

~AXIS LORDS (209)

- The **Hebrew** word *sera-nim'* appears to be a Philistine loanword.
- From the branch of the Nile that is in front of Egypt and up to the border of Ekron to the north, it used to be reckoned as belonging to the Canaanites, five **axis lords** of the Philistines, the Gazites and the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites and the Ekronites, and the Avvim. (**Joshua 13:3**)
- It has the same consonants as the **Hebrew** word for axles at;
- And there were four wheels of copper to each carriage, with **axles** of copper, and its four corner pieces were supports for them. Beneath the basin were the supports, cast with wreaths across from each. (**1 Kings 7:30**)
- It is a title that is applied to the **five lords** ruling the Philistine cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, apparently because of their being in a **coalition or alliance**. The Philistines, according to [**Aos 9:7**], came to the coast of Canaan from Crete, near the Aegean Sea, so it is thought by some that this is an **Aegean** word.
- The **axis lords** dominated Philistia as rulers of individual city-states and as a council of coequals with regard to matters of mutual interest. Achish is called king of Gath.
- Then David rose up and continued running away on account of Saul on that day, and at length came to **Achish the king of Gath**. (**1 Samuel 21:10**)
- So David rose up and he and six hundred men that were with him passed over to **Achish the son of Maach**, the king of Gath. (**1 Samuel 27:2**)
- Apparently he was not a king in the usual sense but, rather, was a prince. Consequently the title of prince **Hebrew**, *sar* is occasionally applied to these rulers.
- And the princes of the Philistines would go out, and it would happen that as often as they went out David acted most prudently of all the servants of Saul, and his name came to be

very precious. (1 Samuel 18:30)

- And the **axis lords** of the Philistines were passing along by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were passing along afterward with Achish. (1 Samuel 29:2)
- And the princes of the Philistines began to say; What do these Hebrews mean? At this Achish said to the princes of the Philistines; Is this not David the servant of Saul king of Israel, who happened to be with me here a year or two, and I have not found in him a single thing from the day of his deserting to me until this day? (1 Samuel 29:3)
- And the princes of the Philistines became indignant at him, and the princes of the Philistines went on to say to him; Make the man go back, and let him go back to his place where you assigned him, and do not let him go down with us into the battle, that he may not become a resister of us in the battle. And with what should this person put himself in favor with his lord? Is it not with the heads of those our men? (1 Samuel 29:4)
- These officials are frequently found cooperating in some cause. They were called together and, in turn, consulted their priests and diviners as to what to do with the captured ark of the covenant after its presence had brought a severe plague of piles, the **axis lords** themselves being affected.
- And the princes of the Philistines became indignant at him, and the princes of the Philistines went on to say to him; Make the man go back, and let him go back to his place where you assigned him, and do not let him go down with us into the battle, that he may not become a resister of us in the battle. And with what should this person put himself in favor with his lord? Is it not with the heads of those our men? (1 Samuel 29:4)
- They collaborated when their armies would go up against Israel.
- And the Philistines came to hear that the sons of Israel had collected themselves together at Mizpah, and the **axis lords** of the Philistines got on their way up against Israel. When the sons of Israel heard of it, they began to be afraid on account of the Philistines. (1 Samuel 7:7)

- In the case of Samson we see them working together to overcome him.
- And the **axis lords** of the Philistines proceeded to come up to her and to say to her; Fool him and see in what his great power is and with what we can prevail over him and with what we are certain to tie him so as to master him, and we, for our part, shall give you each one thousand one hundred silver pieces. (**Judges 16:5**)
- They all gathered at the house of the god Dagon at Gaza to celebrate their capture of Samson, at which time the **five axis lords** then in power were killed.
- So the Philistines grabbed hold of him and bored his eyes out and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with two fetters of copper, and he came to be a grinder in the prison house. (**Judges 16:21**)
- Meanwhile the hair of his head started to grow luxuriantly as soon as he had been shaved. (**Judges 16:22**)
- As for the **Philistine axis lords**, they gathered together to sacrifice a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and for rejoicing, and they kept saying; Our god has given into our hand Samson our enemy! (**Judges 16:23**)
- When the people got to see him, they at once gave way to praising their god, because, said they, our god has given into our hand our enemy and the devastator of our land and the one who multiplied our slain. (**Judges 16:24**)
- And it came about that because their heart was merry, they began to say; Call Samson that he may offer us some amusement. So they called Samson out of the prison house that he might make sport before them, and they proceeded to stand him between the pillars. (**Judges 16:25**)
- Then Samson said to the boy that was holding him by his hand: Do permit me to feel the pillars upon which the house is firmly established and let me lean against them. (**Judges 16:26**)
- Incidentally, the house was full of men and women and all the **Philistine axis lords** were there, and upon the roof there were

- about three thousand men and women who were looking on while Samson offered some amusement. (**Judges 16:27**)
- Samson now called to Yehowah and said; Sovereign Lord Yehowah, remember me, please, and strengthen me, please, just this once, O you the true God, and let me avenge myself upon the Philistines with vengeance for one of my two eyes. (**Judges 16:28**)
 - With that Samson braced himself against the two middle pillars upon which the house was firmly established, and got a grasp on them, one with his right and the other with his left hand. (**Judges 16:29**)
 - And Samson proceeded to say; Let my soul die with the Philistines. Then he bent himself with power, and the house went falling upon the **axis lords** and upon all the people that were in it, so that the dead that he put to death in his own death came to be more than those he had put to death during his lifetime. (**Judges 16:30**)
 - However, the independent city-states under them never united to form one kingdom subject to one ruler. Instead, the five chief cities with their dependent towns functioned somewhat like a confederacy, an **axis**. When making decisions that affected them all, the **axis lords** did what was agreed upon by the majority.
 - This is seen in the decision to reject David and his men from the Philistine army, although Achish, the **axis lord of Gath**, with whom David had dwelt as a refugee from King Saul, was in favor of David's force being accepted to fight with them against Saul.
 - And the **axis lords of the Philistines** were passing along by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were passing along afterward with Achish. (**1 Samuel 29:2**)
 - Consequently Achish called David and said to him; As Yehowah is living, you are upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the camp has been good in my eyes, for I have not found badness in you from the day of your coming to me until this day. But in the eyes of the **axis lords** you are not good. (**1 Samuel 29:6**)
 - And now return and go in peace, that you may not do anything

bad in the eyes of the **axis lords** of the Philistines. (**1 Samuel 29:7**)

- At this Achish answered and said to David; I well know that you have been good in my own eyes, like an angel of God. Only it is the **princes of the Philistines** that have said; Let him not go up with us into the battle. (**1 Samuel 29:9**)
- Throughout Israel's history, especially until they were subdued by David, they were the determined enemies of Yehowah's people and entered many times into alliance with other nations against Israel, often having Israel under oppressive domination. David reduced their power so that they were no longer a major threat. After David's time, the term **axis lords** is no longer found, but the term **king** is applied to their rulers.
- And all the mixed company, and all the **kings** of the land of Uz, and all the **kings** of the land of the Philistines and Ashkelon and Gaza and Ekron and the remnant of Ashdod. (**Jeremiah 25:20**)
- Ashkelon will see and get afraid, and as for Gaza, she will also feel very severe pains. Ekron also, because her looked-for hope will have to experience shame. And a **king** will certainly perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon herself will not be inhabited. (**Zechariah 9:5**)

See Also PHILISTIA

See Also PHILISTINES