

The Maryannu in the Western Desert in the Ramesside Period

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During the New Kingdom of Egypt, ancient military writings constantly described the Sea Peoples as the enemies of the Egyptian army, whereas they praised the glorious victory of the Egyptian army who held the Sea Peoples into captivity. Subsequently, the Asian enemies of Egypt, famously known as Sea Peoples, had been exposed to heavy losses due to the fall of their princes, leaders and prominent warriors into captivity during their sea battles with the Egyptian army. Throughout that era, the Egyptian military had fully expanded their power in the entire ancient Near East, which had been demonstrated in military writings of the Eighteenth Dynasty; the annals of King Thutmose III, one of the greatest of Egypt's warrior pharaohs, in which he depicted his first and largest military campaigns in Megiddo; and the military texts of his successor King Amenhotep II. Historians and researchers have unanimously agreed on the excellence of Sea Peoples—the wave of seafaring raiders and settlers of Indo-European origins—in the usage of chariots in their military campaigns, who had eventually formed a noble class in the Canaanite cities during the sixteenth century BCE, namely the Late Bronze Age.

This research paper tackles an important historical issue related to the emergence of the Sea Peoples as the enemies of Egypt during the New Kingdom, and most specifically during the Libyan war that took place in the Western Desert throughout the fifth year of the reign of King Merneptah, the fourth ruler of the Nineteenth Dynasty of Ancient Egypt (ca. 1207 BCE). One of the most important ancient Egyptian papyri, famously known as

Papyrus Anastasi II, depicted the fierce battle between King Merneptah's army against the Libyans and Sea Peoples, during which the Sea Peoples had been described as the enemies of Egypt who took part in this war. This raises the issue of their sole presence—for the first and last time in their history—as the enemies of Egypt in the Western Desert, contrary to their battles in Syria and Palestine, as cited in ancient Egyptian references throughout the New Kingdom of Egypt. Moreover, based on the textual evidences discovered in Papyrus Anastasi II, the research paper presents the reasons behind the sole presence of the Sea Peoples in the Western Desert during that time.