

Battle of Canaanite Megiddo

Posted by Rogerio De Paula on “PHOENICIA: The history & the legacy of the Phoenicians” facebook page; added in underlined is information from Wikipedia, and in italic from Dr. Marc Achkar:

Megiddo, the Site of the First Documented Battle in History:

Located in the Levant region, the city of Megiddo boasts a rich history dating back to the sixth millennium BCE when it was inhabited by nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples. From the late third millennium BCE, an urban settlement began to take shape, gradually evolving into the prosperous city of Megiddo. Its strategic position at the crossroads of major trade routes between Egypt and Mesopotamia made Megiddo a center of commerce and political disputes.

Megiddo was inhabited by Canaanites. These peoples played a crucial role in the cultural and economic development of the Levant, contributing to the rise of city-states like Megiddo.

Megiddo entered history as the site of the first documented battle known to humanity. This confrontation occurred in 1457 BCE,* during the reign of Thutmose III of Egypt, who led his forces against a coalition of Canaanite city-states, mainly including Megiddo and Kadesh (near present - day Homs / Emessa), with Hurrian back-up. The account of the battle was recorded in hieroglyphs at the Temple of Amun in Karnak, Thebes (now Luxor), by the military scribe Tjaneni, detailing military tactics and the strategic importance of the city.

* The ancient Egyptian account gives the date of the battle as the 21st day of the first month of the third season, of Year 23 of the reign of Thutmose III. It has been claimed that this was April 16, 1457 BC, according to the Middle Chronology, although other publications place the battle in 1482 BC or 1479 BC.

It is the first battle to have been recorded in what is accepted as relatively reliable detail. Megiddo is also the first recorded use of the composite bow and the first body count (4000 Egyptians killed and 1000 wounded, as well as 8300 killed and 3400 captured from the Canaanites' / Hurrians' side).

The city was besieged for seven months and the King of Kadesh escaped. Thutmose built a moat and a wooden palisade, eventually forcing its occupants to surrender. At Karnak it is recorded that the victorious army took home 340 prisoners, 2,041 mares, 191 foals, six stallions, 924 chariots, 200 suits of armor, 502 bows, 1,929 cattle, 22,500 sheep, and the royal armor, chariot and tent-poles of the King of Megiddo. The city and citizens were spared. A number of other cities in the Jezreel Valley were conquered and Egyptian authority in the area was restored.

Thutmose III required from the defeated kings that they each send a son to the Egyptian court. There, they received an Egyptian education. When they returned to their homelands, they governed with Egyptian sympathies.

Archaeological excavations at Megiddo have uncovered numerous artifacts that illustrate its cultural and religious significance. One of the most remarkable finds is a cherub (see below) carved from ivory, dating back to the 12th century BCE. This artifact reflects the artistic and spiritual influence of the peoples who inhabited the region, highlighting the shared religious symbolism of various Levantine cultures.

The historical and archaeological wealth of Megiddo stands as an impressive testament to ancient civilizations and their complex interactions.

One unanticipated result came in the form of the word Armageddon, which took its root from Megiddo's name. "Armageddon" (Har Megiddo in Canaanite and later in Hebrew) is the prophesied location of a gathering of armies for a battle during the end times, which is variously interpreted as either a literal or a symbolic location. The term is also used in a generic sense to refer to any end-of-the-world scenario. In Islamic theology, Armageddon is also mentioned in Hadith as the Greatest Armageddon or Al-Malhama Al-Kubra (the great battle).



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