

RAMSES THE GREAT, THE PEACEMAKER

Mădălina STRECHIE

University of Craiova, Romania
madalina.strechie@edu.ucv.ro

Abstract: *Ramses the Great was not only the greatest Egyptian pharaoh and the longest in office, but also the greatest diplomat of the ancient world. His achievements as a peacemaker were equaled only by the superpower of the ancient world, Rome, through its Pax Romana, but Rome imposed this concept as a policy of a world empire, while Ramses II, rightly nicknamed the Great single-handedly effected an Egyptian peace, more valuable than any peace in the world, which became the prototype of all peace treaties after his reign. Every political leader of Antiquity has at least one military masterpiece, the ancient leaders being the supreme leaders of the army, but Ramses is the only one who has a masterpiece of peace. The genius of Ramses the Great was fully demonstrated by the “sublime treaty”, truly a gift of the gods, mediated by the Son of the Sun, the pharaoh Ramses. He made peace with the most bitter enemies, the Hittites, also called by the Egyptians, Hyksos. The Egyptian Son of the Sun made peace with his civilization built for peace with a civilization built for war, the Hittite (Indo-European, a deeply warlike one, a general characteristic of all Indo-European civilizations). Ramses the Great proved that he is a god, even though this peace treaty, the world’s first attested diplomatic treaty, concluded at Kadesh with the Hittites, proving that peace is as difficult as war. But unlike war, peace has the merit of lasting much longer and, paradoxically, gives meaning to war. These two antagonistic principles, war and peace, were balanced for the first time, in a perfect way, by the Son of the Sun, Ramses the Great.*

Keywords: military alliance, elite units, strategy, treaty, the division of the world.

1. Introduction

At the dawn of the ancient world, the center of power was contested between the Ancient East and the Indo-European civilizations, which began their warlike march on the world. This is what happens with the expansion of the Hittites, who wanted to extend their domination from Asia Minor to the Middle East and even to other continents such as Africa. Thus begins a very tough conflict with Egypt, the fight for territories being fierce. These are the conditions at the beginning of Ramses II’s reign, from the 19th dynasty of

the New Empire, having the longest reign (1295-1229) [1] among monarchs of all time. The young monarch had to face numerous attacks from the Hyksos (Hittites), a civilization built for war as it was his primary occupation, unlike Egypt which was a civilization built for the Nile basin economy. Repeated confrontations were disadvantageous for both sides, especially for the Egyptians, who did not have all the fighting technologies of their Hittite opponents, such as the horse, unknown to the Egyptians until the Hittites came [2].

So these were the conditions that faced Ramses II when he came to the throne of Egypt, frequently and devastatingly attacked by the Hittites, through effective raids that destabilized Egypt, who did not have an army equal to his opponents.

Therefore, the first measure taken by Ramses, to prepare for peace, was first to prepare for war properly, by creating an Egyptian army, to leave the old model, of the Egyptian army organized for peaceful, defensive conditions, in an army prepared for war, offensive, aggressive and to fight on an equal footing with the adversaries.

2. The new army of Ramses the Great and its organization

2.1. Military reform

The military of the time of Ramses II will become professionals, leaving the logic of guard troops of Egypt, entering the logic of intervention troops and offensive response, especially since they faced many times the peoples of the sea, as they were also called the Hyksos or Hittites. Mercenary troops appear, organized by Ramses II, and the Egyptian police forces will acquire war duties [3].

The name of Ramses is composed of the name of the supreme god of Egypt, namely the Sun God, with two meanings being circulated by specialized historians (in the issue of Ancient Egypt) precisely: 1. Ramses=Ra brought him into the world [4] and 2. Ramses=The equal of the Sun God [5]. We agree with both meanings of the quoted scholar, with surely Ramses II by his achievements was truly the son of the Sun God, Ra, becoming truly the Sun of Egypt by his deeds, the equal of the god who gave him his name.

To impose a peace, Ramses II had to have an army prepared with which to impose this peace, therefore the first military measure was that of reorganizing and enlarging the army. He established a new military division, called the IV division of the god Seth, the god of war, but not only among

the Egyptians, with an effective of 5000 people [6]. More after his military reform Ramses II, transformed the army into a social class that was granted land directly by the pharaoh, recruitment was general, taking place in every Egyptian administrative unit (*noma*), many mercenaries being recruited [7]. Also, Ramses II took over the battle chariot from the Hittites [8], adapting it to the terrain of Egypt, training himself in the battle from the chariot (many representations of the great pharaoh are from the battle chariot as archer). The Egyptian army after the reform of Ramses becomes a professional army, especially because he organizes a general staff, called a war council, led by the pharaoh as a great general and also establishes the position of “royal commissioners from foreign countries” [9], organizing what we would call today the secret or intelligence service. The reason was that Ramses II did not exclude the character of the Egyptian army until its reform, namely that of the police that maintained order and discipline especially within economic exchanges (the Egyptian military being at the same time engineers of grandiose constructions, as well as true economic agents-s.n.), but also that of spies (Egyptian soldiers knew many foreign languages, especially those with which Egypt had economic ties – our consideration), which brought in the country, led by the brilliant pharaoh, information, goods and technologies from the countries with which they had economic relations [10]. The command of the army was divided into two echelons, the first was the supreme command, being entrusted to the pharaoh, who was also the great general and the second echelon was more of execution and recruitment of troops, having the role of deputy commander being exercised by the vizier [11] (equivalent to the position of prime minister of Egypt – our consideration). In the general staff organized by the reform of Ramses II, the

function of personal (royal) guard was provided as well as the commanders of the Egyptian fleet, directly subordinated to the pharaoh, who was in fact the commander of the general staff of the Egyptian army. As a distinguishing sign, the commanders of the Egyptian army had as their insignia of command (equivalent to the military rank we can say – our consideration) the cane [12]. The pharaoh, as head of the army staff, offered privileges to the military, such as gold, weapons, loot from weapons, land or other benefits [13].

2.2. The structure of the army of Ramses II

Ramses the Great kept the main weapons of the Egyptian army, which were the navy (river especially on the Nile) and the lightly armed infantry (mainly archers), to which he added a new weapon, following the Hittite model, the cavalry with battle chariots. The cavalry becomes the elite weapon, being the pharaoh's favorite, organized in squadrons of 25 chariots led by a "chief of the chariots" [14]. (Most likely the chief of the cavalry, above the chiefs of the chariots was the pharaoh himself. Many battle scenes depict Ramses only in the chariot of battle, never in a ship or fighting on foot – our consideration).

The infantry is kept but reorganized and enlarged with a new division, formed by the military reform, namely Seth's division, thus ending up consisting of four divisions:

a. Division of Amon

b. Division of Ra

c. Division of Ptah

d. Division of Seth [15].

These four infantry divisions had 200-man company subdivisions, each company also divided into four sections of 50 men each [16].

The navy was named "the king's ships" and had its headquarters in the city of Memphis. It was made up of large sailing ships, but also a row of oarsmen. The sailors were recruited exclusively from the Nile Delta and the commanders of the

Egyptian fleet were with the pharaoh in any military operation, with his guard as mentioned above.

If we were to establish the specifics of each infantry division during the time of Ramses the Great, we must decipher the attributions of the gods who patronized them. After an analysis of these gods, we can deduce that:

a. Division of Amon, was a military division patronized by a very important god of Egypt, after Ra, the patron of Heaven could represent the pharaoh [17]. Amon was considered to be the "prince of justice" [18]. This ancient military division, found by Ramses the Great and preserved by him, was probably an imperial guard, or in other words an elite echelon, which was in the immediate vicinity of the pharaoh, having as its purpose mainly the protection of the pharaoh. Amon was the god of the air and the Sky, and the pharaoh was embodied as Horus, the one who floated in the Sky. He also probably had the function of military police, if we consider that Amon also had legal powers.

b. Division of Ra, was also an old division of Egypt, probably the main infantry corps of Egypt, Ra being the main deity of the Sun and also the father of pharaoh Ramses II. Therefore, it represented the core of the Egyptian army, in which most of the Egyptian soldiers served.

c. Division of Ptah, division of Egypt until Ramses II, kept by him because Ptah was a polyvalent god, he was the anthropomorphic god of crafts [19], but he was also considered the protective god of monarchy, being represented by a bull most of the time [20]. Apparently it was a division of builders, or what today we would call a genius unit, because the Egyptian army, as I said before, was active in terms of construction. During the time of Ramses II, nicknamed the Great, there were numerous monumental construction works, which are still preserved today, so certainly the strength and discipline of the Egyptian army did not lack from these works. Also,

the entire Egyptian army needed weapons, most likely this division provided weapons crafts, just like its divine patron.

d. Division of Seth, a division formed by Ramses II, the one who thus increased the army. Seth was one of the sons of Ra, considered the god of the desert, of war and the prince of darkness [21], but also a god of chaotic forces, embodied especially as a compound animal, which inspired fear and hostility [22]. We consider that this division was one of special forces, formed by Ramses II in response to the superior military strength of the Hittites he was facing. If we consider the attributions of the patron god of the desert, the soldiers of the division were specialized in the confrontations in the desert, which required special training and unusual resistance. Also, the fact that Seth was the god of war and triggered chaos, the soldiers of this division were the best prepared in all aspects and could organize commando expeditions among the enemy with the aim of producing chaos. Through this division, Ramses II thoroughly prepared for the confrontation with the Hittites, who acted in Egypt as permanent harassing troops and caused great losses, especially economic, but also in human lives.

2.3. Weapons

The main armament of the Egyptians was light, consisting of bows (both for infantrymen and for knights – our consideration), being the essential weapon, to which is added the lance with a metal tip, the curved sword, the dagger, the axe, the mace, the sling and the chariot as offensive weapons [23], to which were added the defensive weapons such as: the armor, the helmet and the shield [24]. About the military of the fleet we do not have detailed information about their weapons, but most likely they were the same or similar to the weapons of the other Egyptian military structures.

As the defensive weapon innovated during the time of Ramses the Great is the thin plate, the most probably of leather, called

siryon [25].

Through his military reform and by reorganizing and supporting the army, Ramses II initiated more than a country project, he initiated a world project. To deal with a civilization built for war that benefited from resources like iron (for quality weapons), Egypt, a civilization of peace, was prepared by the brilliant Ramses II to deal with this almost unbeatable adversary, precisely by transforming an army of peace, for one trained for war, considered by the Egyptians as a “hunt”. Precisely in this “hunt” wanted Ramses to be victorious through a peace, his peace, of the Sun of Egypt, which could not work in the logic of war, too long, for Egypt was built for peace.

The wars between the Egyptians and the Hittites were long and with great losses on both sides, (with all the efforts of Ramses to create an army equal to of the Hittites-s.n.), that is why the peace between the two combatants was advantageous to both sides, especially because through the alliance occasioned by this peace, they became the masters of the region and its arbitrators [26]. The most important reform of Ramses II nicknamed the Great was that of foreign policy, the impressive pharaoh being the founder of international relations, being the first and most important diplomat of the world, the one who made peace, much better than war, actually winning a long, hard and devastating war with an extraordinary peace.

3. “The Sublime Treaty” (Peace of Ramses the Great)

Ramses the Great fought numerous battles with the Hittites, both on the continent of Africa, but also in Asia, he also had many confrontations with the vassals of Egypt, in an attempt to eliminate the revolts. The fiercest battle with the Hittites was the one at Kadesh, where from a military point of view no one clearly won, it was more like a draw, the fates of victory being sometimes with Egypt, and sometimes with the

Hittites. As this Egyptian-Hittite conflict was devastating in the long term, Ramses proposed peace, through a peace and alliance treaty between the Egyptians and the Hittites, establishing the border between Egypt and the Hittite Kingdom on the Oronte River [27].

The treaty was concluded on December 21, 1275, was recorded on a silver tablet and he sealed peace, but also an alliance between Egypt, represented by him, the great Ramses, and the Hittites represented by their king. This treaty of peace and political alliance was guaranteed by the gods of both states (that's why it was called "sublime" - our consideration) and was written in both languages (Egyptian and Hittite). According to the sublime treaty, known as the Kadesh treaty, the most important provisions were the following:

1. its observance by the descendants of the two signatories;
2. the spheres of influence were divided between the two signatories and the border between the two powers was drawn (the Oronte river as I mentioned before-s.n.);
3. Kadesh remained with the Hittites, but the Phoenician ports remained with Egypt;
4. everyone helped each other militarily if attacked by a third party;
5. the treaty was publicly displayed in both countries, on several important temples, given the fact that the gods were guarantors of that treaty;
6. based on the peace treaty, the Egyptian- Hittite collaboration was in all sectors, especially in the economic, military, political etc.
7. trade was at its highest level between Egypt and the Hittite Kingdom, Egypt offering gold instead of iron [28].
8. the treaty is strengthened by the marriage of Ramses the Great with the princess of the Hittites (the daughter of his ally, the king of the Hittites – our consideration) [29]. Ramses the Great created his own aura of the Sun of Egypt and even of the whole world, being the

only one until then, but for a long time after that, who conquered the enemies in this unique way, through peace, being rightly considered as such in his era in laudatory terms, which emphasized his uniqueness and genius: "No one, ever, did what he did against foreigners" [30].

The Sublime Treaty is considered the oldest alliance and mutual aid treaty in the world, from the point of view of international law [31], practically this treaty opens a new (foreign) policy for the whole world.

That is why it is considered not only as a peace treaty, but more of a foreign policy treaty, a diplomatic treaty concluded between Ramses the Great, the sovereign of Egypt, and the Hittite king Hattusil III, that Egypt had a specialized chancellery for relations with other nations. From a legal point of view, the sublime treaty includes:

- a. the introduction
- b. religious formulas
- c. peace alliance
- d. friendship relationships [32]. So it is a very complex peace treaty, designed to ensure perpetual peace, at least during the reign of the Sun of Egypt it worked very well, perfectly, being even nowadays a model for international treaties.

For the beauty of the passages and their meaning, we reproduce two of the passages that have us impressed the most, passages that help us for the argumentation of the present study, namely that for Ramses, the titanic pharaoh, the most valuable masterpiece of his reign was not a battle, but the peace that put an end to a long and exhausting war:

Passage I, about peace: *"May wonderful peace and brotherhood reign among children of the great king of the Hittites and the children of the children of Ramses, may they live always, in all times, in peace and brotherhood."*... [33].

Passage II, on the Egyptian-Hittite military alliance: *"If any enemy shall march against the lands of Ramses, then let Ramses say to the great king of the Hittites -join me with all your might against him -"* [34].

The miracle of Ramses' peace was that he transformed the fiercest enemies into the most faithful allies, and the validity of this alliance was for the entire dynasty of both, not only during the lifetime if the two signatories.

4. Conclusions

Ramses the Great was truly a peacemaker, having prepared intensively for war. Through military reform, the Sun of Egypt fundamentally transformed the Egyptian army, enlarging it and endowing it with new weapons, taken from the enemy, precisely in order to be able to obtain an advantageous peace in the first place for Egypt, an essentially pacifist civilization. Weighing the advantages of war and peace Ramses the Great concluded that peace is more advantageous both militarily and economically, therefore proposed peace to his Hittite opponent. The two supreme commanders of their armies were both enlightened minds since both accepted the

terms of peace. The Hittite king has the same merits as Ramses, being as brilliant as his Egyptian counterpart, because he accepted the peace of a war that he could win with great losses, that's right, putting the welfare and lives of his subjects first, the Hittites, trained for war, less for peace. Each leader who signed the sublime treaty was truly a god for his civilization, because he showed it another way to resolve military conflicts, namely alliances. Both Ramses the Great and Hattusil III lost a fierce enemy, but gained an ally and made peace, far more lasting than the war between them, ensuring a division of their world with advantages for each. The sun illuminated not only Egypt and the Hittite Kingdom but the whole world, therefore its initiator deserves all consideration of the whole world.

Acknowledgements

We dedicate this study to all Romanian peacemakers of all times.

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