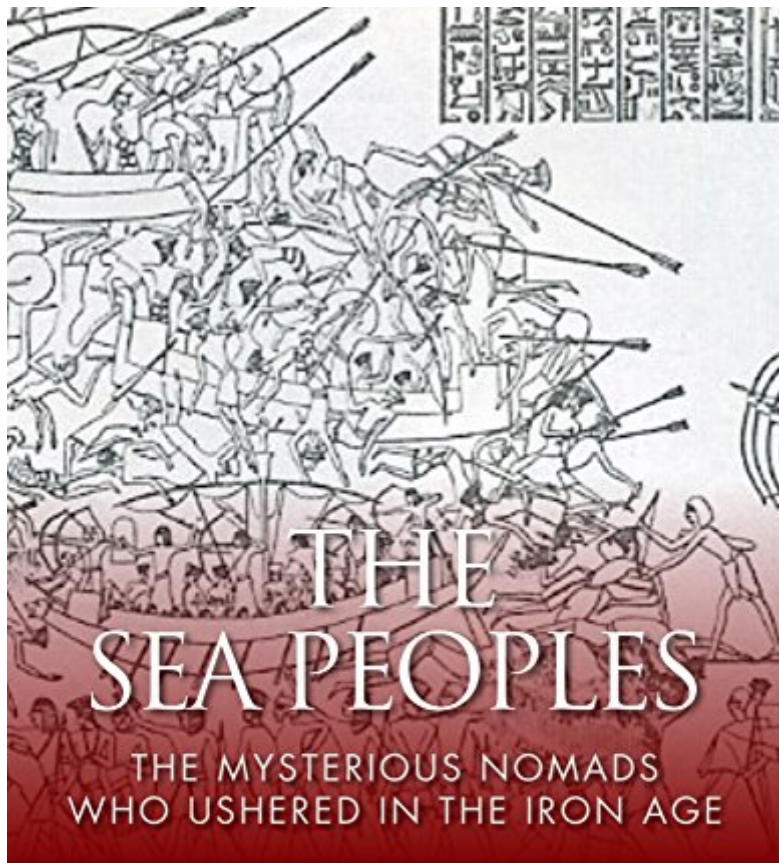


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# The Sea Peoples: The Mysterious Nomads Who Ushered In The Iron Age



by

CHARLES RIVER EDITORS



## Synopsis

\*Includes pictures\*Includes ancient accounts of the Sea Peoples\*Discusses theories about the Sea Peoples' origins\*Includes a bibliography for further reading\*Includes a table of contents

“The [Egyptian] charioteers were warriors and all good officers, ready of hand. Their horses were quivering in their every limb, ready to crush the [foreign] countries under their feet...Those who reached my boundary, their seed is not; their heart and soul are finished forever and ever.”

An inscription made during the reign of Ramesses III

When scholars look at the passage of history, certain epochs and transitions to new periods tend to stand out. The transition from the early modern to the Industrial Age in the late 18th century and the collapse of the Roman Empire are two of the more well known, but the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age during the late 13th and early 12th centuries BCE arguably changed the structure and course of world history more fundamentally than any period before or since. During this period, numerous wealthy and enduring kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean Sea region collapsed, and new ones rose in their places. At the center of this period of turmoil was a group of people known today as the Sea Peoples, the English translation of the name given to them by the Egyptians. Despite their prominent role in history, however, the Sea Peoples remain as mysterious as they were influential; while the Egyptians documented their presence and the wars against them, it has never been clear exactly where the Sea Peoples originated from, or what compelled them to invade various parts of the region with massive numbers. Whatever the reason, the Sea Peoples posed an existential threat to the people already living in the region, as noted by an Egyptian inscription: “The foreign countries (i.e. Sea Peoples) made a conspiracy in their islands. All at once the lands were removed and scattered in the fray. No land could stand before their arms: from Hatti, Qode, Carchemish, Arzawa and Alashiya on, being cut off (i.e. destroyed) at one time. A camp was set up in Amurru. They desolated its people, and its land was like that which has never come into being. They were coming forward toward Egypt, while the flame was prepared before them. Their confederation was the Peleset, Tjekker, Shekelesh, Denyen and Weshesh, lands united. They laid their hands upon the land as far as the circuit of the earth, their hearts confident and trusting: ‘Our plans will succeed!’”

As with any historical matter from the ancient world, the sources can be a problem. The ancient Egyptians recorded their interactions with the Sea Peoples in both written texts and in pictorial reliefs and thus provide the most complete contemporary description of them, but the nature of ancient Egyptian historiography was quite different than the modern concept, so the sources cannot be considered entirely reliable. Later Greek sources, both historiographical and mythological, can help fill in some more details, but those sources are suspect because they were written several

centuries after the emergence of the Sea Peoples. Modern archaeology is beneficial in determining how people lived and possibly where they moved, but there are also problems when one relies too much on archaeological data because the dating of material culture is not an exact science. Finally, linguistic evidence is often employed to determine the geographic origins and eventual landing points of many of the Sea Peoples, but confusion often arises if a group's demonym refers specifically to their place of origin or final home. Naturally, the mystery surrounding the Sea Peoples has led to all kinds of theories aiming to identify them. While plenty of theories are plausible, there are other fanciful theories that have attempted to associate the Sea Peoples with the Atlantic Ocean and even Troy.

## **Book Information**

File Size: 2212 KB

Print Length: 32 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Charles River Editors (August 16, 2014)

Publication Date: August 16, 2014

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00MSYVE6A

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #73,350 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #18 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle Short Reads > 45 minutes (22-32 pages) > History #27 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Ancient Civilizations > Egypt #39 inÂ Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Egypt

## **Customer Reviews**

Review - "The Sea Peoples: The Mysterious Nomads who Ushered in the Iron Age"The Sea Peoples" is a short, little book running to a full 32 pages. It summarizes our knowledge of a mysterious group of tribes who invaded the established Eastern Mediterranean World in the Bronze Age just at the time the Bronze Age was collapsing into a Dark Ages from which the Iron Age arose.

There are many quotes from the Egyptian tablets and a few quotes and archeological references from the Egyptians and the ancient Greeks and other cultures of the Late Bronze Age. This book takes the slant that the Sea People were tribes that arose from Asia Minor and perhaps south east Europe (the Balkans). They may have been Trojans who migrated after being defeated at the destruction of the Troy of that age. Some may have come from Italy, or perhaps through Italy from Asia Minor. The book is well written. It is easily read in under an hour. The book does give the reader an understanding of the lack of knowledge of the Sea Peoples, and mentions the destruction wrought by them and in their time. The language is not pedantic or heavily laden with scientific terms. Unfortunately there is just not enough information in this book to locate in history or enough background given to teach people of the Late Bronze Age and its collapse. I would encourage reading this in conjunction with the book "1176 B.C." The Year Civilization Collapsed." for a fuller appreciation of the Late Bronze Age and the destruction that accompanied the Sea People's invasions.

I learned a lot from this book. I knew of the Phillistines. (Who can read the Bible and not) but I did not realize the sea people had gone so far north and had such an influence on life there. This book still does not explain where these people came from but that is still not known. Yet they had a major effect on many people of the middle east. This book is not an easy read due to the use of place names of old times that may have to be looked up. But if you are familiar with middle eastern geography, this is a good book with a lot to teach you. RAG

This slender volume looks and reads like a term-paper assignment. I suspect it has been sold to students who want an easy solution for an assignment but don't want to actually study the assigned topic. No inaccuracies that I could see, but, in my opinion, the "book" is a total waste of money.

This is a subject that I have only recently taken an interest in. I have always been fascinated by the early civilizations that grew up around the Mediterranean, but I only recently found out that ca. 1400-1100 B.C. some kind of cataclysm befell the entire region, and that most historians believe this was caused by the invasion of the marauding Sea Peoples. This is something I would definitely like to know more about, but the historical record is scarce. It illustrates what a precarious thing civilization is, and that, as Will Durant says, "Civilization must keep its powder dry."

Hmpf. Hoped for more. Guess we don't have the facts yet to support that. It was nice to read the few

we do all collected into one story.

This book explores the changes in the Mediterranean during the late 13th and early 12th centuries BCE. This was an exciting time when well established city states and cultures fell, and the Iron Age arose. The mysterious Sea Peoples were at the center of many of these changes. I have long been fascinated by the Sea Peoples and will probably go on being fascinated by them because they will always remain something of a mystery. This book does an excellent job of giving an over view of what is known and what is guessed (in an educated fashion) about the Sea Peoples. Indeed, they were a collection of tribes and peoples and they came in more than one wave. Sometimes, some of them hired out as mercenaries and occasionally they fought on both sides of the same battle. Their origins are still in dispute, however descendants of some of the tribes that eventually settled have been verified through linguistical and archaeological analysis. The most fascinating thing I learned was that these invaders brought iron weapons and whole new way of fighting with them. These two things revolutionized the whole area over a short amount of time. For instance, some well established civilizations, like Egypt, were still battling with chariots. Chariots take a lot of care and maintenance, not just for the wheeled contraption but also for the horses. Plus they also need a flat plain on which to be effective. The Sea Peoples with their iron age weapons and advanced fighting techniques, put the charioteers to shame. If you haven't read extensively on the Sea Peoples or simply want a refresher, then this is an excellent source. It's a great lunch time break, feeding the mind while you feed your body. The Narration: Jack Chekijian did a great job with this book. He came off as scholarly without being dry or stuffy. Plus there are several difficult to pronounce tribal names and personal names in this book - Jack Chekijian nailed them all.

A very elementary introduction of known facts. The book presented no new information on this culture or people. Read more like a primer edition for a grade school class room. I would not purchase this product again. If any one is 12 or younger and still interested in the subject? Check with your local libraries and borrow it.

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