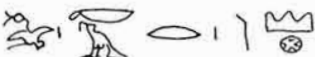



APPENDIX: THE ZEKER


The occurrence of the term , Tkr, in three places in the Report of Wenamun is discussed here separately from the rest of the commentary because of the potential significance of the question and the necessity to pursue it into areas which are not directly related to the report itself. At the same time the following discussion will be limited as much as possible to an elucidation of the designation without entering into the complex problem of the "Sea-Peoples," of which Tkr is considered to be a part. To do justice to the problem in its entirety would unduly burden the present study, which aims at elucidation of a specific text and, therefore, is better kept separate from it.

Despite the stated limitation of the investigation, it is nevertheless possible to attempt clarification of the term Tkr. In two occurrences in the Report of Wenamun (ll. 1,9; 2,63) Tkr is used as a geographical term; a third instance (l. 2,71) is in an incorrectly copied passage and thus has little weight here. Outside the report, Tkr is attested only in the reign of Ramesses III¹ in Medinet Habu and in the Papyrus Harris I and also in the Onomasticon of Amenope, which might be somewhat later.²



1) Medinet Habu I 43,18-25 = Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions* V 34,11-14³: "Said by the mighty fallen ones of  who are in the grasp (*h^c*) of his majesty, in praising this good god, lord of the Two Lands, Userma^catre^c-Miamun: 'Great is your strength, victorious king, mighty sun of Egypt! Greater is your sword than a mountain of metal! Your awe is like that of Ba^cl/Seth! Give us breath that we breathe and the life of one who is in your grip forever!'"

Commentary: The text annotates the representation of five prisoners brought by the king to Amun. They wear the headdress commonly associated with the "Philistines." The people are clearly not to be

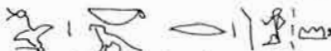
understood as "rulers" of an established form; the qualification by *c3* might best be understood to indicate relative importance. It is important to note that *Zkkr*⁴ is a geographical and not an ethnic term; i.e., it is not a specific designation of people but of people within the country specified. This feature makes it *a priori* improbable that *Zkkr* refers to a migratory people but rather to an established defined political realm. For the request of "giving the breath," cf. Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology of International Relations in Egyptian Texts through Dyn. XVIII*, 1974, 136ff. Special attention has to be given to the comparison of the king's awe with that of Seth, who can be taken as *Ba^cl* in the *interpretatio aegyptiaca*. To invoke the paradigmatical Semitic god would make little sense for any group of people who are not Semites themselves.





2) Medinet Habu II 107,7 = Kitchen, *op. cit.* V 73,9:⁵ "I overthrew (*dh*) the  of the (flat) land, the Peleset, Dayanna, Wešēš and Shekelesh. I destroyed (*htm*) the breath of the Meshwesh . . ."




Commentary: Contained in an inscription of the year 12, it is part of a report of the king to Amun-Re^c and could be understood as a "state of the empire" proclamation. The accompanying scene showing Ramesses III presenting Ma^cat (i.e., Truth) to Amun-Re^c corroborates such an interpretation. The king's military actions are divided into three sections. First is the repulsing (*di.i ht*) of the "Asiatics" (*styw*), which refers to recurrent efforts to stop and reverse migration in the Pharaonic territory. Second in the listing is the action against a variety of people usually identified as the "Sea-People." The particular term *dh* has the connotation "to overthrow, to subdue" but is not the term used for victory in open battle. Rather it appears to convey the consequences of armed action leading to the submission of people under the authority of the Pharaoh. In the listing of the people, following the first mention, the word *t3* "(flat) land" occurs. Edgerton and Wilson, *loc. cit.* render, "I overthrew the Theker, the land of Peleset, the Denyen, the Weshesh and the Shekelesh," which results in an uneven account of four peoples and one country. It would seem a fully justified thesis that the objects of one particular action are of equal nature, i.e., that *dh* "to overthrow, to submit" applies to people in all five instances. Thus, the proposed division of the text leading to *t3 Plst* has to be rejected; support can be drawn from the consideration that the *Plst*-Philistines, as a migrating people, cannot be associated with a specific




country. Consequently, it is necessary to connect *t3* with the preceding mention of the , here clearly indicated as people. In the genitival construction *t3* obviously serves to specify the people named Zeker. As we have found *Tkr* as a geographical term in the preceding instance, its occurrence as an ethnic term in conjunction with *t3* "land" can be considered to reflect a special meaning. It is implicit that there were also Zeker who were not affiliated with *t3* "land," because the specification would not be necessary otherwise. From this, we may conclude that the reference here is to a segment of the Zeker-people, whose *specificum* is the affiliation with the basically geophysical term *t3*. It cannot have its generic meaning "land" in this instance, because such a meaning would not provide a qualification for a people or a group. Thus *t3* has to be understood here in its specific sense of "flat land" in opposition to the mountainous hill country ( *h3st*). Applying this conclusion to the Palestinian area, which constituted the frame in which Ramesses III's action took place, *t3* has to be understood as referring to the coastal plain, the only major expanse of "flat land" there. If Zeker-people could be specified by connecting them with the coastal plain, we could conclude that other Zeker people were living differently and that those Zeker had escaped submission to Ramesses III. The association with four groups traditionally identified with "Sea-People" can only be noted here but is certainly significant. The third type of action the king states consists of the "eliminating of the breath," which applies to a number of people, among whom the reading Meshwesh is the only certain one. The term *htm t3w* apparently denotes the opposite of *di t3w* "giving breath," i.e., the acceptance into vassalage; cf. Lorton, *op. cit.* 136ff.







To summarize the three sections, Ramesses III distinguishes three kinds of political activity: first, the repelling of invaders; second, the submission of people who previously were not under his rule; and third, the quelling of people who had previously been accepted as vassals. As for the Zeker, a specific group among them was subjugated by the king.

3) Medinet Habu I 46,18 = Kitchen, *op. cit.* V 40,2-5:⁷ "The Peleset,  Shekelesh, Dayanu and Weshesh of the (flat) lands had united and they had put their hand on the (flat) lands as far as the Ocean with their hearts confident and trusting 'Our plans will succeed!'"

Commentary: The comments will be restricted here to the above quote, deferring an exhaustive treatment to another occasion because of its significance for the entire question of the "Sea-People." The translation differs basically from previous ones⁸ by dividing the text differently and taking the *hapax legomenon*  as apposition to *t3-mry*. Such a move appears a grammatical necessity because an adverbial nominal clause could not be used in the assumed fashion.⁹ The construction in agreement with attested late Egyptian syntax has to be presumed as *in* + subject + participle; cf. Erman, *Neuägyptische Grammatik*² §701. Consequently *m* has to be recognized as the common spelling for older *in*. A certain difficulty is  following *Wšš*, which can only qualify the aforementioned people, because *dmḏ* has to be taken as predicate in the participial statement. Although all copies agree on the reading *t3w*, it is nevertheless doubtful because it makes little sense.¹⁰ I thus wonder if  does not stand here for  as specification of the *Wšš*, as in Pap. Harris 76,6 *Wšš n p3 ym*, which would produce much better sense. The passage states that people of various ethnic backgrounds had joined together and confiscated (*w3ḥ dṛt ḥr*) the land in the coastal plain. The Zeker are listed as equals to Peleset, Shekelesh, Dayanu, and Weshesh, i.e., according to ethnic backgrounds rather than political affiliation.

4) Medinet Habu I 28,51 = Kitchen, *op. cit.* V 25,4-6:¹¹ "The northern foreigners made a flight with their kin; the Pelesti and the   [], they were uprooted, their land 'devastated,' their herds decimated. They were *thr*-troops on land as well as on Sea."





Commentary:  , despite the spelling, has to be taken here as denoting people rather than the "northern countries," as it stands parallel to Pelesti, who are clearly indicated as people. The ambiguity between "countries" and "people" is common; cf. Wb. III 235,13. *Nwt*, as already pointed out by Burchardt, *Altkanaanäische Fremdworte und Eigennamen* no. 563, is akin to  "to flee," although Edgerton and Wilson, *op. cit.* 30, n. 51 a, Wb. II 225,1, and Helck, *Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien* 463, prefer rendering it "to tremble." The word might have an Egyptian cognate in *nwd* "to move" (Wb. II 225, 2ff.; CT IV 72f.; V 64 c; 392 a; cf. also S. Yeivin, *Kêmi* 6, 1936, 72). The term occurs also Medinet Habu 37,9; 82,13; and 46,21. The first two are comparable to the instance here and are followed by *m ḥ^cw.sn*, while the third differs in spelling and application. *N ḥ^cw.sn*, in contrast to Edgerton and Wilson, I take in its traditional sense "altogether," literally, "with






their limbs," referring to the voluntary nature of the action and also to its comprehensive extent. The reason for the action expressed by *mw* which the Pelesti and Zeker had taken is provided by the causal [*iua*]_w *fdkw t3.sn*  *.sn skm* "they were uprooted, their land had perished, their herds had vanished." For *fdk* "to uproot," literally, "to tear off," cf. Wb. I 583, and S. Yeivin, *Kêmi* 6, 1936, 70. The two other statements concern the livelihood of the afflicted people, without specification of the cause of the affliction, which seems to have been considered as known. *T3*, as above, denotes the "flat land" with the connotation of being arable land in contrast to the untillable mountains. Edgerton and Wilson, *op. cit.* 30, renders it, "they were cut off from their land, coming, their spirit broken" with an emendation of "some preposition" before *t3.sn*; the translation remains unsatisfactory because  would have to have a suffix. Taking *t3.sn* and  *.sn* as parallels brings about a balanced syntactical scheme.  makes no sense and is improbable in its spelling. It appears that only the determinative and ending are written, while the verb itself is missing; *3b* "to stop" is a feasible emendation as a parallel to *skm*.  can hardly mean "spirit," as Edgerton and Wilson assume, because the term is not commonly used in regard to non-Egyptians, nor is it an abstract to the degree that it could be attributed to a people. Again, an emendation appears unescapable and I propose to take  as writing for "small cattle, herd."¹² If we put the points contained in the statement in a causal order, we find that the northerners, among whom two groups, the Pelesti and the Zeker, are singled out, took to flight on their own volition, because their base of existence, agriculture and husbandry, had vanished. There is no mention of any specific cause for this change of circumstance, in particular no mention of a people who could have caused the affliction. At the same time it transpires quite clearly that the Pelesti and Zeker are the victims or objects of the situation rather than its cause.

Those people who had taken to flight after having lost their livelihood had previously been *thr* on land and on sea, i.e., "foreign troops in Pharaonic service"; for *thr*, see Schulman, *Military Rank, Title and Organization in the Egyptian New Kingdom*, MÄS 6, 21ff. According to the specification given, those mercenaries belonged to the land and sea forces. It is noteworthy that Egyptian maritime forces were mainly recruited from inhabitants of the Eastern Mediterranean littoral.¹³

The movement of those people and their eventual repulsion was





obviously directed toward the Nile valley. This was not necessarily a true migratory movement, as is commonly assumed, but according to the Medinet Habu text, was a large-scale mutiny by mercenaries, triggered by the collapse of their economic base due to an unspecified event which afflicted their area of dwelling. That the "uprooted" people headed to Egypt was no doubt inspired by her reputation as the land of plenty, as reflected in Gen. 12:10; 41:54. That the Pharaoh could not condone a large-scale infiltration by mutinying mercenaries into the Nile valley would seem the only logical political reaction and would explain the efforts taken to defend Egypt against the onslaught of the desperados. When seen this way, certain details in the account become understandable which heretofore remained unconnected and expressed in seemingly bombastic language. The punishment of the leaders of the mutiny is an important feature (Medinet Habu 28,54). Even more revealing is the reaction of the people once their move toward Egypt in quest of survival was checked (28,52; 46,23). Their question "Where shall we go?" (28,56; 46,35) makes sense only when understood against the background of their experience, which had forced them from settled conditions into a searching for a place to survive. This conforms with the description that "their bodies were weak" and that "they had no strength" (28,56). Their respect for the Pharaoh prevails, once the mutiny is checked.

5) Medinet Habu VIII 600B: In a display of bound captives a ^{c3} n hrw n    44  "the leader of the enemies of Tkr (country)" is between the "chief of Amos" and "the Sherden of the Sea." The list also includes "the leader of the enemy of Pe[iset]." While Tkr is indicated to refer here to a country, the specification of "enemies" suggests that only a select group of people is meant here.

6) Pap. Harris 76,6-7¹⁴: "I felled those who offended her (Egypt) in her Two Lands: I smote the Dayanu in their   ; the   and the Pelesti were made to ashes; and the Sherden and Weshesh of the Sea were made into non-existing ones, spoiled at one occasion and brought as spoil to Egypt like the sand of the shore."

Commentary: The reference to the offending (*th3*) is of particular importance because of its moral connotation, which could hardly be applied to hostility by an external enemy; for *th3*, cf. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy* 292. The passage reflects different treatment of various groups of people acting against Egypt. Here, too, understanding the move by the Pelesti and the Zeker toward Egypt as that of groups of

desperados who had lost their base of livelihood makes good sense. It is corroborated by the actions claimed by Ramesses III to have taken place after the offenders were subdued: "I organized them in strongholds bound in my name. Numerous were their recruits like 10,000. I supplied them all with clothing and provisions from the treasuries and granaries every year." It would seem an unusual form to follow victory over enemies who had threatened to conquer Egypt, to have them settled and supplied by the Pharaoh,¹⁵ except when those people are evaluated as mercenaries who have been driven to mutiny by the collapse of their economic base.

7) Onomasticon of Amenope 4,6 = Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I 199f., lists  |   |  between Šrḏn and Pelešti, the first determined as people, the second as a country. The nature of the text does not convey any details about Zeker.

Summary: The references to Zeker in Medinet Habu are coherent and allow one to establish a definite picture. In the description of the "conspiracy" (šdt) in Medinet Habu 46,16, the "foreigners" are said to have been "uprooted at one time" (fdk m [sp w^c]). After looting at Amor (Amuru), they moved toward Pharaonic territory (t3-mry) in order "to expell and scatter (distribute) by fighting the flat lands" (46,16), which apparently refers again to the coastal plain. They rallied to defend themselves, but the conspirators nevertheless succeeded (46,18), achieving a redistribution of agricultural land because they had lost their previous base. Those involved are specified as Pelešti, Zeker, Shekelsh, Dayanu, and Weshesh, which conforms with Medinet Habu 107,7 (see above), where, however, the Zeker are qualified by the addition t3 "the (flat) land."

The result is that a specific group of Zeker was affected by the King's action, while others remained untouched. On the other hand, the absence of a similar specification applying to the Pelešti, etc., can be taken as an indication that in their case a specification was unnecessary, because they could not be conflated with others to whom the same designation could be applied. From this observation it can be concluded that Zeker referred to a people with whom there was continuous contact and that these people were serving in Pharaonic military service as mercenaries like the Pelešti. They were obviously different from the latter, except in their occupation. This enables us to postulate that Zeker refers to a people with whom the Pharaoh had contact, in addition to those serving as mercenaries.

The conspicuous and recurrent juxtaposition of Zeker to Pelesti provides the next lead to an understanding. If we are right to identify the Pelesti with the Philistines, as is now generally agreed, and if they are to be affiliated with the Helladic world,¹⁶ it can be presumed that the Zeker were of different ethnic stock than the Pelesti.¹⁷

Two passages in the Report of Wenamun provide the essential clue for the identification of the designation Zeker. According to l. 1,8f., the harbor of Dor belonged to the land of Zeker, from which it can be deduced that the people called Zeker came from a defined area. This area is obviously coastal, which is confirmed by l. 2,63, in which ships inspected by Wenamun are bound for the Zeker country, this implying a littoral location. According to Josh. 11:2; 12:23 Dor belonged to the coalition of Canaanite kings, which allows us to suggest that it belonged to the coastal towns which later made up the confederation of Phoenicia. In other words, the thesis can be promulgated that Zeker denoted people from or in an area later called Phoenicia. The term appears in the time of Ramesses III and is not found after Wenamun; thus it is a temporarily restricted term.

If this thesis is correct, Zeker should denote Semites and the term itself should be Semitic. I take it as the self-designation of the people of the Phoenician coast and equate it with 𐤆𐤊𐤌 "man, male." As a designation of people it follows a recurrent pattern in which a people considers itself as "men" *per se*. The above explanation (see note *ac*) of Zeker-ba^cl as "man of Ba^cl" supports this thesis.

Wenamun in his journey touches on Zeker territory only at Dor. Its ruler is denoted as a local independent prince, and it is not specified if or how he was related to the Pharaonic empire. He is certainly friendly and helpful to his Egyptian visitor despite Wenamun's predicament resulting from the theft of his valuables. What is conveyed of the political situation indicates a stabilization of conditions following the turmoil under Ramesses III, the causes of which, however, would require a larger frame for investigation than the present one. By the time of Wenamun's journey, i.e., around 1072 B.C., the situation along the Palestinian coast was apparently enjoying solidarity, which made a structured international exchange workable. There is no trace in the Report of Wenamun of any form of turmoil left by a large-scale invasion, nor is there any trace of hostile feelings in this area toward the Pharaoh. The Phoenician coastal towns appear to have been under the authority of

local Semitic rulers whose interconnection is not specified in detail. Zeker as a geographical term refers to the area dominated by the merchant cities and should be taken as a self-designation of what later became denoted as Phoenicia. In the inscriptions of Ramesses III Zeker applies to mercenaries in the Pharaonic service similar to the Pelesti, i.e., the Philistines. Like them, Zeker people were involved in a widespread mutiny which Ramesses III succeeded in quelling.