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PHILISTINE: A crass, prosaic, often priggish individual guided by material rather than intellectual or artistic values”

(Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary)



- **SETTLEMENT:** The Philistines arrived in Canaan at the beginning of the 12th century BCE (Israel arrived mid 13th century). During its first period of settlement, Philistia extended from the Yarkon river to the NW Negev, and from W slopes of Judea to the Mediterranean. They conquered Canaanite cities and settled on their ruins. The fact that there is evidence that they built houses outside city walls, indicates that defense was not a serious problem.
- **ARTS AND CRAFTS:** four influences that can be discerned in decoration of Philistine pottery: Mycenaean, Cypriot, Egyptian and Canaanite (*pottery is a consistent indicator of cultural diffusion)
- **ECONOMIC LIFE:** they were capable farmers and artisans, as can be seen from the underground silos, flint blades, millstones, oil presses, loom weights, and wine jars.
- **URBAN DWELLERS:** they were also sophisticated town planners. The earliest strata of their cities show that they were divided into different zones: industrial, public and cultic, and domestic (*Ashdod for example, had houses with courtyards, a citadel, cultic installations, a drainage system, municipal garbage dump outside the city walls)
- **MUREX:** from documents discovered at Ugarit, we know that Ashdod was a famous trade center during LBA, known in particular for its production and export of royal purple cloth, dyed apparently at nearby harbor town of Tel Mor from murex shells.
- **STOREROOMS:** inside city gate, show hoard of iron's carpenter tool, bronze pan of scale and stone and metal weights (*all indicating extensive commercial links with Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the cities of Phoenician coast)
- **EKRON:** flourishing ceramic industry, produced fine tableware as well as everyday kitchenware including cooking pots, large deep bowls. By 7th century BCE Ekron was largest producer of olive oil in Ancient Near East
- **WORSHIP:** They worshipped Dagon, and their temples were found to contain "holy of holies" in the form of a plastered platform, and the ceiling of one of the largest sanctuaries was supported by cedar columns. The influence of other cultures including Canaanite, Aegean and Cypriot. (* cf 1 Kings 7:13)
- **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** they were accomplished architects, builders, artistic pottery makers, textile manufacturers, dyers, metalworkers, silver smelters, farmers, soldiers, sophisticated urban planners. As (one of the) sea peoples, they played an important role in furthering the connections between Canaan and the rest of the Mediterranean world.