ABSTRACTS

Monday, 3 November 2014

The Troubled Waters of Sea Peoples Research – A Retrospective Presentation
Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy (OREA, Vienna, Austria)

During the earlier decades of the 20th century, the raids of the Sea Peoples against Egypt – already well known since the 19th century from Egyptian sources such as the descriptions and reliefs in the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu – were incorporated into the discussion(s) dealing with the causes of the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization. Various theories based on this combination led to surging debates. In particular, a fierce dispute arose when invasions originating from regions outside the Aegean were brought up; some of them even were suspected of political implications. This may have been one of the reasons why from the 1960ies until the 1990ies any theory considering migrations and invasions in connection with the great upheavals of the Eastern Mediterranean around 1200 BC was banished and avoided. Owing to the finds from the Austrian excavations at Aigeira in western Achaea, the speaker herself got into these stormy waters.

In recent years new evidence has turned up which suggests that some Sea People groups may, indeed, have originated from outside the Aegean. Therefore a retrospective on the Sea Peoples research of the 20th century by someone who was then involved may be useful.

The Appearance, Formation and Transformation of Philistine Culture: New Perspectives and New Finds
Aren Maeir (Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel)

The results of the excavation from the the last decade or so in Philistia and beyond have brought to light whole new sets of data and interpretive perspectives. This has caused major changes in the understanding of the character and underlying mechanisms of the appearance, formation and transformation of the Philistine culture - and its relationship to other contemporary cultures and peoples. While the earlier paradigms on the Philistines are not to be ignored, they do require substantial revision in light of these more recent finds and developments in research - something that has still not percolated into all summaries of the Philistines and their culture appearing in some of the recent research. In this paper, I intend to focus on some of these new data and interpretative perspectives and demonstrate how our current understanding of the Philistines has changed - and what are the difficulties with some of the older understandings and paradigms. This is seen, for example in our understanding of the origins of the Philistines, in how and under what influences their culture appeared, what are the relationships with the Canaanite populations in Philistia, how and when the Philistine culture was influenced by and influenced on other Levantine cultures, and what were the reasons for the ongoing changes of the Philistine culture during the Iron Age.
The Sea Peoples and the Collapse of Mycenaean Palatial Rule
Helène Whittaker (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

In this paper I will assess the evidence for the possible involvement of the Sea Peoples in the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces and the consequent collapse of palatial power across the Greek mainland. In the first part of the paper I will discuss the chronology and the nature of the destructions at each of the palaces separately. In the second part of the paper, I will look at the aftermath of the destructions and suggest that the evidence for cultural and social continuity at the sites that were resettled soon after the collapse of palatial administration might be interpreted as supporting the Sea Peoples hypothesis.

The Destruction of Hala Sultan Tekke, Cyprus, in the 12th Century BCE
Peter Fischer (Austrian Academy of Sciences / University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

Renewed excavations at Hala Sultan Tekke, extending over five field campaigns (2010–2014) under the direction of the author from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, exposed three new city quarters with three phases of occupation. Excavations took place near the ancient harbour, i.e. close to today's Salt Lake, in the north-western part of this large city, the total extent of which is still not known but which seems to have exceeded 25 hectares.

According to a number of radiocarbon dates the most recent phase, which reveals evidence of severe destruction, should be placed in the 12th century BCE. Domestic and industrial structures, where copper and textiles were produced, were destroyed and the once flourishing city was abandoned and never reoccupied. The present paper will discuss the possible reasons for the destruction of Hala Sultan Tekke, the abrupt abandonment of the city and the probable fate of its population.

Cyprus during the "Crisis Years": Examining the Case of the Paphos Region
Artemis Georgiou (University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus)

The Mediterranean-wide "crisis" of the 12th century BC, which saw the deterioration or the dissolution of the land-based empires, did not have a uniform impact on Cyprus. Due to the absence of a strong central state, the horizon of the "Crisis Years" on the island comprises regional settlement histories of abandonments, destructions, continuities or unprecedented flourishing.

My contribution aims to bring to the fore the particular case of the Paphos region. During the critical passage to the 12th century BCE, the polity of Paphos witnessed an impressive economic and political ascendancy, displayed primarily by its ability to monumentalize its urban cult centre. The contribution will further address issues pertaining to the establishment of a short-lived settlement at Maa-Palaeokastro, and its relation to the overall transformations of the settlement pattern within the Paphos hydrological zone. Additionally, this study aims to elucidate the transformation of Cyprus’ material culture, especially as regards to the establishment of wheelmade pottery that largely follows Aegean types. Finally, using a holistic, contextual and longue durée approach, I will attempt to examine whether material remains allow us to identify migration phenomena.

The Sea Peoples Phenomenon in Cilicia
Gunnar Lehmann (Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel)

The paper discusses the Sea Peoples phenomenon in Cilicia. New archaeological data is presented from the excavations at Kinet Höyük which were directed by Marie-Henriete Gates and are currently prepared for publication. The finds from Kinet Höyük are discussed against the background of previous and contemporary research in Cilicia and northern Syria. The evidence demonstrates that the northern Levant played a key role in connection with migrations and local responses in the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age.
The Archaeological Ramifications of Hawkins’ Philistines in Aleppo

Diederik Meijer (University of Leiden, Netherlands)

Although the "pots-peoples" idea has long been abandoned by archaeologists, the Philistines still seem to provide a case for many to throw caution to the wind and trace them archaeologically. Plšt in Aleppo? If textual material seems to suggest this, how do we look at archaeological finds in the region to try and corroborate or dismiss such an idea? This discussion is partly methodological, partly hands-on archaeology.

Sea Peoples in Central and Northern Levant

Francisco Núñez (Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain)

The analysis of the impact of the Sea Peoples in the Levant faces a basic problem: an unbalanced distribution of written and archaeological sources of information. The overwhelming amount of information produced in the Southern Levant is not matched by the rest of the coastal strip. This situation undoubtedly conditions how the evidence from the Central and Northern parts has been read and interpreted.

The starting point was similar to the entire Levant: a series of city-states under the hegemony of foreign powers. Nevertheless, the crisis of the Palace System apparently brought about diverse situations in different geographic areas. Regarding the Northern part of the coastal strip, the situation seems to have to some extent similar to that already observed in the south; namely, the destruction and/or abandonment of most urban centers as well as the presence of active foreign peoples. However, the crisis did not produce the same effect among the cities of the central part of the Levant. No destructions or abandonments have been recorded so far, with the exception, maybe, of Kamid el-Loz. Besides, the influence of the Sea Peoples, but not necessarily their actual presence, can be observed only on certain aspects of the material culture; for example, the updating experienced by the local ceramic repertoire.

The Northern Philistine Area in the Iron Age I and IIA

Wolfgang Zwickel (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany)

Generally the Philistine territory covers the area from Tell Qasile in the North to Gaza and its surroundings in the south. Nevertheless the Philistine Decapolis Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gat and Ekron is situated only in the south of this area, while no town is mentioned in the north. The paper discusses the sites in the north, the historical data for this area, the identification of this territory with the Sea Peoples group of the Danaoi/Denyen/Danuna, the settlement history in this area and compares finally the material culture of that area with other sites. The aim is to understand this area closer.

On the Connection between the Phoenician Phenomenon and "Sea Peoples"

Ayelet Gilboa (University of Haifa, Israel)

This paper presents a preliminary attempt to trace the long-term effects of the 'Sea People' phenomenon on Levantine trade activities in the early Iron Age and eventually on the rise of polities in southern Lebanon—particularly Tyre—as major commercial players in the Mediterranean arena from the late 9th BCE. The main tool employed to trace fluctuating commercial spheres during this time span is pottery. Though ceramics (and their contents) where hardly ever a prime commodity in inter-regional exchanges, this is the only medium the origin of which can be traced with relatively high resolution and therefore it can serve as a proxy for defining interactions spheres. I argue in this paper that the rise and subsequent fall of the Carmel coast (the 'Sikila territory') as a major hub for east-Mediterranean trade is a crucial factor in the processes I attempt to trace.
Contrasts, Contacts, and Interconnections — Tel Kinrot as an Early Iron Age Key Site in the Northern Jordan Rift Valley at the Dawn of the 1st Millennium BCE

Stefan Münger (University of Bern, Switzerland)

Ancient Kinneret (Tēl Kinerōt [Hebrew]; Tell el-Orēme [Arabic]) is located on a steep limestone hill on the northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee (2508.7529 [NIG]). The site, whose settlement history began sometime during the Pottery-Neolithic or the early Chalcolithic period, is emerging as one of the major sites for the study of urban life in the Southern Levant during the Early Iron Age (c. 1130–950 BCE). Its size, accessibility by major trade routes, and strategic location between different spheres of cultural and political influence make Tēl Kinerōt an ideal place for studying the interaction of various cultures on urban sites, as well as to approach questions of ethnicity and regionalism during one of the most debated periods in the history of the ancient Levant.

The paper will briefly discuss the settlement history of the site during the Early Iron Age. However, the main focus will lie on the material culture of the late Iron Age IB city that rapidly evolved to a regional center during the transition from the 11th to the 10th century BCE. During this period, ancient Kinneret features a multitude of cultural influences that reach from Egypt via the Central Hill Country until the Northern parts of Syria and the Amuq region. While there are indisputably close ties with the ‘Aramaean’ realm, there are also strong indications that there were – at the same time – vivid socio-economic links with the West, i.e. the Southern and Northern Mediterranean coasts and their hinterland. It will be argued that the resulting ‘cultural blend’ is a typical characteristic of the material culture of the Northern Jordan Rift Valley in the advent of the emerging regional powers of the Iron Age II.

"Sea Peoples Phenomena" in Early Iron Age Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Jordan Valley?

Teresa Bürge (OREA, Vienna, Austria)

The basis for this study is an exceptionally well-preserved compound integrated into the defence system of the early Iron Age town of Tell Abu al-Kharaz. Its destruction is dated according to 15 high-precision radiocarbon dates to 1128–1055 BCE (1σ). Sequencing of the complete Iron Age occupation of the site is based on a total of 45 radiocarbon dates and precise stratigraphical observations.

There are several imports from Phoenicia and other neighbouring regions. A number of finds show affinities with Philistine material. These finds are partly represented by fine tableware, which differs clearly in shape, decoration and surface treatment from the local, usually undecorated, material. There is, however, a second group of finds which – in contrast to the former – most likely was not traded. This group consists of close-shaped cooking vessels which resemble Philistine-type cooking jugs and cylindrical loom weights which were common in Late Bronze and early Iron Age Eastern Mediterranean. The complex "Sea Peoples phenomenon" obviously had influences on previously less discussed parts of the Southern Levant and Transjordan. This paper will discuss possible influences of the Sea Peoples east of the Jordan River.
Tuesday, 4 November 2014

The Sea Peoples after Three Millennia – Possibilities and Limitations of Historical Reconstruction
Reinhard Jung (OREA, Vienna, Austria)

The Sea Peoples puzzle is continuing to exert fascination on archaeologists, philologists and historians working in the countries around the eastern Mediterranean. In the past two decades a renewed interest in this field of research can be noted. Two main tendencies contribute to this revival. On the one hand theoretical models based on sociological and historical migration research are applied to the Mediterranean archaeological record of the late 2nd millennium B.C.E. On the other hand the final edition of excavation results from key and minor sites has considerably broadened the available data base. In this context, field work and museum studies in the central Mediterranean, in Cyprus, Anatolia as well as in the central and northern Levant more and more enrich the reconstruction of historical scenarios that was traditionally based on Egyptian historical records, biblical traditions and archaeological research in the Aegean and the southern Levant.

The Impact of the Sea Peoples on the Egyptian Administration of Canaan
Manfred Bietak (OREA, Vienna, Austria)

Contrary to Egyptian official statements in Papyrus Harris and on the walls of the temple at Medinet Habu it seems clear that Egypt lost the entire coast of its province Canaan in year 5 of Ramses III. It was just able to ward off an assault of the Sea Peoples at the mouth of the easternmost Nile branch by decisive land- and sea battles. Egypt was, however, still able to administer its remaining assets in the Jesreel plain and in the Jordan Valley until Ramses VI. This paper will deal also with the question if communication with Egypt was upheld via the Sinai or by sea via the Gulf of Elat.

The European Background to the Sea-Peoples: The 13th Century Revisited
Kristian Kristiansen (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

The 13th Century was a dramatic period in many parts of Europe: migrations, warfare on the one hand and new religious ideas and social transformations on the other. Interaction with the Aegean reach a new highpoint now through east central Europe and Italy. From this background I trace possible contributions to the downfall of Bronze Age civilizations after 1200 BC.

Rethinking Philistine Society: Aspects of Cultural Resilience
Assaf Yasur-Landau (University of Haifa, Israel)

Traditional viewpoints of the transition between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age see the beginning of 12th century in the Levant as a historic watershed event. The end of Egyptian hegemony, the collapse of the Canaanite city state system, and the Aegean migration are all indicators of a profound political change. But how deep was the overall cultural change? This lecture will focus on aspects of continuity and Canaanite cultural resilience though the critical first two centuries of the Iron Age. It will discuss phenomena of economic and cultural adaptations to the post-urban reality of the 12th century, as well as aspects of local responses to the Aegean migration, which led to the formation of a multi-cultural society in Philistia. It will be argued that with the final publication of early Iron Age strata from Philistine sites of Ashdod and Ekron, and preliminary publication of finds from Ashkelon and Gath (Tel es-Safi), it is now possible to reconstruct the social processes which made the 12th and 11th centuries BC an era of not only of recovery and transformation, but also of considerable continuity of Bronze Age traditions.
Sea Peoples, Philistines, and the Destruction of Cities: A Critical Examination of Destruction Layers 'Caused' by the 'Sea Peoples'

Jesse Millek (University of Tübingen, Germany)

One of the most ubiquitously cited aspects of the collapse of the Late Bronze Age are the destruction layers of most of the major cities within the Eastern Mediterranean. Whether it be the destruction of the palaces in the Aegean, the burning of Hattusa, the razing of Ras Shamra, the destruction of Eknomi, or the defacing of the gods of Hazor, as all of these have been used as evidence for the massive upheaval which took place roughly around 1200 B.C.. These destruction events are often described as violent conflagrations which destroyed a flourishing city often at the hands of an invading force. However, even though these destruction layers have played a prominent role in our understanding of the Late Bronze Age collapse, we still know very little about their formation. The goal of this paper is to examine some of the destruction events in the Southern Levant that are often times attributed with the arrival of the Sea Peoples, and to see if there is any archaeological evidence that would point to who or what destroyed the cities. Sites such as Aphek, Tel Batash, and Lachish will be closely examined with the goal of finding a new understanding of exactly what happened at each individual site at the end of the Late Bronze Age, but also for the Southern Levant as a whole.

Anglo-Saxons and Sea Peoples: Comparing Similar Approaches for Tracking Ancient Human Migration

Lorenz Rahmstorf (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany)

Research on the migrations of Anglo-Saxons and Sea Peoples is facing similar general problems in regard to tracking actual migration. Even more specific archaeological aspects are often comparable in both cases. The Anglo-Saxon migration occurred during the 5th and 6th centuries AD from the Continent to Britain, while the Sea Peoples migration took place around 1200 BC and in the 12th century BC from rather unclear places in the Eastern Mediterranean or even Italy and Southern Europe to the Levantine coast of the Mediterranean. The paper will discuss and compare some of the approaches applied in both archaeological disciplines. These comprise the discussion of the fairly obscure written documentation on the (potential) homeland of the migrants, the question of the number of migrants, its implications, as well as specific evidence from habitation and burials pointing to potential homelands. I will specifically compare the archaeological evidence from Early Anglo-Saxon England and the 12th century BC Southern Levant (Philistia). It is hoped that this will contribute to more comparative approach and a methodological dissemination of the study of ancient migrations.

The Sea Peoples: a View from the Pottery

Penelope Mountjoy (British School at Athens, Greece)

The shapes and motifs of the Philistine pottery from Ekron, Ashdod and Ashkelon will be considered in relation to the pottery from the Aegean and from other East Mediterranean areas in order to pinpoint possible origins for some of the groups of Sea Peoples. The results of chemical analysis by Neutron Activation of pottery from these areas will be used to demonstrate connections between areas and to highlight trade routes and sailing routes.
How Aegean is the Philistine Pottery? Practices with Aegean-type Pottery
Phillipp Stockhammer (University of Heidelberg, Germany)

For a long time, early 12th century BCE Aegean-type pottery at the Southern Levant has most often been interpreted as an indicator of the presence of the “Sea People” and especially the Philistines. However, in the last years there has been research showing that the use of Aegean-type pottery in the first half of the 12th century must not be confined to this supposedly migrant group, but that different actors used shapes of Aegean-type pottery for different purposes. Moreover, it has become clear that the Aegean-type repertoire used by the Philistines cannot be understood as a mere imitation of feasting habits in the Aegean, but that it is the product of the transformative power of intercultural encounters. In my paper, I want to distinguish different groups of users of and practices with Aegean-type pottery in the early 12th century BCE Southern Levant. I will define different phenomena of interaction with Aegean-type pottery and discuss to what extent the different repertoires of and practices with Aegean-type pottery reflect contemporaneous material culture and social practices in the Aegean and on Cyprus.

Exotics in the 12th Century BCE Mediterranean
Gert Jan van Wijngaarden (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands)

The movement of individuals and groups of people can archaeologically be attested by its effects on the material record. A notable phenomenon of the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean is the occurrence of a group of artifacts that can be labeled as “international”: imports from specific areas that are found in different parts of the Mediterranean or objects that show material and stylistic convergences from various cultural traditions. Examples are Levantine cylinder seals, Cypriot and Aegean pottery, Egyptian scarabs and alabaster vases, etc. Many of these items were manufactured in various parts of the Mediterranean. Their wide distribution relate such objects to maritime interconnections and to the people that maintained the Mediterranean networks of movement, communication and exchange.

In this paper, I will try to explore the role of such exotics in maritime contacts in the Mediterranean during the 12th century BCE. After an assessment of the types of exotics that were circulating in the intercultural networks, I will address the variation in contexts by zooming in on two regions: Cyprus and western Greece. This will serve as a basis to discuss the exchange of knowledge, information and materials among groups in various parts of the Mediterranean. By comparing the role of these exotics in the 12th century with the period before the “Sea Peoples”, we may get an idea of the effects of the migrating groups on the material culture of maritime interconnections.

Weapons and Metals – Archaeometallurgical Research on Late Bronze Age Exchange between Italy and Greece
Mathias Mehofer (University of Vienna, Austria) & Reinhard Jung (OREA, Vienna, Austria)

Within the framework of a current research project (funded by INSTAP) we examined the interactions between Italy and Greece from the late 14th to the 11th centuries B.C.E. During that particular period new types of weapons such as spearheads with cast sockets, Naue II swords, daggers and various other implements belonging to the metallurgical koiné spread to the Mediterranean world. With this long-held knowledge in mind we raised the question from which region(s), when and where the new types of weapons were introduced to the Mediterraneans. In order to examine these issues, a large number of weapons, parts of armour, implements and dress accessories belonging to the so-called "Urnfield bronzes" were analysed. These EDXRF and lead isotope analyses were carried out at the CEZ-Mannheim. As a result, a number of bronzes could be identified as imports from Italy to Greece. In this lecture, we will discuss the analytical and archaeological data that have led to these conclusions. An integrated scientific approach – combining archaeometallurgical analyses with a typological classification of the artefacts – will form the basis for discussing the provenance of the copper used. The results presented indicate that northern Italian copper ore sources and metal workshops played a crucial role within these interactions.
The Evidence for Climate Change, Famine, Plague, Carrying Capacity Fragility, Warfare, Migrations, Earthquake Effects and Disruption of Complex Society Exchange Networks at the End of the Bronze Age

Malcolm H. Wiener (Institute for Aegean Prehistory, Greenwich, Connecticut, USA)

The paper discusses the period between c. 1300–1050 BC in terms of 1) the scientific evidence for drought between c. 1200–1000 BC; 2) the textual evidence for famine; 3) the possibility of plague and the relationship between malnourishment and disease; 4) warfare and migrations as causes or consequences of food shortages; 5) the earthquake storm hypothesis; and 6) exchange network disruption and complex system collapse.

Determining the Arrival of the Sea People in the Southern Levant: Absolute Chronology and Cultural Changes based on a Micro-archaeological Approach

Elisabetta Boaretto (Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel)

The transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age represents an important cultural and political change in the southern Levant. The transition, dated by archaeological artifacts and historical documents to around the 12th century BC, is the subject of continuous research since the synchronization between sites is not well established. A precise absolute date for this transition for the southern Levant based on radiocarbon is difficult since the radiocarbon calibration curve reduces precision significantly due to wiggles that form an approximately 200 years long plateau. A different approach to dating this transition is based on the integration of microarchaeological tools in the field during the excavation to identify the “dating assemblages” containing short-lived materials from a sequence of strata. The dates obtained are then modeled taking into account the stratigraphic sequence, and in this way reducing the inherent poor precision of the calibration curve from this period. This approach has been applied to different sites in the Southern Levant improving our understanding of the nature of the LB/IA transition.