, it is understood that economic reasons outweigh in this great turmoil. Because, in addition to the problems of the peoples participating in the migration, such as lack of land and not being able to reach sufficient food, the famine disasters that started towards the end of the 13 th century BC and also affected the Hittite Land, seems to have prompted the Aegean Peoples to find new homelands for themselves. The fact that Achaean (Mycenaean) people, which was engaged in commercial activities in the Aegean and Mediterranean waters, could not continue this trade in a healthy

⁵ For information about the Sea Peoples Migration, see: Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister, *The Philistines: Their History and Civilization*, Oxford University Press, London 1914, pp. 20-28; Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ege ve Yunan Tarihi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayını, Ankara 197 pp. 87-92; Richard David Barnett, "The Sea Peoples", *Cambridge Ancient History II/2*, Chapter XXVIII, Cambridge 1975, pp. 359-371; Füzûzan Kınal, *Eski Anadolu Tarihi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayını, 2.Baskı, Ankara 1987, pp. 125-126; Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi*, Ekin Yayınevi, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, pp. 165-174; Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Medeniyetleri Tarihi*, Ekin Yayınevi, 5. Baskı, Bursa 2020, pp. 234-240; Ekrem Memiş, "Ege Göçlerinin Tetiklediği Diğer Göç Hareketlerine Kısa Bir Bakış", *Avrasya Uluslararası Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Cilt 7, Sayı: 19, Eylül 2019, pp. 148-162; Ekrem Memiş-Cemil Bülbül, *Eskiçağda Göçler*, Ekin Yayınevi, 2. Baskı, Bursa 2019, pp.107-121; Joseph Morris, *The Origins of the Sea Peoples*, Florida State University Classics, Florida 2006, pp. 1-54; Ekrem Memiş- Cemil Bülbül, *Amurrular (Araplar'ın En Eski Ataları)*, Fırat Üniversitesi Orta Doğu Araştırmaları Merkezi Yayını, Elâzığ 2012, pp. 87-101.

⁶ Ekrem Memiş, "Filistin Kime Aittir?", *Gazi Üniversitesi Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Sayı: 1, Ankara 1985, p. 223, n.1.

way due to the pirates that originated in the Mediterranean can be added to these reasons. Some Ancient Age historians such as Ord. Prof. Dr. Arif Müfid Mansel, look for the roots of this great migration movement in Central Europe, which was still living in prehistoric times at that time. According to the aforementioned scientist, some Thracian tribes, mostly Brigians or Phrygians, who were displaced upon the entry of the Illyrians to the southwestern regions of the Balkan Peninsula occupied by the Thracians in the 2nd Millenium BC, passed through the Straits to Anatolia and they took the warrior tribes living in the west and North of Anatolia with them and attacked the Hittite Land, destroyed the cities and towns, and thus eliminated the Hittite Kingdom.⁷

However, what is even more interesting is that some Anatolian tribes who fought alongside the Hittites in the Battle of Kadesh had a share in the collapse of the Hittites.⁸ At the beginning of these tribes are the Lukkaeans⁹ and Gaškaeans.¹⁰ This means that some Anatolian tribes, who hated the Hittites, also contributed to the realization of this destruction.¹¹

The first phase of the Sea Peoples Migration took place in the last quarter of the 13 th century BC, as stated above. Indeed, these nomadic forces, called “Sea Peoples” in the Egyptian annals, arrived at the gates of Egypt around 1225 BC, but were defeated by the pharaoh Merneptah.¹² The aforementioned Egyptian pharaoh had the names of the peoples he defeated inscribed on the walls of the Karnak Temple, these peoples were Ekwesh¹³, Turisha¹⁴, Rkw¹⁵, Šrdnw¹⁶ and Škršw.¹⁷ The Israel Stele¹⁸, which also belongs to the Merneptah period (1236-1223 BC) and depicts the victory against a Libyan army supported by the Sea Peoples, both gives a detailed account of the course of the war and expresses the great happiness of the

⁷ Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ege ve Yunan Tarihi*, Ankara 1972, p. 88.

⁸ Ekrem Memiş- Cemil Bülbül, *Amurrular (Araplar'ın En Eski Ataları)*, Elâzığ 2012, p. 88.

⁹ For more information about Lukkaeans, see: Oktay Akşit, *Likya Tarihi*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayını, İstanbul 1967; Ekrem Memiş, “MÖ 2. Binyıl Anadolu Tarihinde Lukkalar”, XI. Türk Tarih Kongresi Bildirileri, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayını, Ankara 1994, pp. 269-275; Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi*, Ekin Yayınevi, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, pp. 63-70.

¹⁰ See for Gaškaeans: Einar von Schuler, *Die Kaškaer (Ein Beitrag zur Ethnographie des Alten Kleinasien)*, Berlin 1965, pp. 1-197; Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi*, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, pp. 50-62.

¹¹ Ekrem Memiş- Cemil Bülbül, *Eskiçağda Göçler*, Ekin Yayınevi, 2. Baskı, Bursa 2019, p. 109.

¹² William Taylour, *The Mycenaeans*, London 1972, p. 174; Raymond O. Faulkner, “Egypt from the inception of the Nineteenth Dynasty to the death of Ramesses III”, *Cambridge Ancient History II/2*, Chapter XXIII, Cambridge 1975, p. 233; Rudolf Naumann, *Eski Anadolu Mimarlığı*, Translated in Turkish by Beral Madra, Ankara 1975, p.21; Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi*, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p. 165.

¹³ See for Ekwesh=Achaeans: Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ege ve Yunan Tarihi*, Ankara 1971, p. 87.

¹⁴ See for Turisha=Etruscans: Denys Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad*, Los Angeles 1959, p. 106; Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ege ve Yunan Tarihi*, Ankara 1971, p.87; for to learn about formation of the Etruscan people, see also: Ekrem Memiş, “Etrüsk Kavminin Oluşumunda Troyalılar'ın ve İskitler'in (Sakalar) Rolü”, *Tarihten Bir Kesit: Etrüskler*, 2-4 Haziran 2007, Bodrum Uluslararası Sempozyum Bildirileri, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayını, Ankara 2008, pp. 107-112; Ekrem Memiş, *Troya ve Troyalılar (Troyalılar Türk müdür?)*, Altınpost Yayınları, 2. Baskı, Ankara 2012, pp. 131-140.

¹⁵ See for Rukku=Lukka on the Hittite cuneiform texts= Lycians in the Classical Age: George Leonard Huxley, *Achaeans and Hittites*, Oxford 1960, p. 33; Oktay Akşit, *Likya Tarihi*, İstanbul 1967, p. 76; Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi*, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p.67.

¹⁶ See for Sherden=Sardinians: Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister, *The Philistines: Their History and Civilization*, London 1914, p. 24; Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ege ve Yunan Tarihi*, Ankara 1971, p. 87.

¹⁷ See for Sheklesh= Sicilians: Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister, *The Philistines: Their History and Civilization*, London 1914, p. 25; Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ege ve Yunan Tarihi*, Ankara 1971, p. 87; Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi*, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p. 165.

¹⁸ Since the name “Israel” was first seen in this documents, it was called “The Israel Stele”.

Egyptian people over this victory.¹⁹ Indeed, the phrase in this documents: *"Men come and go with singing, and there is no cry of men in trouble. Towns are populated once again and he who plants his harvest shall eat it. Re has turned himself to Egypt"*²⁰ shows that the Egyptian people were extremely pleased with the victory over the Sea Peoples.

Among the oldest sources giving information about the Sea Peoples Migration are the Ugarit documents written in Akkadian cuneiform.²¹ While some of them convey indirect information about the Sea Peoples Migration, some of them are directly related to these migrations.

The first of giving indirect information documents is a letter known as PRU V. Number 63=RS.18.40. This letter was sent to an unnamed Hittite king by an Ugarit commander named Shiptibaal. The letter in question includes the following statements:

To the king, my lord,

Say:

Message of Shiptibaal

(your) servant

.....

To the feet of my lord

Seven times (and) seven

Times

From after

.....

I fall.

Your servant

Lawasanda

fortified (his) positions

with the king.

And behold,

the king retreated, fled, and there

he sacrificed

.....and I, too

.....to Mount Amanus

..... behold, the enemy destroyed.

.....

The most important thing learned from this letter is that the enemy has crossed the Amanus. The enemy mentioned here was probably the Sea Peoples.

¹⁹ Ekrem Memiş, İsrail Nereye Koşuyor? (En Eski Çağlardan Günümüze İsrail-Filistin Mücadelesi), Ekin Yayınevi, Bursa 2006, p. 42.

²⁰ Raymond O. Faulkner, "Egypt from the inception of the nineteenth dynasty to the death of Ramesses III", Cambridge Ancient History II/2, Chapter XXIII, Cambridge 1975, p. 234.

²¹ The Ugaritic documents were published by F. A. Claude Schaeffer in UGARITICA V, Paris 1968, and by J. Nougayrol in Le Palais royal d'Ugarit II and V.

Another Ugarit documents that provides indirect information on migrations is a letter registered as PRU II Number. 13=RS.16.376. This letter was sent by an Ugarit king to an unnamed Queen Mother. The Ugarit king says that in this letter:

1-15)(These lines are destroyed. So, we can not understand them).

16) *And if the Hittites*

17) *mount, I will send a message*

18) *to you, and if*

19) *they do not mount, I will certainly send*

20) *a message. And you,*

21) *my Mother, be not afraid*

22) *and do not put*

23) *worries into your*

24) *heart.*

.....

It is understood from this letter that the king of Ugarit occupied some high points on the Amanus mountains and hoped that the Hittite soldiers would come to his aid and reinforce him. Undoubtedly, it was the Sea Peoples that forced the Ugarit king to resist.

A third letter found in the Ugarit archive is the document numbered PRU V. 114=RS.19.11. This letter was addressed to a lord named Zrdn (or perhaps Grdn). The sender of the letter in question is unknown. This letter sheds light on the situation of Ugarit during the Sea Peoples Migration. This letter includes the following statements:

To Z(?)rdn,

My lord, say:

.....

Your messenger arrived

The degraded one

trembles, and the low one

is torn to pieces.

Our food in the threshing

floors

Is sacked (or burned)

and also the vineyards

are destroyed.

Our city is destroyed,

And must you know it.

.....

According to the information obtained from this letter, the Sea Peoples had burned and destroyed the cities of Ugarit and then plundered the gardens and fields belonging to the Ugarit people.

Apart from the three letters mentioned above, we have two more letters that provides information directly about these migrations, the first of which (UGARITICA V.23 RSL.1) was sent by Pagan, the king of Alashia, to Ammurapi, the king of Ugarit (Ras Shamra).²² The letter includes the following statements:

Say that:

King says to Ammurapi, the king of Ugarit,

as the following:

Greetings to you,

let the gods maintain your health.

You wrote me as the following:

“The ships of the enemy were seen in the sea”.

If so, be careful.

As for you; where are your troops and chariots?

Are not they near you?

Is the enemy who drove you back?

Rebuild the walls of your cities.

Settle your troops and chariots into there.

Wait for the troops of the enemy there carefully.

.....

It seems that the king of Alashia, with this letter, informs the king of Ugarit about the danger of the Sea Peoples and gives him some advice about the precautions to be taken against the enemy.

By a good coincidence, the reply letter (UGARITICA V. 24 RS.20.238) sent by the Ugarit king Ammurapi to the Alashia king Pagan was also found among the documents of the Ugarit archive.²³ In the letter in question, the Ugarit king Ammurapi says to the King of Alashia:

To the king of Alashia, my father,

your son, the king of Ugarit, says that:

I fall to the feet of my father.

Greetings to my father.

Greetings to his houses, wives, armies.

Greetings to everything belonging to my father,

the king of Alashia.

Father, the ships of the enemy came.

They burnt my cities. Now, my cities are still burning.

And they made badness us.

²² At that time, various tribes with different ethnic origins lived in the city of Ugarit and they used 5 different scripts and 7 different languages.

²³ The two kings mentioned here were vassal kings of the Hittite Great King.

*You, my father, know that my all troops
are in the Land of Hittite and my all ships
are in the Land of Lukku.*

*Until now, they did not come back,
and the country was left without defense.*

My father must know that

The number of the enemy ships which came against to me is seven.

And they made us badness. Now, if there are

Another ships belonging to the enemy, inform me.

.....

It is clear from this letter that a group of the Sea Peoples had burned down the cities of the Land of Ugarit.²⁴ The Ugarit king could not resist his enemies as he sent his land and naval forces to the aid of the Great Hittite King. Just as this letter clearly reveals the destruction of the Sea Peoples, the Ugarit excavations support this destruction in the layers of the late 13 th century BC.²⁵

We think that the Ugarit letters that we are talking about here must also belongs to the first stage of the Sea Peoples Migration. Because the Hittite Kingdom is still standing.²⁶

The peoples that participated in the second phase of the Sea Peoples Migration caused the greatest damage. Egyptian sources provides the most satisfactory information about this great migration movement, which dates back to the beginning of the 12 th century BC.²⁷

Indeed, in the documents of the time of the Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses III (1198-1167 BC), the peoples that participated in the second phase of the Sea Peoples Migration and the struggle against them are mentioned. In this context Ramesses III's relentless struggle against the mentioned peoples and his brilliant victory in the 8 th reign year of him (1190 BC) are described both in hieroglyphic writing and pictures on the walls of the Medinet Habu Temple.²⁸ In this inscription, the pharaoh of Egypt says that:

"No land could stand before their arms. Khatti, Qode, Carchemish, Arzawa and Alashia were destroyed. They advanced into the Land of Amurru and set up their military camp in a place there. They killed all of the people in the land of Amurru. And then they advanced by land and by sea to Egypt. The confederate peoples consisted of Pelest, Turisha, Sherden, Sheklesh, Zakkar, Denyen and Weshesh. These peoples invaded the most distant lands even. Their hearts were full of confidence. And they said that: "we are succeeding our plans".²⁹ The inscription then tells how the Sea Peoples were defeated.

²⁴ For to learn more information about the last days of Ugarit, see: Michael C. Astour, "New Evidence on the Last Days of Ugarit", American Journal of Archaeology, 69/3, 1965, p. 255.

²⁵ In fact, this destruction occurred twice, in the late 13 th century BC and early 12 th century BC. The real destruction occurred in the early 12 th century BC.

²⁶ Ekrem Memiş, Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p.168.

²⁷ Ekrem Memiş- Cemil Bülbül, Eskiçağda Göçler, 2. Baskı, Bursa 2019, p.113.

²⁸ James Henry Breasted, A History of Egypt From the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest, London 1948, pp. 464-504; Richard David Barnett, "The Sea Peoples", Cambridge Ancient History II/2, Chapter XXVIII, Cambridge 1975, p. 371; William Taylour, The Mycenaeans, London 1972, p. 174; F. Kınal, Eski Anadolu Tarihi, 2. Baskı, Ankara 1987, p. 227; Ekrem Memiş, Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p. 168.

²⁹ Arif Müfid Mansel, Ege ve Yunan Tarihi, Ankara 1971, p. 88; F. Kınal, Eski Anadolu Tarihi, 2. Baskı, Ankara 1987, pp. 227-228; Ekrem Memiş, Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p. 169.

As it is understood from the wall paintings located right next to the Medinet Habu Victory Inscription, the Sea Peoples Migration took place in two ways, by land and by sea. Those who went by land had two-wheeled ox carts. Women and children were in these cars.³⁰ Those who went by sea had boarded the ships with oars and “sails”.³¹

The inscription mentioned above and stated to belong to Ramesses III is an extremely valuable document. Because this document reveals in all details both the geographical regions where the migration took place, the identity of the peoples that participated in the migration and destruction they caused. Accordingly, the Hittite central region, as well as the Hittite-subordinate Syrian kingdoms such as Qode, and Carchemish, and the Alashia Kingdom, which was also a Hittite vassal, could not escape the anger of the Sea Peoples. The Arzawa Region, which was always a threat to the Hittite Kingdom and almost all Hittite kings had to deal with, could not escape from this destruction. It is understood that the Amarna Land, which has been a Hittite vassal since the Amarna Age, could not escape from this encroachment. Because in the inscription in question, it is stated that the Sea Peoples established their camps in the Amurru Land and subjected the people living there to genocide. It is also learned from this inscription that the peoples participating in the migration marched on Egypt from Amurru Land, and while carrying out this march, they destroyed everything that came in their way.³² The inscription of Ramesses III that we are talking about also mentions the names of the peoples that the aforementioned pharaoh defeated. These peoples were also members of the coalition formed against the pharaoh. These peoples were as the following:

- 1-Šrdn (Sherden=Sardinians)
- 2-Dnyn (Denyen=Adanians)
- 3-Prst (Pelest=Philistines)
- 4-Škrš (Sheklesh=Sicilians)
- 5-Tršw (Turisha=Etruscans)
- 6-Zkkl (Zakkalians)
- 7- Wssw (Weshesh)

We know Sherden, Sheklesh and Turisha from the Karnak Inscription which belongs to Merneptah, the pharaoh of the Egypt. We know Denyens from the other four names from Tel el Amarna letters³³ and Karatepe excavations.³⁴ The remaining three names appear for the first time. Of these, the Pelests were undoubtedly Philistines. This means that the Philistines first appeared on the stage of history in the 8 th year of Ramesses III's reign (1190 BC).

³⁰ Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi*, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p.169.

³¹ The ships with sails belongs to the Philistines. See for this matter: Richard David Barnett, “The Sea Peoples”, *Cambridge Ancient History II/2*, Chapter XXVIII, Cambridge 1975, p. 373.

³² Ekrem Memiş, *Eskiçağ Medeniyetleri Tarihi*, Ekin Yayınevi, 5. Baskı, Bursa 2019, p. 237.

³³ In an Amarna letter, EA 151, Abilmilki, the king of Tyre, says to Amenophis IV, the pharaoh of the Egypt:” The king of the Denyens died. His brothers succeeded to him. There is security in the land”. This letter indicates the existence of a Danuna Kingdom in the Çukurova (Cilicia) region as early as the Amarna Age (1400-1350 BC). The name “Adana” also originates from “Danuna”. We would like to specifically point this out.

³⁴ Inscriptions written in two languages (Phoenician and Hittite Hieroglyphic Script) were found during the excavations carried out by H. Bossert in Karatepe, near Adana/Kadirli. As understood from these inscriptions, the name of the city was Asitawanda and the king had the same name. This king was the Danuna King.

Pictures depicting land and sea battles provides important information about the war equipment of the invading peoples. As can be seen from these pictures, the Philistines were people with shaved beards and very special headdresses. There were strips of leather or feathers at the top of these headdresses. The headdress was attached with a chin strap tied under the chin. They wore closed skirts that went down to their knees. As weapons they carried spears, long and thin swords, and round shields with handle similar to those of the Sherdanians.³⁵ The Philistines fought on land in the Hittite style, in chariots with crews of three, two combatants and one driver. Their women and children were following them in carts driven by oxen.³⁶

Another Egyptian source³⁷ giving information about the second phase of the Sea Peoples Migration is the “Great Harris Papyrus” also from the reign of Ramesses III. Denyens are mentioned in that document. It is said that Purasati³⁸ and Zakkala were “made ashes”. However, it is also mentioned that the Sherdanians and the Shekleshes were settled in fortresses along the border and that the Egyptian pharaoh received cloth and grain as tax from the mentioned peoples.³⁹

It seems that the Egyptian pharaoh had established tangible dominance over the Sea Peoples he had defeated and settled in Egypt’s frontier fortresses in the early 12 th century BC. However, the death of the aforementioned pharaoh in 1167 BC turned everything upside down. Because his successors have never been able to replaced him. The power of Egypt gradually dwindled. This was most beneficial for the Sea Peoples (Aegean Peoples). As a matter of fact, they soon began to challenge Egypt and not pay their taxes.⁴⁰ After a while, they became completely independent.⁴¹

The Results of the Sea Peoples Migration

In the light of all this information, we can list the results of the Sea Peoples Migration as follows: The Sea Peoples Migration, which caused the collapse of the Hittite, Mitanni and Kassite kingdoms and the weakening of the Egyptian Kingdom, is seen as an important event that separates the Bronze and Iron ages from each other. At the end of these migrations, the representatives of the Iron Age Culture, who did not have a written culture yet, tried to eliminate the representatives of the Bronze Age Culture who had a far superior culture and to fill their place. But it seems that this has not been easy at all. Because the chaotic environment they created prevented the flow of information about what was going on in the Ancient Near East and especially in Anatolia for about 400 years. Ancient Age historians described this time period, which has been lived between 12-8 th centuries BC and hinders the flow of information, as a “Dark Age”.

³⁵ As a matter of fact, such iron weapons were found in archaeological excavations in the ancient cities of Palestine, Gezer and Gerar. In this regard, see: Ekrem Memiş, “Filistler’de Demircilik Sanatı”, Selçuk Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, Sayı 1, Konya 1987, pp. 123-127.

³⁶ Ekrem Memiş, Filistinlilerin Kökeni ve Tarihi, Konya 1996, p. 46; Ekrem Memiş, Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p. 170.

³⁷ Raymond O. Faulkner, “Egypt from the inception of the Nineteenth Dynasty to the death of Ramesses III”, Cambridge Ancient History II/2, Chapter XXIII, Cambridge 1975, p. 244.

³⁸ The Purasaties mentioned here are the Philistines.

³⁹ Ekrem Memiş, İsrail Nereye Koşuyor? (En Eski Çağlardan Günümüze İsrail-Filistin Mücadelesi, Ekin Yayınevi, Bursa 2006, p. 47.

⁴⁰ Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister, The Philistines: Their History and Civilization, London 1914, pp. 29-34; H. Gressmann, Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament, Berlin 1926, pp. 71-76; Ekrem Memiş, Eskiçağ Türkiye Tarihi, 16. Baskı, Bursa 2022, p.171.

⁴¹ Ekrem Memiş- Cemil Bülbül, Eskiçağda Göçler, 2. Baskı, Bursa 2019, p. 117.

Even the construction styles have changed after Sea Peoples Migration. The Phrygian architectural style, which was built with large stones, emerged instead of the construction technique of filling between the two walls with small stones and rubble, which is typical of Hittite architecture.

In Central Anatolia, cuneiform has completely disappeared but the tradition of writing in cuneiform on stones continued in the Urartu Land. On the other hand, a Phrygian script emerged in Western Anatolia only after the 8 th century BC, which is claimed to be rooted from the Hellenic alphabet.⁴²

The economic effects of the Sea Peoples Migration should not be forgotten. First of all, after these migrations, sea routes started to gain more importance. Besides, land trade with caravans still kept its importance. In this period, stamped gold and silver rings started to be used instead of “bronze ingots”.⁴³ In other words, important developments occurred in international trade after the Sea Peoples Migration.

In the field of religion, some reforms were carried out especially in Anatolia after the Sea Peoples Migration. In this context, the cult of Kubaba from Carchemish, who was an important goddess during the reign of the Hittite king Suppiluliuma I (1380-1335 BC), not only spread to the whole of Asia Minor (Anatolia), but probably went to Greece via Western Anatolia via the Phrygians. So much so that this cult was later taken away from Pessinus, near Sivrihisar, in the Roman Age, to be placed in the Roman pantheon.

The ethnographic effects of the Sea Peoples Migration were also great. The Phrygians, claimed to be from Indo-European tribes, spread into the Kızılırmak bend, and the colonies of the Indo-European Hittites began to line up on the west and south Anatolian coasts.

The tribes that came with the Sea Peoples Migration further complicated the already complex ethnic structure of the Ancient Near East.

Evaluation and Conclusion

If we make a general evaluation in the light of all this information, we can say the following: The Sea Peoples Migration, which started due to economic reasons such as famine and land shortage, is a great peoples movement that took place in two stages, between the last quarter of the 13 th century BC and the first quarter of the 12 th century BC, as we have mentioned before.

The number of peoples participating in the first migration movement that took place in the period of pharaoh Merneptah is less, on the other hand, the number of peoples participating in the second migration movement that took place during the time of pharaoh Ramesses III is more. The movement of the peoples participating in the first stage is rather a discovery movement. However, the second phase of migration, which took place in the early 12 th century BC, developed extremely rapidly. So much so that even the Hittite Kingdom, which had dominated the political destiny of Anatolia for 500 years, could not hold on against this sudden attack.

⁴² Ekrem Memiş, “Eski Anadolu Tarihinde Frigler ve Çözüm Bekleyen Bazı Sorunlar”, Near East Historical Review, 12/1, January 2022, p. 10.

⁴³ Animal hides on which metal parts are attached are called “ingot”.

It is not in vain that these migrations are called “Aegean Migrations” or “Sea Peoples Migration”. Because most of the peoples that participated in these migrations consist of peoples living on the Aegean and Mediterranean islands and the western and southern coasts of Anatolia, and they are also seafaring peoples. For this reasons, in the sources of Ugaritic and Egyptian origin, they were referred to as “Aegean Peoples” or “Sea Peoples”.

Did the Aegean peoples get the results they expected from this migration movement? Such a question can be answered both “yes” or “no”. Because the main reason that played a role in their migration was the famine disaster they experienced in their homeland. For this reason, they marched on Egypt, where there was no famine disaster, and they had a tough struggle against the pharaohs to settle in this land of abundance. Among these peoples, the Philistines settled in the south of Palestine and the Zakkalians settled in the north of Palestine, achieving their goals and continued the Aegean civilization in these countries for a while. On the other hand, Sherdens and Shekleshes were settled in the border castles of Egypt on conditions that they pay taxes to Egyptian pharaoh. The remaining tribes, on the other hand, had to return to their homelands after they were defeated by the Egyptian pharaohs.

When the results of the Sea Peoples Migration are examined, it is seen that the effects of these migrations in the economic field were positive, but the effects in other areas were negative.

As a matter of fact, it is not correct to see the Sea Peoples Migration as a single migration movement. Because the Sea Peoples Migration has also been the trigger of new migration movements in both the Ancient Eastern and the Ancient Western geographies. Indeed, new migration movements are witnessed in the same time period with these migrations or a little later.

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