

The Late Bronze Age Collapse and the Sea Peoples' Migrations (4265/3500 words)

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Introduction:

The study of the Late Bronze Age collapse and the Sea Peoples' migrations is exceedingly complex and contentious regarding diverse and often contradictory evidence and interpretations. Its scope spans multiple regions in the East Mediterranean, Egypt, and Near East; it covers several centuries straddling the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 BCE) to Iron Age (1200–586 BCE); it entails diverse disciplines and specialists, including the archaeology, art, languages, and history of the Aegean, Western Anatolia, the Hittites, Cyprus, Syria-Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Libya, and elsewhere. The topic also incorporates a continuous influx of new data and re-assessments.⁵ The textual-pictorial account from Ramesses III's memorial temple at Medinet Habu has long dominated more popular and simplified perceptions and misconceptions regarding a "single" event ca. 1200 BCE (elsewhere 1190/1177 BCE):⁶ This pivotal event is applied to mark the "collapse" of Late Bronze Age empires, kingdoms, city states, and their affiliated cultures throughout the East Mediterranean and Near East, followed by their integration and/or partial replacement during the early Iron Age with hybrid populations, societies, material culture, and polities. In contrast, the extant and emerging patchwork of evidence suggests that the foundation of a new geo-political and socio-cultural landscape of the biblical Philistines, Israelites, and their neighbors reflects far more complex, multi-faceted, obscure, and long-term factors. Such data also imply a continuity and merging of the Canaanites and other indigenous cultures with various Sea Peoples (e.g., Philistines), the Israelites, and other peoples and influences (Bachhuber 2013).

Sources:

Although the Medinet Habu account plays a major role in clarifying the Sea Peoples' migrations and the end of the Late Bronze Age (Murnane 1980, 11–18), other significant historical sources exist from Ramesses III's reign (Papyrus Harris I and other texts) (Kitchen 2008). In addition, many pertinent texts pre-date and post-date this event and Ramesses III: The Amarna Letters (Moran 1992), records from Ramesses II's reign (Kitchen 1996; 2000), Linear B texts (Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 387–92); the Hittite Archives at Hattusha (Hoffner 2009), Ugarit's archives (Yon 2006), the Onomasticon of Amenemope (Gardiner 1947), the Journey of Wenamon (Simpson 2003, 116–24), and many other sources (Wente 1990, 268 Meshwesh, 269 Sherden; Peden 2001, 182–237). For instance, the Amarna Letters (mid-14th century BCE) and Battle of Kadesh (year 5 of Ramesses II) attest to the presence of the Sherden/Shardana (who appear later in the Sea Peoples' confederation) as auxiliaries in the Egyptian army (Moran 1992; Kitchen 1982, 55 fig. 18). The Sherden and other (sea) peoples (i.e., Lukka; Shekelesh; Teresh; Ekwesh) are also listed amongst the Libyan (Libu) force attacking Egypt during the reign of Merenptah (late 13th century BCE) (Kitchen 2003, 4). Furthermore, the archaeological record

⁵ See Sandars 1985; Ward and Joukowsky 1992; Drews 1993; Stager 1995; Oren 2000; Leahy 2001; Bachhuber and Roberts 2009; Yassar-Landau 2010; Haider, Weinstein, Cline and O'Connor, 2012; Bachhuber 2013; Cline 2014; D'Amato and Salimbeti 2015.

⁶ Absolute dates vary according to High, Middle, or Low chronologies and cross-cultural synchronisms (Dodson 2013; Kotsonas 2013).

furnishes much supplementary, albeit often contradictory, information regarding the Sea Peoples and other events leading to the Late Bronze Age's collapse: This includes palaeo-environmental data (e.g., climate change), settlements, burials and shipwrecks (e.g., Cape Gelidonya; Point Iria), and affiliated ecofacts (Broodbank 2013, 445–505; Walsh 2014, 170, 178, 286; Renfrew and Bahn 2016, 50).

Background:

During the Late Bronze Age, New Kingdom Egypt expanded its empire over many Canaanite city-states in Syria-Palestine (Hasel 1998; Mumford 1998; Morris 2005; Spalinger 2005; Steiner and Killebrew 2014). Egypt initially dispatched periodic military campaigns and exacted annual tribute under threat of retaliatory attacks in Late Bronze Age IA (1550–1450 BCE). Thutmose III intensified Egypt's domination of the Levant, starting with the Battle of Megiddo, and continuing with attacks and inspection tours to the north (Redford 2003); his successors consolidated this new imperial infrastructure (e.g., provincial capitals and garrisons), formalized borders (with Mitanni), and expanded interactions with neighboring kingdoms via treaties and diplomatic marriages in Late Bronze Age IB-IIA (1450–1300 BCE).⁷ Egypt's relations with the Hittite Empire decline sharply in the late 14th century BCE (Amarna period), following the Hittite expansion and incursion into Mitanni, the defeat, defection, and loss of some northern Egyptian vassals (in Amurru), and an Egyptian escort's alleged murder of a Hittite prince dispatched to Egypt (Dodson 2009, 89–94; Dodson 2014, 76–81, 135–38; Stavi 2015). Egypt fights Hatti during the next few decades, restoring order in its Canaanite Empire, and eventually establishing peace and a stable border between the Hittites and Ramesses II (Late Bronze IIB: 1300–1200 BCE). However, during this period Egypt and adjacent regions face natural disasters (climatic change; low Niles; drought; famine), unrest in Canaan, Nubia, and marginal regions (vassal rebellions; Shasu Bedu attacks; Israelite stirrings), Libyan incursions into the Nile Valley (Ramesses II fortifies the western delta), fights over the succession (Amenmesse versus Sety II), internal strife (Queen Tawosret, Siptah, and Chancellor Bay in late Dynasty 19), gold depletion in Nubia's mines, other economic problems (inability to pay tomb workers; workmen's strikes), and other factors affecting Egypt and its empire (Dodson 2010; Spencer 2014; Goelet 2016).

The Iron Age IA-B period (1200–1000 BCE) witnesses a relatively rapid decline in Egypt and its imperial territories (Dodson 2012), which succumb to increasing Libyan incursions (in Egypt) and further population movements and settlement by indigenous refugees, Bedouin, and others: For instance, a confederation of Philistines arises in southwest Canaan, the Tjekker, Sherden, and other Sea Peoples are attested in various parts of the Levant (e.g., Phoenicia; Transjordan), while the Israelites emerge in the southern hill country (Kitchen 1995, 243–54; Killebrew 2005).

Sea Peoples' Migrations:

Medinet Habu portrays the Sea Peoples' migrations as a “single event” dating to year 8 of Ramesses III, who claims that “The foreign countries, they made a conspiracy in their isles. Removed and scattered in battle, were the lands at one time. No land could stand up against ('before') their arms, beginning from Hatti (Anatolia); –Qode (Syria), Carchemish (Syria), Arzawa (southern Anatolia), and Alashiya (Cyprus), cut off (all) at once in one [place]” (Kitchen

⁷ See Der Manuelian 1987; O'Connor and Cline 1998; Cohen and Westbrook 2000; Bryan 2001; Cline and O'Connor 2006; Dodson 2009.

2008, 34). These foes represent three newcomers, the Peleset, Tjeker, and Weshwesh, and familiar enemies: The Sheklesh, the Denyen/Danuna (Danaoi? of the Iliad), and a captured enemy labelled “Sherden of the Sea” (Bachhuber 2013, 6098). This group is described as establishing a camp in the Hittite controlled region of Amurru (southwest Syria), devastating this region, and moving southward overland to Egypt’s imperial frontier in Djahi (i.e., northern Palestine to southern Syria), perhaps as far south as Tell Borg and the Pelusiac branch (Hoffmeier 2014). In the land battle scenes, the Sea Peoples are shown advancing in chariots and as infantry with clean shaven faces, flaring (feathered?) helmets, upper body armour, tasselled kilts, circular shields, spears, axes, and long swords; they utilize three-person crews (i.e., characteristic of Anatolian chariotry), and are identified as Peleset, Denyen, and Tjekel. The chariots are followed by identical warriors driving wagons carrying women and children, drawn by “humped” oxen typical of Zebu cattle from Syria and Anatolia (O’Connor 2000, 95–97). Ramesses III also mentions securing Egypt’s delta river mouths with warships and troops along the riverbanks (Wachsmann 2000). The Sea Peoples’ fleet is represented by five ships with bird-headed ends: Three ships contain warriors with flaring helmets (identified as Peleset, Denyen and Tjekel) and two boats have crewmembers wearing horned helmets (often equated with the Sherden) (Haider et. al., 2012, 198). Ramesses III claims victory against both the land and sea invasions, while affiliated texts mention the presence of the Sherden and Teresh. However, the Teresh and Denyen are attested a few decades before as foes during the reign of Merenptah, while the Denyen and Sherden appear even earlier as troublesome peoples in the 14th century BCE. The frequency of hostile sea raiders is attested by other LB Age accounts of piracy by the Lukka (from Lycia in southwest Anatolia) and Ekwesh (western Anatolia?), who are otherwise absent from Ramesses III’s list of enemies.

Late Bronze Age Collapse:

The Aegean:

The decline of the Mycenaeans and Aegean in general is complicated, remains unclear and is widely debated. It involves multiple factors (e.g., droughts; famines; earthquakes; warfare; palace system collapse), varies in nature and intensity between polities and regions, and ranges from gradual to more rapid developments (Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 387). Earlier attacks and earthquake destructions appear at some Mycenaean palace centers toward the end of Late Helladic IIIB1 (1300–1250 BCE), including Mycenae, Tiryns, and Thebes, while the remainder of the 13th century BCE (LH IIIB2: 1250–1190 BCE) is characterized by increasing instability and decline. Mycenaean palace citadels and Aegean settlements experience diverse problems, such as an apparent over exploitation of agricultural lands, soils and other resources (evident in several regions); natural disasters (earthquakes; flooding; droughts; disease); declining populations (e.g., northern Rhodes); some potential population influxes (foreign migrants); gradual impoverishment and abandonment (Grotta on Naxos); the strengthening and expansion of fortifications (Mycenae; Tiryns; Midea; Athens; Ayios Andreas on Siphnos; Phylakopi on Melos); some augmentation of coastal watch systems (e.g., Pylos); evidence for attacks and destructions (Mycenae; Tiryns; Midea; Thebes; Orchomenos; Dimini; Gla); and other circumstances (civil strife). Despite such long-term developments, many Mycenaean palace-citadels, including Linear B tablets, reveal indications for a “final disaster” with little to no warning at the end of LH IIIB2, ca. 1200/1190 BCE (e.g., a conflagration at Thebes baked some wet Linear B tablets), disrupting an otherwise functioning society, administration, economy, and lifestyle (Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 390–92). The potential culprits vary widely: Indigenous

uprisings, warring neighbors (Mycenaean Big Men, chiefdoms, and city states), and external raiders (Sea Peoples?; northern “Dorian” invasion? [refuted]; “barbarians”?). However, while individual sites and circumstances fit some of these scenarios, it seems that multiple and varying factors contributed to both the gradual and ultimate collapse of Mycenaean and Aegean societies (Tartaron 2013, 17–20).

Anatolia:

Despite the popular assignment of the “Sea Peoples” as the main cause behind the ca. 1200 BCE collapse of Hatti, Arzawa, Kizuwadna, Willusa (Troy?), Alashiya, and Levantine states, the underlying mechanisms and factors are complex, unclear and debated (Bryce 2005, 327–51; Beckman, Bryce and Cline 2011, 267–82). At a superficial level, the complex socio-political landscape across Anatolia did encounter tumultuous disturbances, destructions, abandonments, and other socio-economic, political and cultural changes at the end of the Late Bronze Age. However, the Hittite Empire faced increasing pressures along its frontiers, including vassal rebellions (western and southern Anatolia), Kaska tribal raids from northern Anatolia, and the expansion of and conflict with the Assyrian Empire to the southeast. During the late 13th century BCE, the Hittites heartland struggled increasingly with issues over the succession to the throne, shortages in agricultural laborers, and a declining economy, plus widespread natural disasters such as prolonged droughts, famine, disease, and earthquakes (e.g., Hisarlik/Troy) (see Van den Hout 2013, 41–43; Bryce 2014, 86–94). Hence, the “Sea Peoples,” many of whom appear to have originated from western and southern Anatolia, including a few groups that had been active in this region for a few centuries, probably reflect only one of many components aiding in and emerging from the fall of Late Bronze Age Anatolia. By the early 12th century BCE, many polities and sites are destroyed and abandoned in Hatti and adjacent regions, including the Hittite capital at Hattusas, while other sites have squatter occupation, reduced village communities, or re-settlement nearby (Sagona and Zimansky 2009, 287, 291–92; Gates 2011, 405; Seeher 2011, 384).

Cyprus:

Cyprus experienced similar site destructions (e.g., Kition; Enkomi), abandonment (e.g., Maroni-Vournes; Kalavassos-Ayios Dimitrios), and turmoil around 1200 BCE (Knapp 2013, 447–48), but yields closer links to the Sea Peoples and related activities (Tatton-Brown 1987, 15). For much of the preceding 14th through 13th centuries BCE, the Hittites may have dominated or controlled key portions of Cyprus: King Šuppiluliuma II refers to naval activity against maritime pirates in this region and a subsequent land battle on Alashiya (Cyprus). Correspondence between the Hittite vassal ruler of Ugarit and the king of Alashiya reveals hostile Sea Peoples’ fleets, coastal raids, plus other maritime marauders in this region immediately prior to ca. 1200 BCE (Karageorghis 1982, 82–84; Knapp 2013, 448). One probable Sea Peoples affiliated group, the Mycenaean, display close links with Cyprus, especially during the 13th century BCE (Late Cypriot IIC), and later: Imported and locally copied Mycenaean (Late Helladic) IIIB pottery and motifs, bronze equipment and weaponry (Enkomi Tomb 18: greaves and a Naue II-type sword), and other items in settlements and burials; other Cypriot artifacts display typical “Sea People”-type warriors with flaring helmets, circular shields, and tasseled kilts (e.g., Enkomi stamp seal and ivory game box) (Mee 2008, 375–77; Karageorghis 1982, 84–85, fig. 68). Cyprus also contains some imported “Trojan ware” (“Grey ware”) at Kition, Enkomi, and elsewhere, suggesting additional links with northwest Anatolian and the Aegean

(Karageorghis 1982, 86). However, the archaeological and historical data enable a broad range of interpretations concerning the significance of Aegean and West Anatolian imported items, influences, and local copies. For example, indirect Aegean trade, Mycenaean traders, transitory migrants (emissaries; mercenaries; raiders), captives/booty, and potential limited Aegean settlement (i.e., colonization) within a predominant Cypriot population.

Syria-Palestine:

Canaan exhibits a variety of destruction levels, decline, impoverishment, and abandonment at different sites during the 13th century BCE through the early Iron Age that can be attributed to different scenarios: Local nomadic raids (e.g., Shasu; 'apiru); Sea Peoples' attacks (e.g., Ugarit); [Egypt's subjugation of the Israelites and others \(attested in Merenptah's "Israel" stela\)](#); [an Israelite conquest \(described in later biblical texts\)](#); warring city states (especially in the northern Levant); Egyptian conflict with and suppression of rebellious vassal city states (e.g., Ashkelon); potential civil uprisings (1250 BCE destruction of Hazor's Stratum XIII citadel); earthquakes (Deir el-'Alla; Lachish); and more obscure socio-economic, political, and other factors (e.g., depopulation: Jericho remained unoccupied for much of the Late Bronze Age). Although northern Syria fell under Hittite control during much of Late Bronze Age IIA-B (Bryce 2014), this region experienced fluctuating conflict with Egypt, Mitanni, Assyria, and Hatti, while the stabilization of a frontier between the Egypt and Hatti (in year 21 of Ramesses II) did not end the internal strife and regional warfare during the remainder of the Late Bronze Age (Spalinger 2005).

The Israelites' emergence, their influx, and their precise role(s) in the Late Bronze Age and its collapse and transition to the Iron Age are equally obscure and debated (Hoffmeier 1997; Hoffmeier 2005). Although the Israelites are attested in Palestine during Merenptah's reign, and perhaps earlier (Ramesses II?; Berlin Stela 21687), the Egyptian and Near Eastern textual and archaeological evidence do not corroborate later biblical accounts of an Exodus and sojourn during the Ramesside period (Frerichs and Lesko 1997). [The biblical conquest account is problematic in view of some of the archaeological record from Canaan](#), where excavations have yielded a mixture of contradictory and corroborative data for occupation strata, settlements, and ethnic populations affiliated with the Israelite conquest account (Levy, Schneider and Propp 2015). In contrast, the archaeological evidence to-date supports a more gradual emergence of small, agrarian settlements in the hill country during the early Iron Age, which draw upon Canaanite traditions and may reflect a combination of semi-nomadic pastoralists, deurbanized Canaanites (refugees), and others (Killebrew 2005; Faust 2006).

Egypt:

Aside from the failed Sea Peoples' attacks around 1200 BCE, Egypt also experiences increasing turmoil throughout Dynasties 19–20 (1300–1069 BCE): Declining climatic conditions (droughts; low Niles; famines); vassal revolts in Canaan and Nubia (Sety I; Ramesses II; Merenptah; Ramesses III–IV); campaigns abroad (Sety I and Ramesses II's attempts to regain Amurru and Kadesh from Hatti); Bedouin hostilities (Libyan and Meshwesh incursions from the Western Desert; Shasu raids across North Sinai; subjugation of the Seir Bedu [Negev?]); Egypt's militarization of key frontier regions and imperial territories (fortifying the western Delta, north Sinai and Canaan); economic hardship (depletion of Nubian gold mines; growing inflation; royal tomb workmen's strikes; increasing tomb robberies), an evident rise in corruption (theft of temple wealth; widespread involvement in Theban tomb robberies), civil strife (fights over the

royal succession; the assassination of Ramesses III [slit throat]; power struggles between the king and Amun cult), and the eventual dissolution of Egypt into a southern Theban theocracy and a northern Tanite kingdom under the nominal leadership of Ramesses XI (Van Dijk 2000, 295–313; S. Redford 2002; Vernus 2003; Redford 2006, 157–204; Bietak 2007, 438–48).

Aftermath:

During the Iron Age IA-IB aftermath following the 1250–1200 BCE coastal and inland conflicts, migrations, flight, and settlement, new peoples integrate variously into the indigenous populations of the East Mediterranean: The Phrygians, kingdom of Urartu, and others emerge in Anatolia (Sagona and Zimansky 2009, 291–370); some Aegeans appear in Cyprus (Knapp 2013, 449); the neo-/Syro-Hittites forge new states in northern Syria (Sader 2014, 618); Aramaeans shift into southeast Syria (forming Aram-Damascus); the Israelites (and others) coalesce in the hill country (Gilboa 2014); Ramesses III–VI control an increasingly reduced area of Canaan during Iron Age IA (Mumford 2001a, 343; 2014, 78–81); the Peleset (Philistines) merge with Canaanites in the southern coastal plain of Philistia (Dothan and Dothan 1992); other Sea Peoples may have settled elsewhere in the Levant (e.g., Phoenicia), including the Tjekker at Dor, Sherden at Akko, and perhaps others inland (e.g., Sherden? at Tell es-Saidiyeh in the Jordan Valley) (Tubb 2000, 189; Sader 2014). Leading up to and during the Iron Age, tribal societies establish chiefdoms and subsequent kingdoms in Ammon, Moab, and Edom in Transjordan and the Negev (Bienkowski 1992; Herr and Najjar 2008; Levy, Najjar and Ben-Yosef 2014).

Iron Age Syria-Palestine:

Following ca. 1200/1177 BCE, Ramesses III–VI retained political control of Canaan in Iron Age IA, while the specific relationship with the Sea People captives, migrants, other peoples remains less clear. It is uncertain whether captured warriors (e.g., Peleset) served as auxiliaries in Egyptian garrisons within Canaan versus mainly in Egypt: Some Iron Age IA, ceramic anthropoid coffins bearing striped headdresses appear in Egyptian garrison cemeteries at Deir el-Balah (which also has LB Age IIB coffins; Mumford 1998: 1604–1743), Tell Farah South, Beth Shan, and perhaps elsewhere (e.g., a body fragment occurs at Lachish). These examples have often been equated with the flaring helmets sported by some Sea People mercenaries (i.e., Peleset; Tjekker; Denyen), but this equation remains speculative and contested (Killebrew 2005, 65–67, 218; Dothan 2008, 94–95). Of note, a pottery deposit associated with the Deir el-Balah residence/fort may reflect a Philistine practice.⁸ Regardless of individual areas and circumstances, Iron Age I displays a major shift in the political and cultural landscape of the Levant (and beyond) (Mumford 2007), witnessing the influx and blending of the Philistines, Tjekker, Sherden, Israelites, and other peoples with the former Canaanites and other ethnic groups (‘Apiru; Shasu; Seir Bedu). This includes the consolidation of powerful Phoenician city-states to the north (e.g., Byblos; Tyre; Sidon), and new polities to the east (Aram-Damascus; Ammon; Moab; Edom).

The Sea Peoples and Canaanites in the Levant:

The archaeological and historical records suggest that the Peleset and other Sea Peoples (Tjekker; Sherden) settled amongst the Canaanite population (Killebrew and Lehmann 2013), probably via Cyprus (which yields much locally made Mycenaean IIIC1b pottery). The Peleset initially concentrated at and around the towns of Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ashdod in the Plain of

⁸ Personal communication John S. Holladay, Jr; see Dothan and Nahmias-Lotan 2010, 111–13.

Philistia during Iron Age IA: An emerging hybrid Peleset, Tjeker, Sherden, and Canaanite population replace some LB IIB Canaanite towns (e.g., Ashdod), abandon other sites (e.g., Ugarit; a hiatus occurs at Lachish in Iron IB), establish new towns (Iron IB Tell Qasile), and continue occupying other towns (e.g., Tell el-Farah South; Gezer). The Onomastakon of Amenemope confirms the presence of the Sherden, Tjeker, and Peleset in Canaan, plus the importance of Ashkelon (150 acres), Ashdod (20 acres), and Gaza (mostly unexcavated). These settlements are associated with the biblical Philistines, implying that these migrants had become quite settled by 1150–1100 BCE (Mazar 1990; Lipinski 2006, 49–57). *The Journey of Wenamon* (ca. 1069 BCE; Simpson 2003), mentions an Egyptian emissary stopping at a Tjeker port-town of Dor (Plain of Sharon). Wenamon also relates that the Tjeker operated many ships along the Levantine coast, while the prince of Byblos is called Tjeker-baal. The Sherden also may have occupied the northern valleys and plains of Canaan, including Tell es-Saidiyeh (Tubb 2000). Regarding Aegean links, northern Palestine and coastal Lebanon and Syria have produced locally made Mycenaean III C1b pottery (e.g., Acre; Beth Shan), albeit in much smaller amounts than Philistia (Mee 2008, 378, 382).

The Pelest, who are best equated with the biblical Philistines, may have roots from Crete (biblical Kaphtor [Amos 9:7; Jeremiah 47:4]), but also display strong ties with the Ionian coast (Western Anatolia) and the Aegean in general: The Plain of Philistia yields Mycenaean pottery forms (Late Helladic III C bell-shaped bowls and kraters; stirrup jars; strainer jugs; pyxides), Mycenaean-style art and motifs (e.g., birds), figurines (e.g., seated and standing human figures), seals with glyptic art (resembling Cypro-Minoan script), architecture (megeira; bench-shrines), and other components (Dothan 1982; Mazar 1990). [A flaring headdress similar to the style associated with the Pelest is found on the Phaistos Disk](#) from Late Bronze Age Crete (Gardiner 1947, 203* *kftyw*). The Bible has some Philistine names and designations with apparent, albeit contested, links to Luwian languages from Western Anatolia (Singer 1988, 243). Anatolian parallels to the Sherden(?) and Tjeker(?) may be reflected by the introduction of many double pithos burials at Tell es-Saidiyeh (Jordan Valley) and some double pithos and cremation burials at Azor (near Tell Qasile).

During Iron Age IB, after Egypt lost control of Canaan, the characteristic Philistine material culture expands further north and inland, including the settlements of Ekron (Tel Migne) and Gath (Tel Safi), which biblical texts (Judges 16) ascribe to a Philistine confederacy of five towns: pentapolis (Younker 2003, 372; Yasur-Landau 2010, 282–97). This autonomy enabled the Philistines to fortify their growing cities (Ashdod increased to 100 acres). Some elite housing includes Mycenaean-style buildings with a central hearth and four pillars (Migne-Ekron); a few homes adopted a “four-room house” plan, which becomes typical for mainly Iron Age Israel and Judah (Holladay 1997, 337). Philistine temples, exemplified at Tel Qasile and partly exposed at Tel Safi (Gath), exhibit Aegean-style roots (e.g., Kition; Phylakopi): [Rectilinear structural plans, two central pillars, interior benches for votive offerings, an altar, treasury, outer courtyard, and other features](#). They contained ritual equipment such as Aegean-derived Ashdoda female figurines, mourning female figurines (hands-to-head), pottery stands, rhyta, and kernoi, plus triton shells (possibly a horn for ritual calls), alabaster vessels, jewelry, seals, and other votives (Mazar 1980; 1985; 1990). One popular misperception concerning the Philistines introducing and having a monopoly on iron production and superior weaponry (see I Samuel 13:19–22) is misplaced: Iron items appear earlier in the Levant and are manufactured and dispersed widely during the Iron Age, including in Israelite territory (Dever 1990, 80). In addition to the continuation and dominance of typical Canaanite pottery forms in Iron Age IB Philistia,

Philistine pottery shifts to a hybrid, Bichrome ware with a more stylized bird motif, painted spirals, frames, rarely fish, and sometimes an Egyptian-style lotus blossom. Although other Aegean-derived items continue in Iron IB, and likewise merge with Canaanite material culture (e.g., hybrid “Orpheus” jug from Megiddo Stratum VIA), Bichrome pottery characterizes Philistine culture: It is also exported to settlements along the borders of Philistia and reaches the foothills of the Israelite hill country. The Philistine heartland contains multiple burial types, from the common indigenous simple pit-graves and rectilinear cist graves to foreign-derived pithos burials (Azor; Tell Zeror), some Aegean(?) -derived rock-cut bench tombs (Tell el-Farah South), and sporadic cremation burials (e.g., Azor) (Dothan 1993, 128, 129; Kochavi 1993, 1525; Yisraeli 1993, 442–43).

Israelites:

In contrast to the coastal concentration of foreign influences, the southern hill country region is associated particularly with the emergence and foundation of the early Israelites (and other groups), who display roots from indigenous semi-nomadic pastoralists, Canaanite and other peoples (Faust 2006). The early Israelites develop into an agrarian population comprised mainly of small, egalitarian communities (extended households and villages), clearing trees, creating terraces for farming, storing water in cisterns, and maintaining small herds (Gilboa 2014, 640–44). Most sites contain a few houses within an ovoid enclosure that closely reflects semi-nomadic pastoralist camps, while the material culture is utilitarian and simple, drawing upon Canaanite pottery, arts, crafts, and architecture. Hence, the early Israelites likely formed from multiple peoples, perhaps encompassing Canaanite refugees from coastal towns, other nomadic groups (Shasu; ‘Apiru; Seir Bedu?), and possibly some Levantine persons returning from Egypt (e.g., perhaps reflecting the earlier Hyksos flight from Egypt?; other fugitives?; see Caminos 1954, 255 “Exodus Papyrus”) (Dever 2003; Miller and Hayes 2006; Maeir 2013; Levy, Schneider and Propp 2015).

Conclusions:

Although the Sea Peoples and other ethnic groups (especially Philistines) remained politically and culturally separate from Israel by the Iron Age IIA (1000–925 BCE), much of their preserved material culture become less distinct or disappears, being submerged within the predominant Canaanite-derived cultures (including Phoenician influence). For instance, red slipped and burnished pottery, which is popular in Phoenicia, appears alongside Philistine Bichrome ware in the 11th century BCE (Qasile Strata XI–X), some containers share red slip surface treatment and Bichrome decoration (e.g., black-painted spirals), while Philistine Bichrome ware disappears by 1000 BCE (Ben-Shlomo 2014, 723). During the Iron Age II we become more reliant upon biblical, Egyptian, and Syro-Mesopotamian textual-pictorial records to clarify the nature of the various Sea Peoples’ descendants (particularly the Philistines) and other ethnic groupings in the Levant (Maeir 2013b, 241–42).

Levantine Periods: <i>(dates & terminology in flux)</i>		Egyptian Dynasties:	Egyptian rulers:	Mycenaean pottery (Greece):
Late Bronze Age IA (1550–1450 BCE)	Transitional MB-LB or MB IIC – LB IA <i>(1550-1458+ BCE)</i>	Dynasty 18 (Early Egyptian New Kingdom Empire)	Ahmose (1550–1525 BCE) Amenhotep I (1525–1504 BCE) Thutmose I (1504–1492 BCE) Thutmose II (1492–1479 BCE) Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE) Qn. Hatshepsut (1473–1458 BCE)	Late Helladic I Late Helladic IIA
Late Bronze Age IB (1450–1400 BCE)	Late Bronze Age IB <i>(1458-1390 BCE)</i>	Dynasty 18 (consolidation of empire)	Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE) Amenhotep II (1427–1400 BCE) Thutmose IV (1400–1390 BCE)	Late Helladic IIB
Late Bronze Age IIA (1400–1300 BCE)	Late Bronze Age IIA <i>(1390-1295 BCE)</i> <i>Or LB IB-IIA transition is sometimes dated ca. 1352 BCE</i>	Dynasty 18 (Amarna period)	Amenhotep III (1390–1352 BCE) Amenhotep IV (1352–1336 BCE) (Akhenaten) Neferneferuaten (1338–1336 BCE) (Smenkhara) Tutankhamun (1336–1327 BCE) Ay (1327–1323 BCE) Horemheb (1323–1295 BCE)	Late Helladic IIIA1 Late Helladic IIIA2
Late Bronze Age IIB (1300–1200 BCE)	Late Bronze Age IIB <i>(1295-1177 BCE)</i>	Dynasty 19 (early Ramesside period)	Ramesses I (1295–1186 BCE) Sety I (1294–1279 BCE) Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE) Merenptah (1213–1203 BCE) Amenmessu (1203–1200? BCE) Sety II (1200–1194 BCE) Siptah (1194–1188 BCE) Queen Tausret (1188–1186 BCE)	Late Helladic IIIB
LB III or Iron Age IA (1200–1150 BCE)	Early Iron Age I	Dynasty 20 (Egyptian Ramesside Empire retains Canaan)	Sethnakht (1186–1184 BCE) Ramesses III (1184–1153 BCE) Ramesses IV (1153–1147 BCE) Ramesses V (1147–1143 BCE) Ramesses VI (1143–1136 BCE)	Late Helladic IIIC
Iron Age IB (1150–1000 BCE)	Late Iron Age I	Dynasty 20 (Late Ramesside Egypt retains Nubia)	Ramesses VII (1136–1129 BCE) Ramesses VIII (1129–1126 BCE) Ramesses IX (1126–1108 BCE) Ramesses X (1108–1099 BCE) Ramesses XI (1099–1069 BCE)	Late Helladic IIIC
		Dynasty 21 (Third Intermediate Period)	Smenides (1069–945 BCE) Amenemnisu (1043–1039 BCE) Psusennes I (1039–991 BCE)	Submycenaean

TABLE 1: Late Bronze Age to Iron Age I Near East, Egyptian and Aegean chronologies (after Mazar 1990, 238; Shaw 2000, 481; Shelmerdine 2008, 4–5 figures 1.1–2; see also Mumford 2001b, 361 table 1; **Sherratt in Steiner and Killebrew 2014, 499 table 33.1**).

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Illustrations:

Figure 1: Map of the East Mediterranean, showing site destructions dating to ca. 1200 BC (STOCK IMAGE).

Figure 2: Illustration of the overland migration of Sea Peoples into Canaan, from the Medinet Habu reliefs of Ramesses III (STOCK IMAGE).

Figure 3: Illustration of the Sea Peoples' fleet destroyed at the eastern delta river mouth, from the Medinet Habu reliefs of Ramesses III (STOCK IMAGE).

Figure 4: Map of the political and ethnic composition of the Levant during Iron Age IA-B, including the Philistine settlement (STOCK IMAGE).

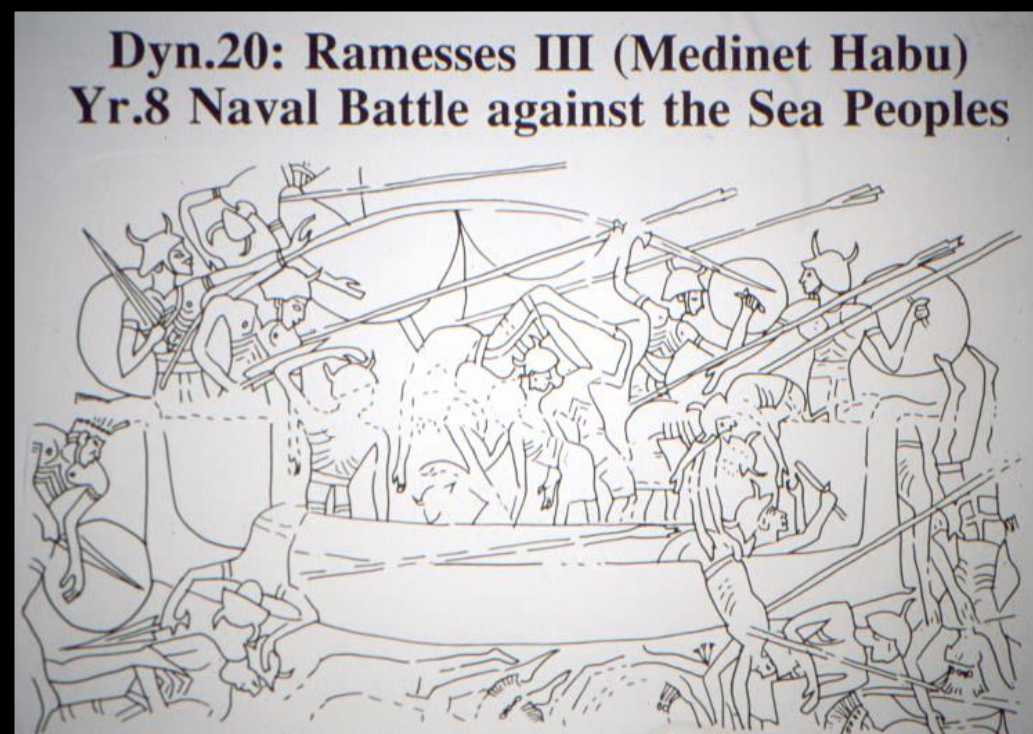
ANT 245:

Peoples of the World: Mediterranean Area, From Prehistory to the Trojan War.

Notes & images compiled by Gregory Mumford (2018)

Lecture 21:

The Sea Peoples & others 1200 BC



Lecture outline:

1. End of the Late Bronze Age: Perspective from Ancient Egypt
2. End of the Late Bronze Age: Perspective of the Aegean & Mycenaeans
3. End of the Late Bronze Age: From the perspective of Anatolia (i.e., mainly the Hittite Empire ...)
4. End of the Late Bronze Age: From the perspective of the Levant (i.e., mostly Hittite Empire) & Cyprus (Alashiya).
5. End of the Late Bronze Age: From the perspective of the Levant (i.e., mostly Egyptian Empire): Ramesses III ...
6. End of the Late Bronze Age: Aftermath of the Sea Peoples' movements against Egypt & Canaan: Ramesses III ...
7. Iron Age IA (1,200 – 1,150 BCE): Post-Sea Peoples' Egyptian empire ...
8. The later Iron Age I (1B) (Ca. 1150 - 1000 BCE): Post “Late Bronze Age” (mostly transitional) in the Near East ...
9. The later Iron Age I (1B) (Ca. 1150 - 1000 BCE): The legacy of the Canaanites, Peleset & elusive “Sea Peoples” in the Near East ...
10. Summary:
11. Bibliography

1.

**End of the Late Bronze Age
Ca. “1200 BCE” (1177 BC)**

**One perspective =
from Ancient Egypt
(temp. Ramesse III)**

Ramesses III.

Year 5: Prelude to Sea Peoples

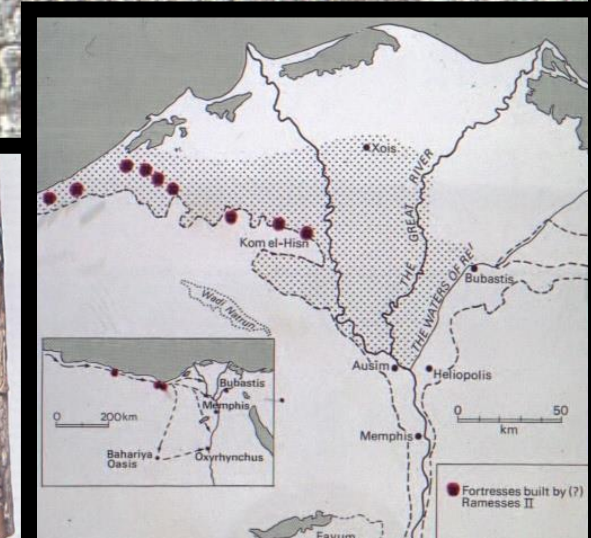
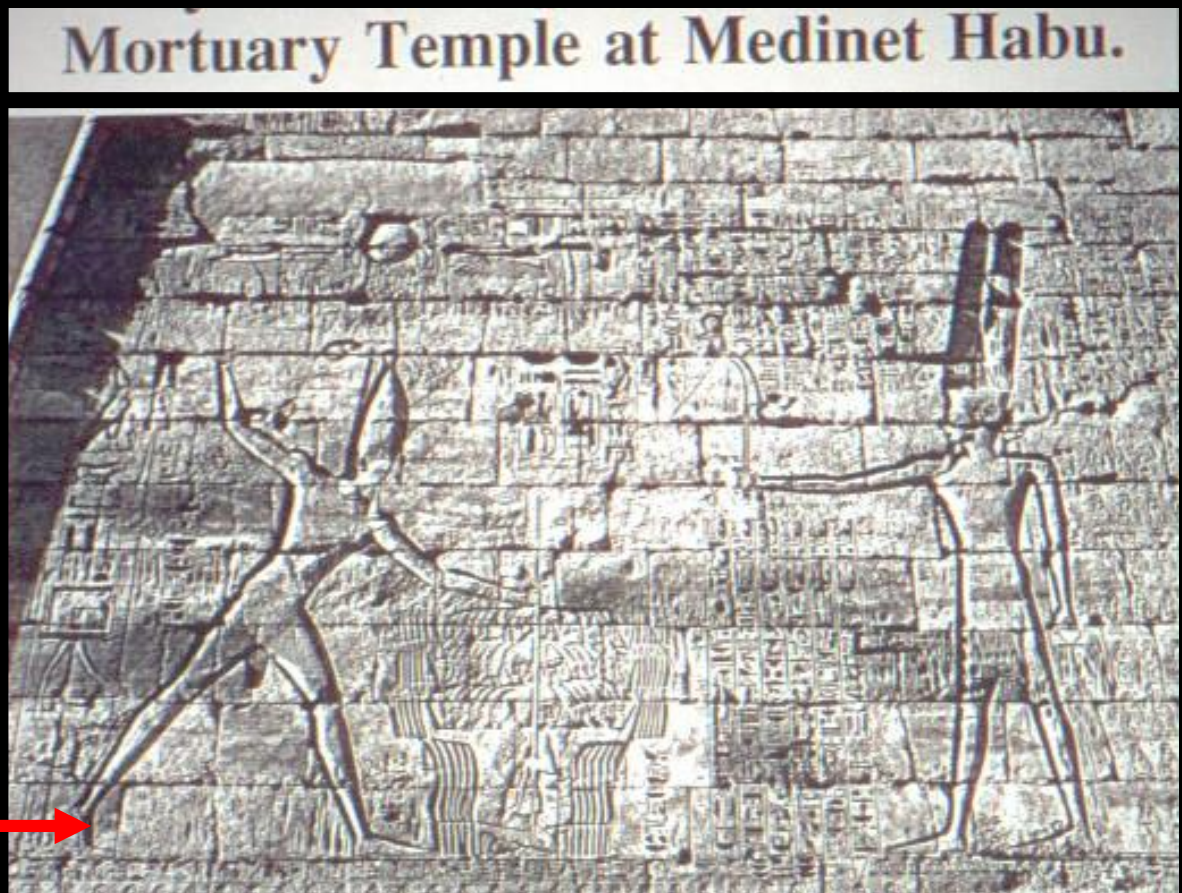
- **Libya invades Egypt (W. delta).**
 - **Libyan coalition composed of Libyan, Meshwesh, and Seped peoples.**
 - Meshwesh (assoc. with Sea Peoples)
 - **Seped = unknown tribe.**
- **Libyan excuse for attacking Egypt = R-III placed a child as chieftain of the Libyan Tjemehu-tribe.**
- **Reflects standard Egyptian practise:**
 - Taking vassal heirs as hostages**
 - Returning Egyptianized heir to ruler upon father's death.**
- **Libyan tribes already coveting W. Delta agricultural lands.**



Ramesses III.

Year 5 (cont.):

- Like Merenptah, R-III requested advice through an oracle from Amun.
- In response he is provided a sword to destroy Libyans (depicted in temple).
- R-III claims total victory.
 - a. Dead Libyans = 1000s
 - b. POWs → slaves for state & temples.



Ramesses III.

Year 8: Sea Peoples

Factors → Sea Peoples:

- **Year 8: R-III faced serious threat that affected entire E. Mediterranean**
 - mass-migrations of peoples across the sea, and**
 - overland migrations of displaced populations & refugees from nations & peoples defeated by the first wave of invasions & migrants.**
- **Many reasons suggested for the massive migrations ca. 1200 BC, which actually span 50 years: E.g.,**
 - Climatic conditions:** Drought
 - Famine** (from droughts)
 - “Nomadic” pressures & movements** in Europe, *displacing Mediterranean coastal populations* (eg, Mycenaeans).
 - Ripple effect** of displaced populations migrants, invaders, raiders, refugees,



Ramesses III.

Year 8: Sea Peoples

Ramesses III reveals Egypt's perspective:

"The foreign countries made a plot in their islands, and the lands were dislodged and scattered by battle all at one time and no land could stand before their arms:

Khatte (Hittites),

Qode (Syria),

Carchemish (Syria),

Arzawa (S. Anatolia),

& Alashiya (Cyprus)."



Ramesses III.

Sea Peoples' composition & origins:

• Three new enemies:

1. **Peleset** (Philistines) =Anatolia/Aegean
2. **Tjekker** =NW Anatolia (Troad?)
3. **Weshwesh** =Anatolia (Troy?)

• Four old enemies:

4. **Shardana** → Sardinia =North Syria
5. **Teresh** = Lydia (W. Anatolia)
6. **Sheklesh** (→ Sicily) =South Italy(?)
7. **Denyen** (Danuna) =Danaoi (of the Iliad?)
(or Cilicia; SE Anatolia).

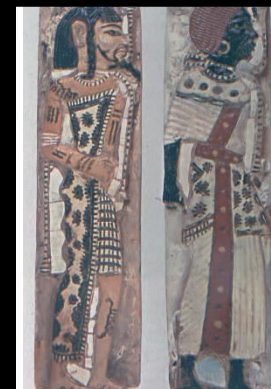
- Shardana & Denyen =known in 14th cent. BC
- Teresh & Sheklesh =Known under Merenptah

• Other troublesome groups since 14th cent. BC **(absent from Ramesses III's list):**

8. **Lukka** (Lycia in SW Anatolia)
9. **Ekwesh** (West Anatolia)



Peleset



2.

**End of the Late Bronze Age
Ca. “1200 BCE” (1177 BC)**

**From the perspective of
The Aegean & Mycenaeans ...**

LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC

End of the Late Bronze Age:

- **The late 13th cent. BC**, ca.1200 BC, witnessed major political, social, and economic turmoil throughout the East Mediterranean.
- Most **Mycenaean** palaces = destroyed & abandoned (raids; earthquakes; etc)
- **Hittite empire** collapses ca.1200 BC
- **Coastal raids** occur increasingly in the East Mediterranean: Ugarit, Cyprus, +
- Many East Mediterranean **cities are destroyed** ca.1200 BC (esp. on coast)
- **Displaced populations (refugees)** migrate to new regions, → initiating further population displacements.
- **“Sea Peoples”** raid and settle many areas throughout E. Mediterranean.

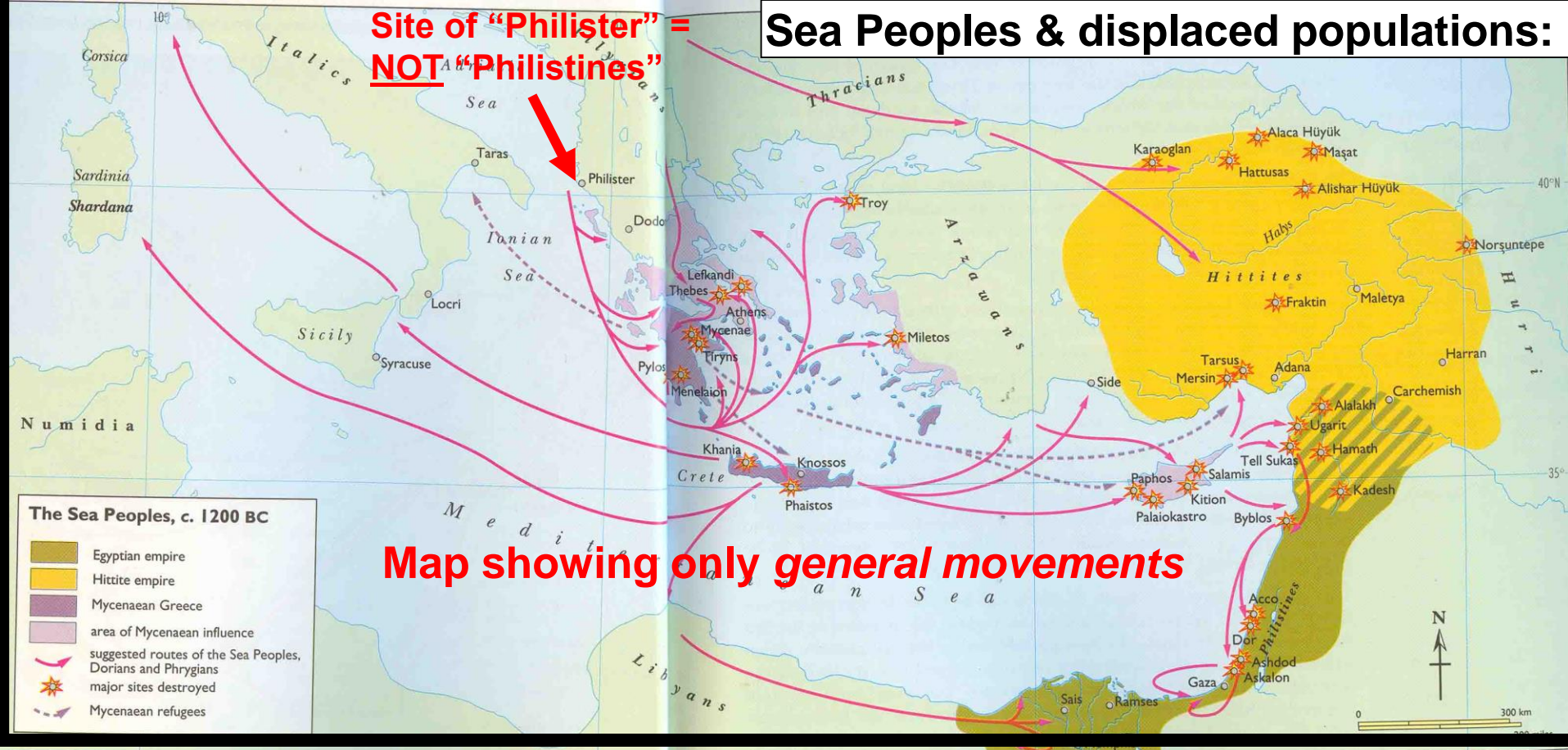


Ca. 1200 BC Sea Peoples



Sea Peoples & displaced populations:

Site of "Philister" =
NOT "Philistines"

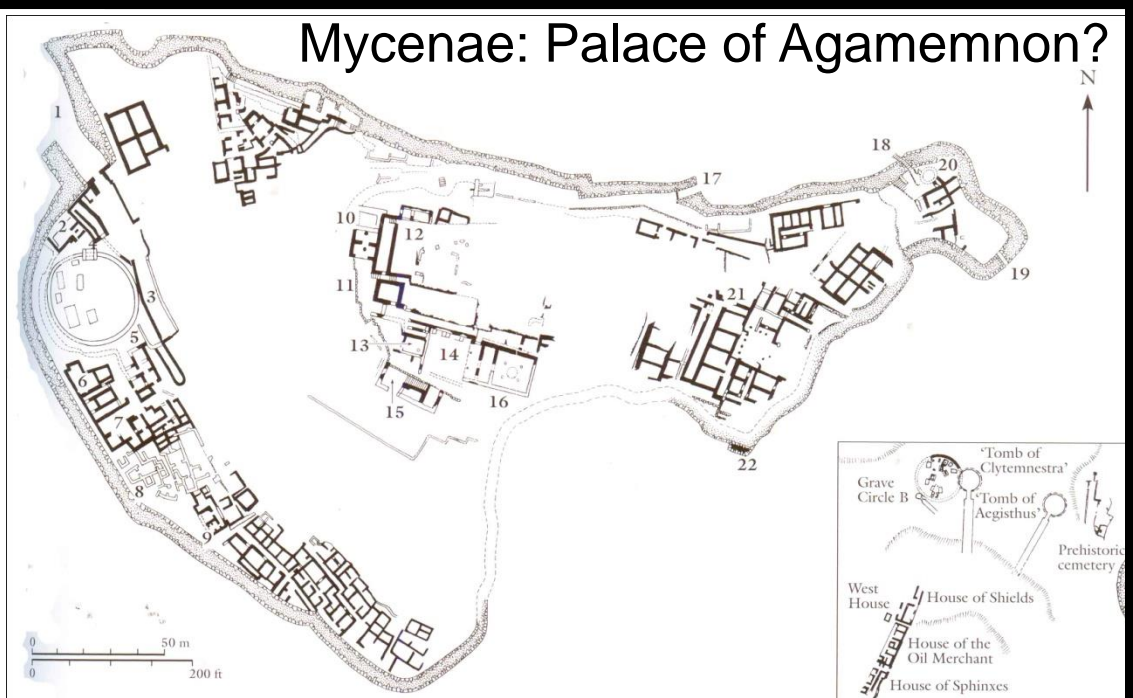
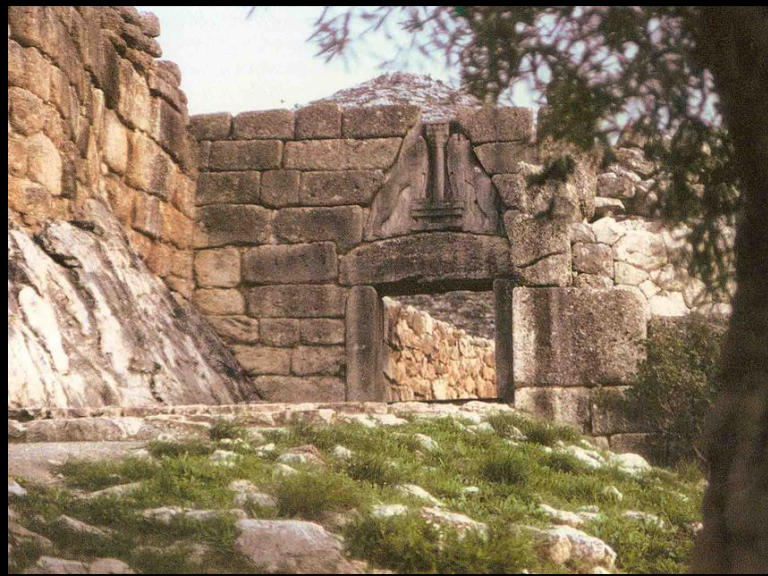


1. Shardana/Sherden: from N. Syria → Cyprus → Sardinia (9th cent BC)
2. Shekelesh: from Anatolia? → Sikels of Sicily (& S. Italy)
3. Denyen/Danuna from Hatay? (Anatolia?) → Danites? In Palestine
4. Tjeker from W. Anatolia/Troad? → Palestinian coast N. of Tjeker
5. Peleset from Anatolia? → Palestine = Philistines
6. Meshwesh via Libyan raids → Egypt Chiefs of Ma Dyn. 21-22
7. Weshwesh from Ilios? → ?
8. Teresh/Tursha (Lydia?). Lukka (Anatolia). Ekwesh (Acheans?) → disappear!

BACKGROUND: Late Bronze Age.
LB 2B: 1300 – 1200 BC.

GREECE & AEGEAN (MYCENAE)

- Reduction in domestic trade
- Reduction in international trade
- Natural disasters: varying evidence
Some drought → famine; earthquake
- Political troubles: city states warring
“Dorian” invasion? (refuted by specialists!)
- Population pressures (hill country)
- Palace system collapse/revolt
- Chain reaction → “Dark Age”



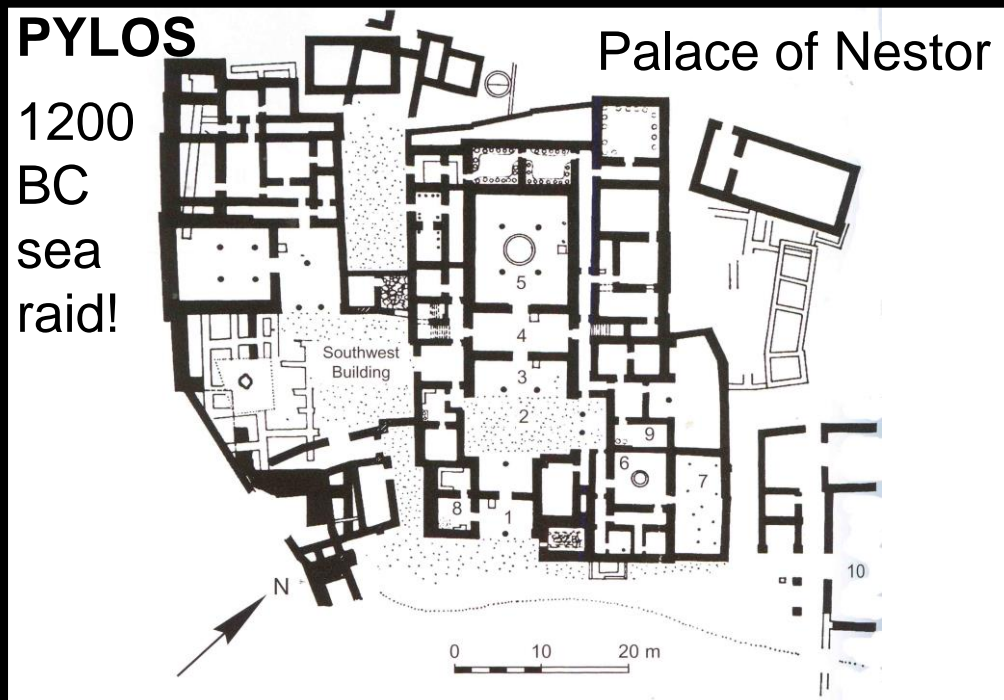
BACKGROUND: Late Bronze Age.
LB 2B: 1300 – 1200 BC.

GREECE & the AEGEAN:

- **Interruptions in trade** with East
e.g., metal shortages
- **Bolstering palace fortifications**
Securing water sources in palaces
- **1250-1200 BC more destructions!**
1200 BC further fortifications
(implying fear of attack & siege)
- **Pylos** linear B tablets: “Thus the
watchers are guarding the coastal
regions” (800 troops dispatched).

1200 BC:

- **All Mycenaean palaces = destroyed**
- **Many settlements are destroyed**
- **Other settlements are abandoned**
- **A few sites continue** → 12th cent.
E.g., Asine
- **Some sites reoccupied/flourishing**

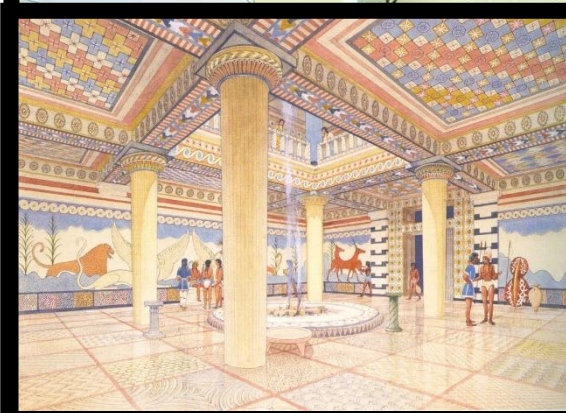
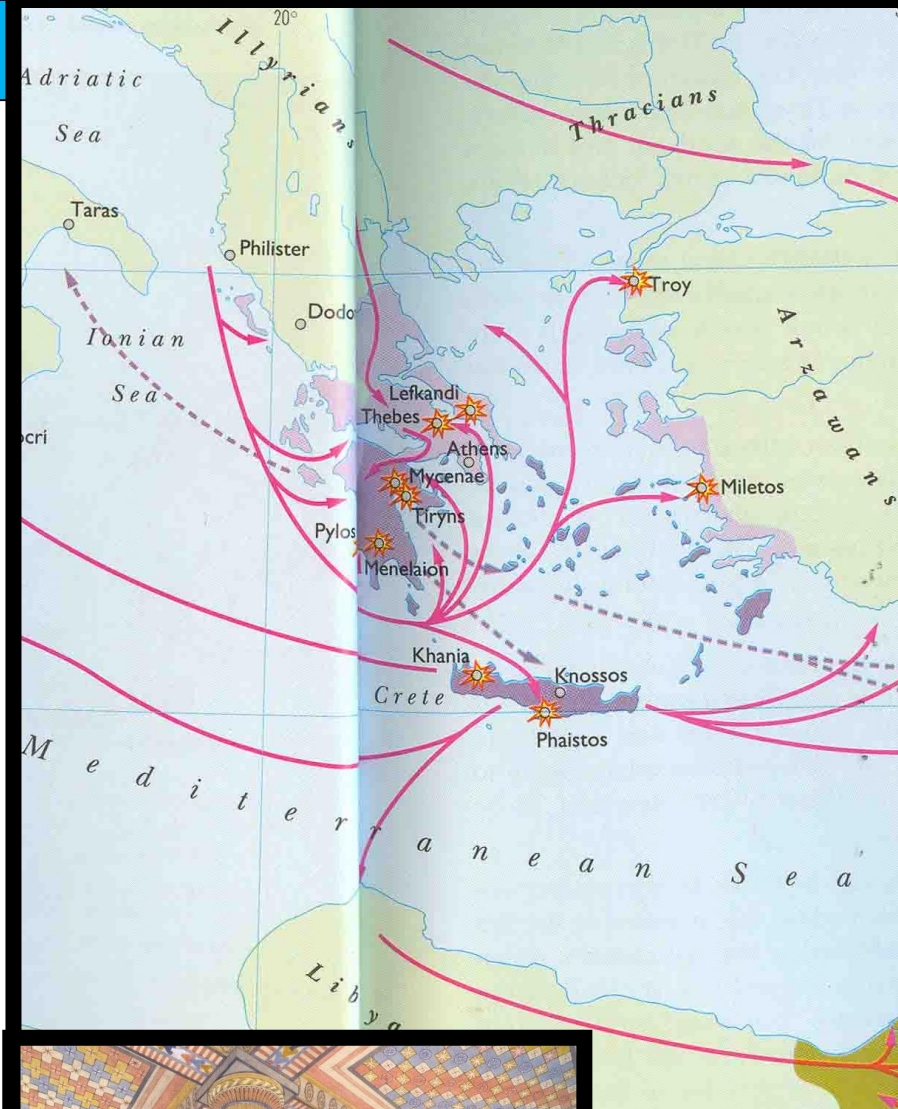


Aegean – Greece Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

- **Decline** of the Mycenaeans & Aegean
 - a. is complicated,
 - b. remains unclear
 - c. is widely debated.**NOTE:** No evidence at all for “*Dorians*”
- **Decline involves multiple factors:**
E.g., droughts; famines; earthquakes; warfare; palace system collapse;
- **Decline varies in nature & intensity** between polities and regions ...
- **Decline ranges** from gradual to more rapid developments (see Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 387).

Details:

- Earlier attacks+earthquake destruction appear at **some Mycenaean palace centres** near end of Late Helladic IIIB1 ca. 1300–1250 BCE:
E.g., Mycenae, Tiryns, and Thebes.



Aegean – Greece Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

- Remainder of 13th cent. BCE (LH IIIB2: 1250–1190 BCE) = characterized by increasing instability and decline: E.g., Mycenaean palace citadels & Aegean settlements experience diverse problems

a. Over exploitation of agricultural lands, soils & other resources (i.e., evident in several regions);

b. Natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes; flooding; droughts; disease);

c. Declining populations (e.g., northern Rhodes);

d. Some potential population influxes (foreign migrants [*Dorians*]? = **NO!**);

e. Gradual impoverishment and abandonment (e.g., Grotta on Naxos)

f. Strengthening & expansion of some fortifications (Mycenae; Tiryns; Midea; Athens; Ayios Andreas on Siphnos; Phylakopi on Melos).



Aegean – Greece Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

- g. Some augmentation of coastal watch systems (e.g., Pylos);
- h. Evidence for attacks & destructions (Mycenae; Tiryns; Midea; Thebes; Orchomenos; Dimini; Gla);
- i. Other circumstances (civil strife).

Some evidence for sudden “collapse”:

- *Despite such long-term developments, many Mycenaean palace-citadels, including some Linear B tablets, reveal indications for a “final disaster” with little to no warning at the end of Late Helladic IIIB2 (ca. 1200 / 1190 BCE): E.g., a conflagration at Thebes baked some **wet** Linear B tablets = unexpected*
- **This disaster disrupted an otherwise *functioning* society, administration, economy, and lifestyle** (see Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 390–92).

Generic
watchtower



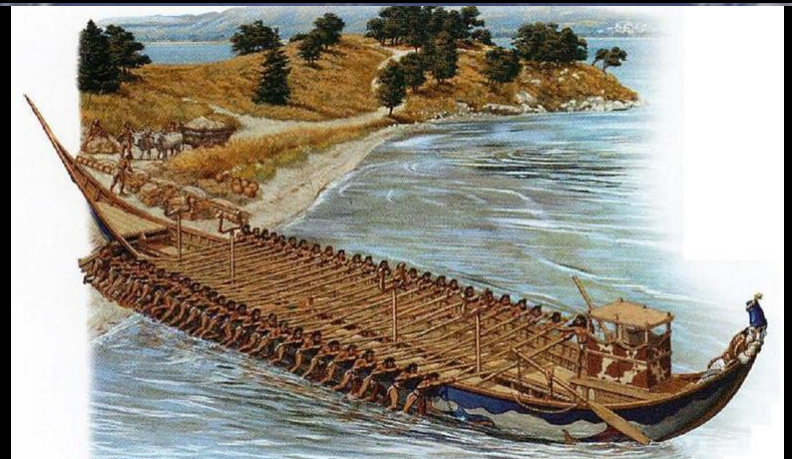
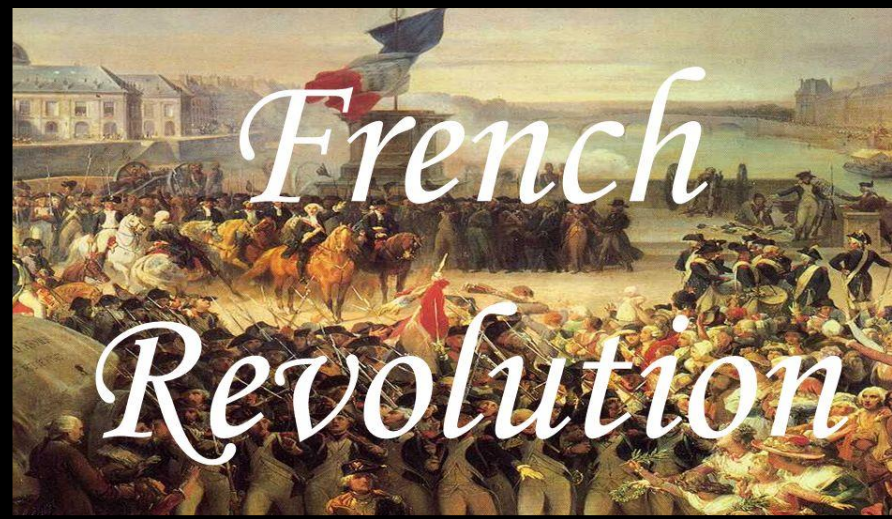
Generic raiders



Aegean – Greece Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

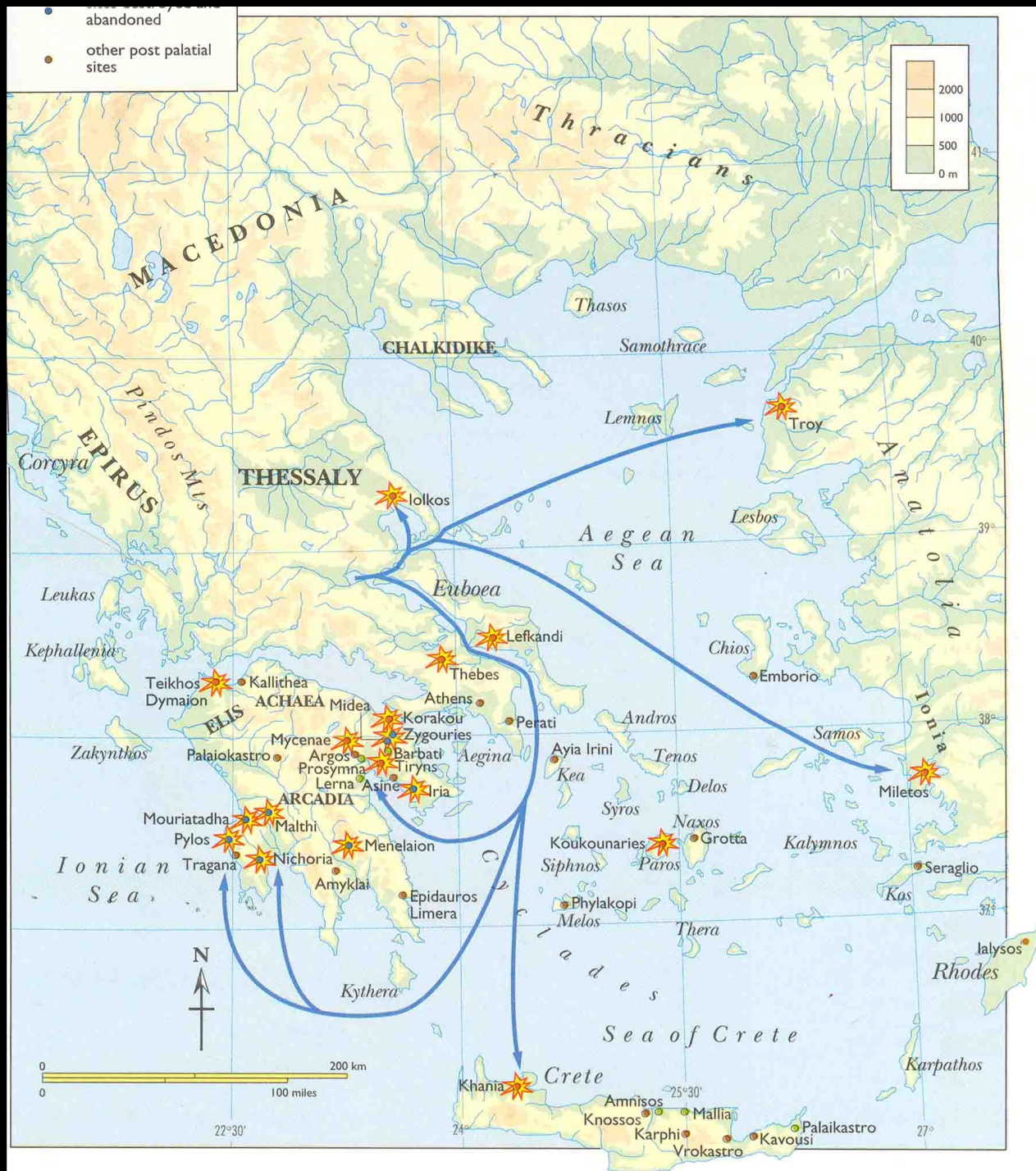
- The potential culprits for this disaster vary widely:
 - a. Indigenous uprisings,
 - b. warring neighbors (Mycenaean Big Men, chiefdoms, and city states),
 - c. external raiders (Sea Peoples?; northern “*Dorian*” invasion? [= NO!; = refuted]; “barbarians”?).
- *However, while individual sites and circumstances fit some of these scenarios, it seems that **multiple and varying factors** contributed to both the gradual and ultimate collapse of Mycenaean and Aegean societies (see Tartaron 2013, 17–20).*



Greece & Aegean ca. 1225-1100 BC:

End of Mycenaean Summarized ...

- The “*collapse*” of the Mycenaean city states and culture is **still greatly debated**.
- **Many sites = destroyed by fire or = abandoned**
- **Some sites remain abandoned**
- **Other sites are re-occupied & flourish.**
- **Some Mycenaean settling in Cyprus**
- **→ Situation has created many theories and more questions.**



Theories behind the Sea Peoples:
● “Dorian invasion” from the north into Greece (Mycenae) → now discounted

- Other suggestions for Mycenaean collapse:**
- Drought (i.e., climatic factors ...),
 - Famine (byproduct of less rainfall),
 - Population movements (var. factors),
 - Economic decline (var. factors),
 - Systemic collapse of Mycenaean palace system (long-term & short-term),
 - Earthquake destruction (separate),
 - Raids (textual attestations)(var. factors)



3.

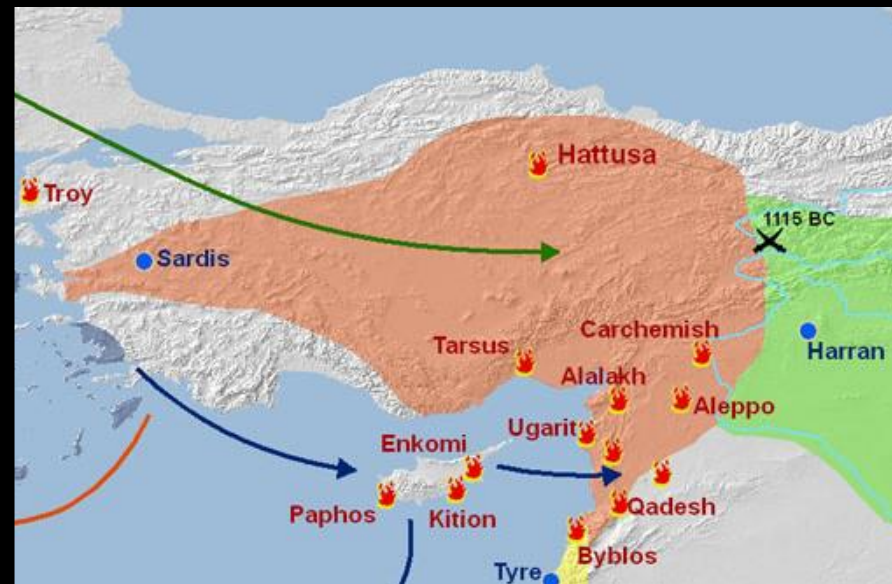
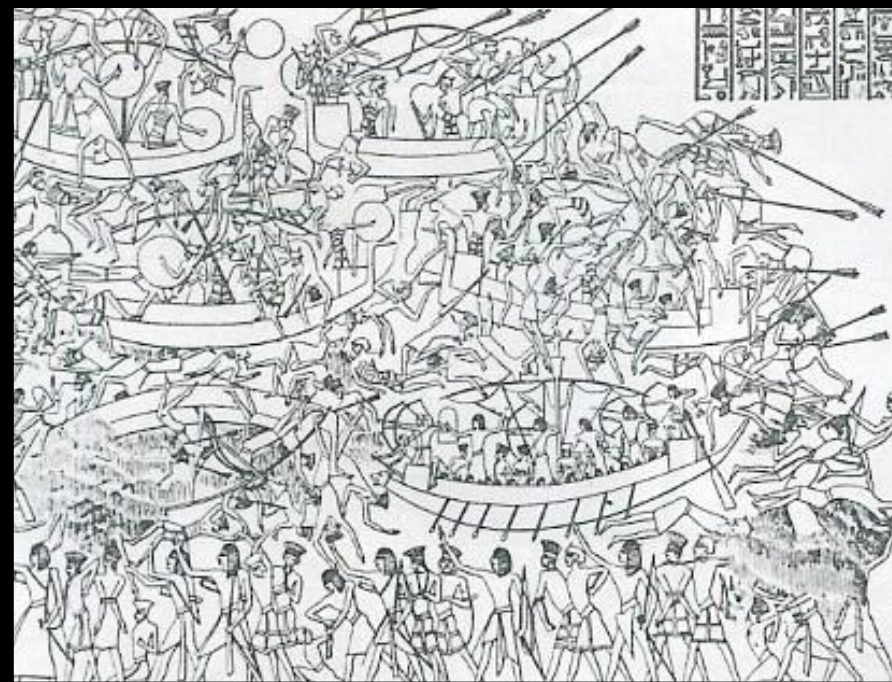
**End of the Late Bronze Age
Ca. “1200 BCE” (1177 BC)**

**From the perspective
of Anatiolia (i.e., mainly
the Hittite Empire ...)**

Anatolia Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

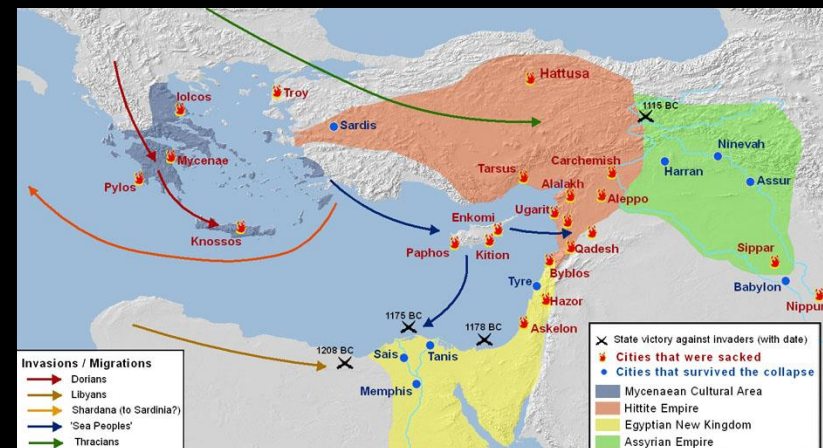
- Despite the popular assignment of the “Sea Peoples” as the ‘main cause’ behind the ca. 1200 BCE collapse of Hatti, Arzawa, Kizuwadna, Willusa (Troy?), and elsewhere, *the underlying mechanisms & factors are complex, unclear and debated* (see Bryce 2005, 327–51; Beckman, Bryce and Cline 2011, 267–82).
- **At a superficial level**, the complex socio-political landscape across Anatolia did encounter ...
 - a. tumultuous disturbances,
 - b. destructions,
 - c. abandonments, and
 - d. **other** socio-economic, political and cultural **changes** ...at the end of the Late Bronze Age.



Anatolia Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

- However, the Hittite Empire *did face* increasing pressures along some of its frontiers, including...
 - a. vassal rebellions (western & southern Anatolia),
 - b. Kaska tribal raids from northern Anatolia, and
 - c. the expansion of & conflict with the Assyrian Empire to the southeast.
 - During the late 13th century BCE, the Hittite heartland struggled increasingly with
 - a. issues over succession to the throne,
 - b. shortages in agricultural laborers,
 - c. a declining economy, plus ...
 - d. widespread natural disasters such as prolonged droughts, famine, disease, and earthquakes (e.g., Hisarlik/Troy)
- (Van den Hout 2013, 41–43; Bryce 2014, 86–94)



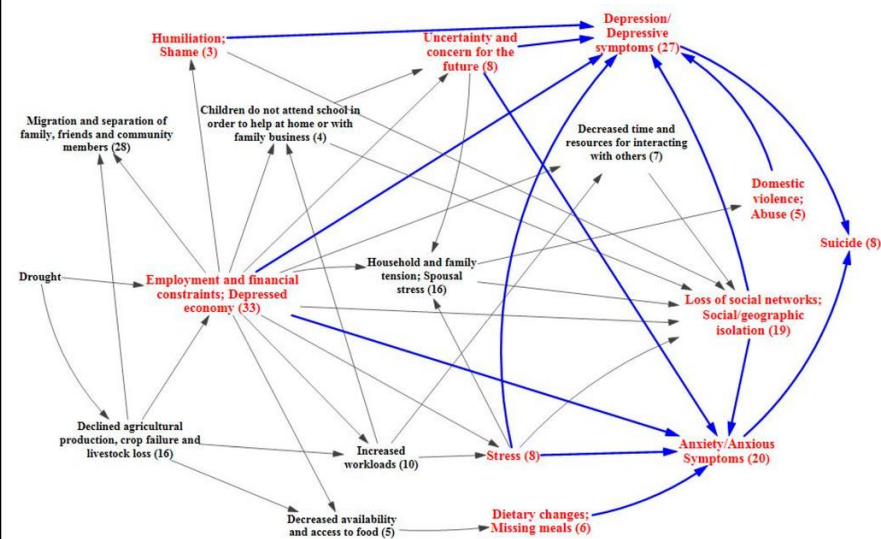
Anatolia Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

- Hence, the **“Sea Peoples,”** many of whom appear to have originated from **western and southern Anatolia**, including a few groups that had been active in this region for a few centuries, probably reflect **only one of many components/factors** aiding in, and emerging from, the “fall” of Late Bronze Age Anatolia.
- By the early 12th cent. BCE, many polities and sites are **destroyed and abandoned** in Hatti and adjacent regions, including the Hittite capital at Hattusas, *while other sites have **squatter occupation**, reduced **village communities**, or **re-settlement nearby*** (Sagona and Zimansky 2009, 287, 291–92; Gates 2011, 405; Seeher 2011, 384).



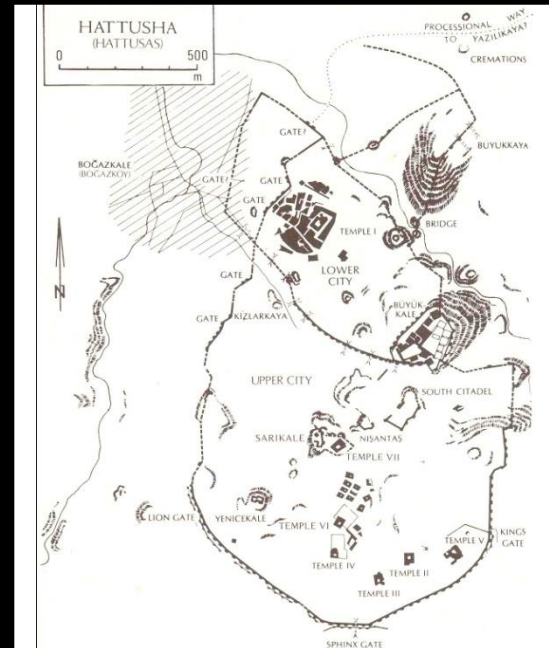
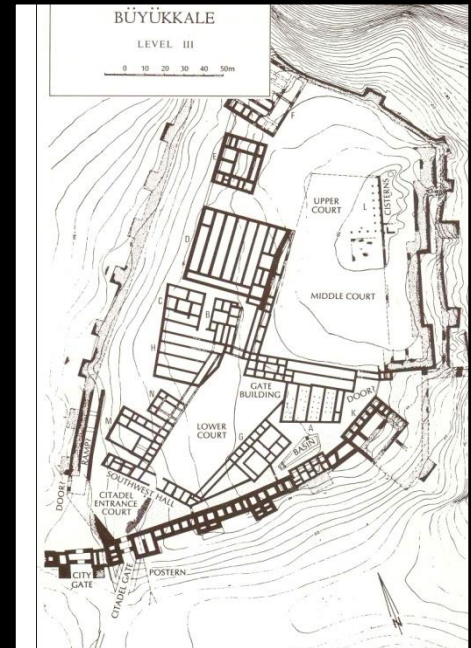
Multi-causal factors in (ancient) “collapse” ...



**BACKGROUND: Late Bronze Age.
LB 2B: 1300 – 1200 BC.**

**ANATOLIA: summary of troubles...
The Hittites and their neighbours:**

- Attacks from **North** by Kaska tribes
- Attacks from **Southeast** by Assyria
- **Provincial regions along borders breaking free** → independent polities
- **Major vassals breaking free**
- **Over-reliance** on prof. chariot force (too many regions to fight)
- **No (real) Hittite naval power** to counter sea raiders beyond frontiers
- **Vassal states with naval vessels (Lukka; Ugarit) probably looking after their own interests.**
- **Increasing internal pressures** within royal family and empire.

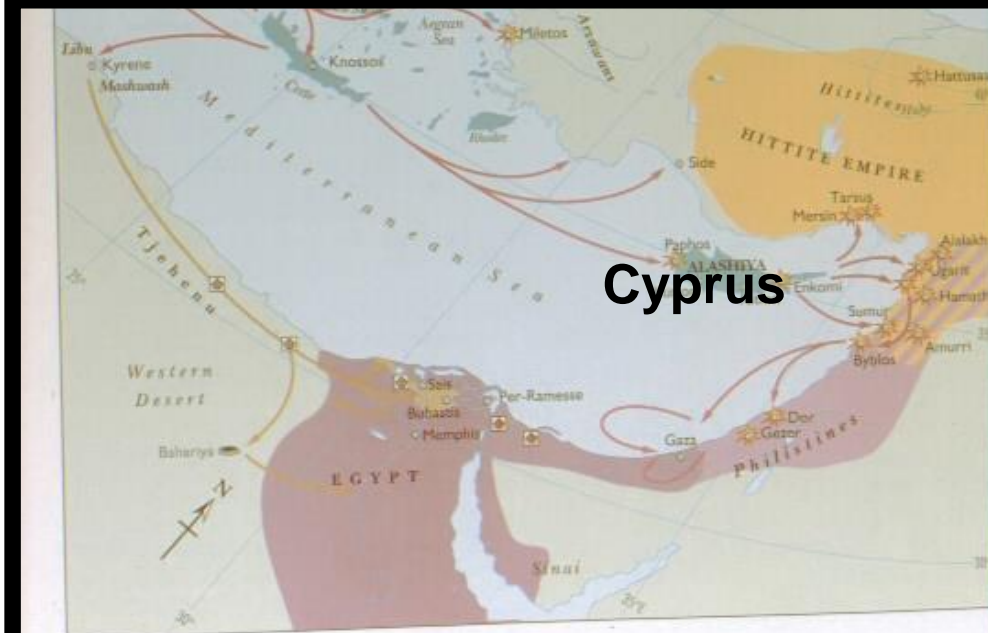


Ramesses III.

Fall of Hittite kingdom:

- **Sea Peoples' confederation helped to destroy the Hittite empire along the coast:**
- **Hittite battle with maritime marauders from Cyprus is recorded by Suppiluliumas II:**

"I mobilised, with speed,
I Suppiluliumas the Great,
I reached the Sea.
The ships of Alashiya (Cyprus)
came up against me
and gave battle,
three times out at sea ...
when I arrived on dry land
the enemy came against me
to do battle in multitudes ...
I fought them ..."

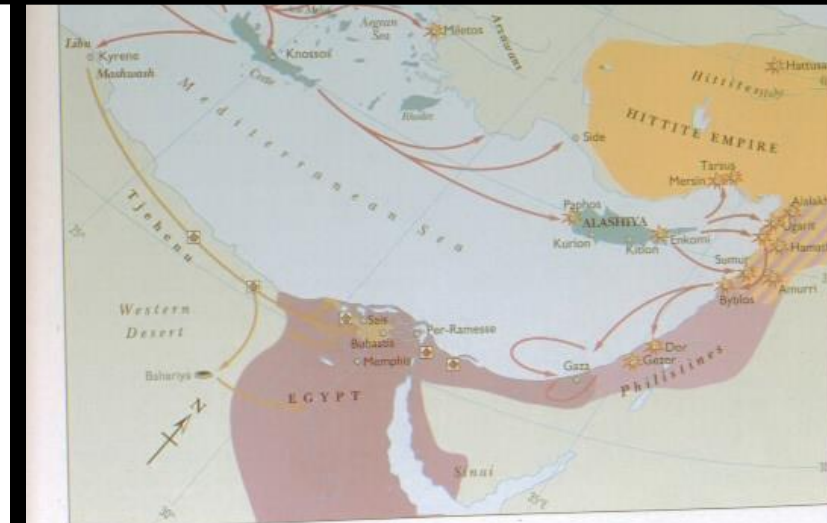
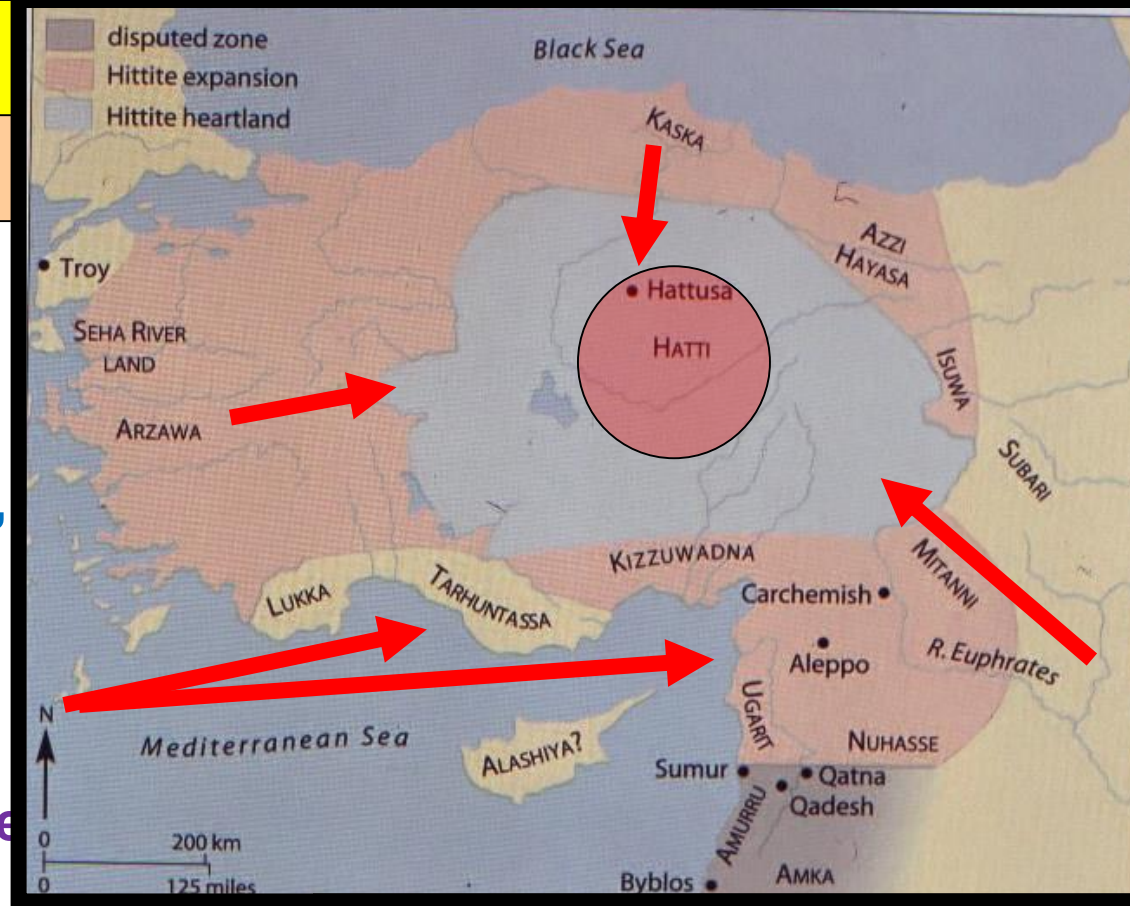


Ramesses III.

Destruction of the Hittites:

● The Hittite empire fell from a combination of factors:

1. Increasing pressures from hostile Assyrians in N. Iraq,
2. Civil strife in E. Anatolia, rebellions in W. Anatolia,
3. hostile Northern Kaska tribes attacking Khatti,
4. Internal unrest in Hittite homeland,
5. Coastal raids by Sea Peoples (tipping fragile balance).
6. Etc.





Reconstruction of Hattusha -- capital of Hittite Empire

Hittite empire collapses: suffered from

- Drought & famine,
- Strife over royal succession,
- External pressures (raids; revolts),
- Invasion from norther tribes (Kaska).
- Etc.



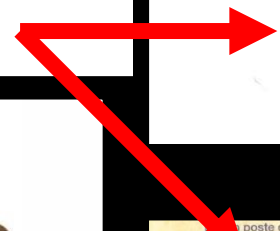
4.

**End of the Late Bronze Age
Ca. “1200 BCE” (1177 BC)**

**From the perspective
of the Levant (i.e., mostly
Hittite Empire) and
Cyprus (Alashiya).**

LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC

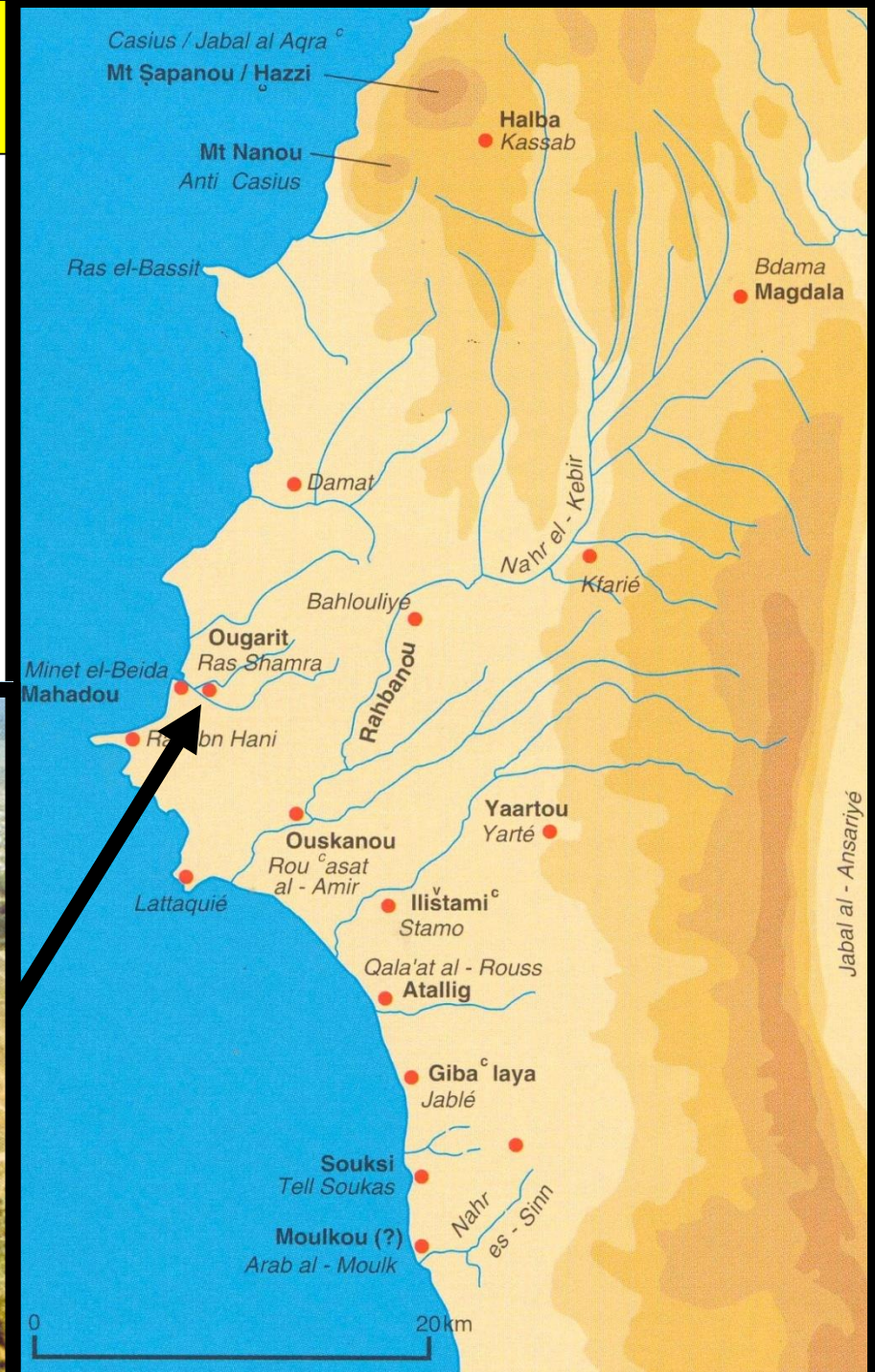
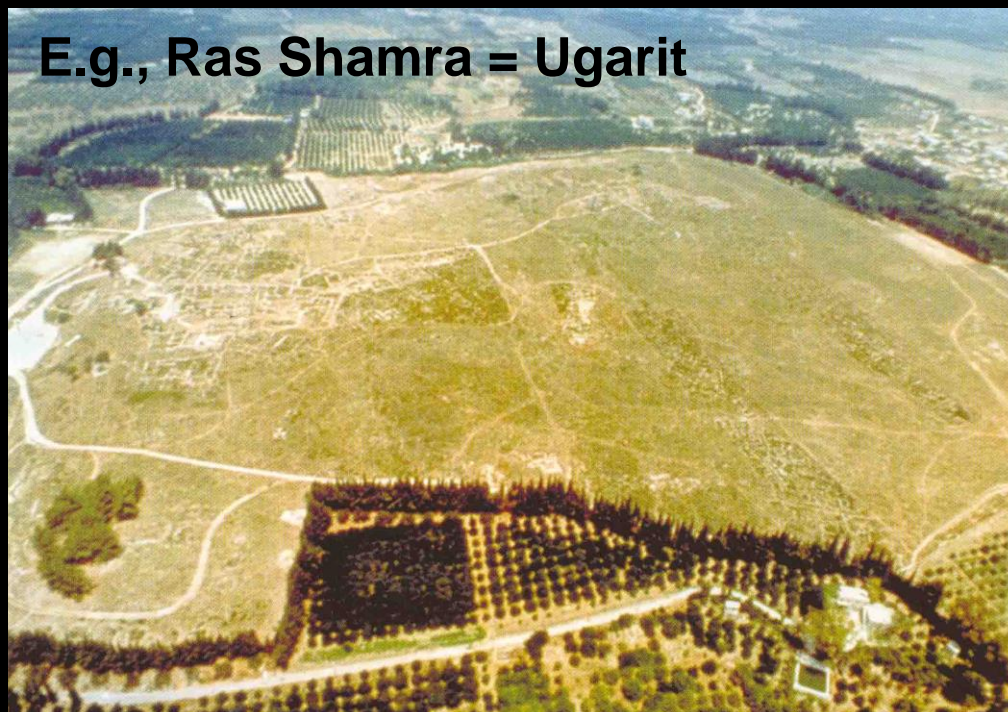
- **This East Mediterranean turmoil puts a virtual end, albeit temporarily, to regular East-West commerce.**
- **Mycenaean & Cypriot pottery stops being imported into the Levant-Egypt.**
- **Major Levantine cities are destroyed, such as Ugarit & Alalakh.**



BACKGROUND: Late Bronze Age.
LB 2B: 1300 – 1200 BC.

Northern SYRIA:
Hittite Amurru & N. Phoenicia/Lebanon

- **Withdrawal of Hittite troops** to protect the homeland & strategic areas.
- **Removal of vassal troops** to bolster threatened regions of Hittite empire
- **Increased attacks by Bedouin** against weakened areas: **Shasu?: 'Apiru?: etc.**

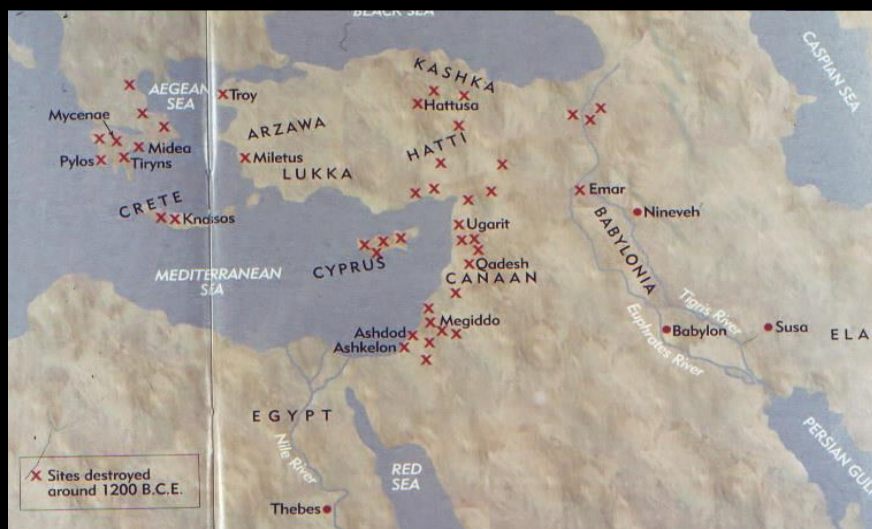


Ramesses III : 1184-1153 BC

● Fall of Syrian kingdoms:

-Late 13th century BC archives at Ugarit → 3 letters between Hammurabi of Ugarit & King & Steward of Alashiya (Cyprus):

A. High Steward of Alashiya tells Hammurabi of Ugarit that 20 enemy ships, *which had been under observation*, have disappeared; he warns Hammurabi to be on guard



Ramesses III : 1184-1153

● Cypriot letter-1:

"Greetings to yourself, and to your country. As to those matters concerning the enemy. It was indeed men of your country (**Ugarit**) and your boats that did it, your people were indeed responsible for that offence, but don't complain to me. The twenty boats that the enemy left previously in the mountainous parts did not stay there, but they went off suddenly, and now we don't know where to look for them. I write to inform you, and to put you on your guard."



Ramesses III : 1184-1153

● **Cypriot letter-2:**
B.King of Alashiya warns Hammurabi of Ugarit
advising him to fortify & prepare his towns & troops against attacks:



A complete set of fourteenth-century-BC Mycenaean body armour found near Midea, and now in Nauplion Museum



"Thus says the King to Hammurabi King of Ugarit. Greetings, may the gods keep you in good health. What you have written to me "enemy shipping has been sighted at sea." Well now, even if it is true that enemy ships have been sighted, be firm. Indeed then, what of your troops, your chariots, where are they stationed? Are they stationed close at hand or are they not? Who presses you behind the enemy? Fortify your towns, bring the troops and chariots into them, and wait for the enemy with feet firm."

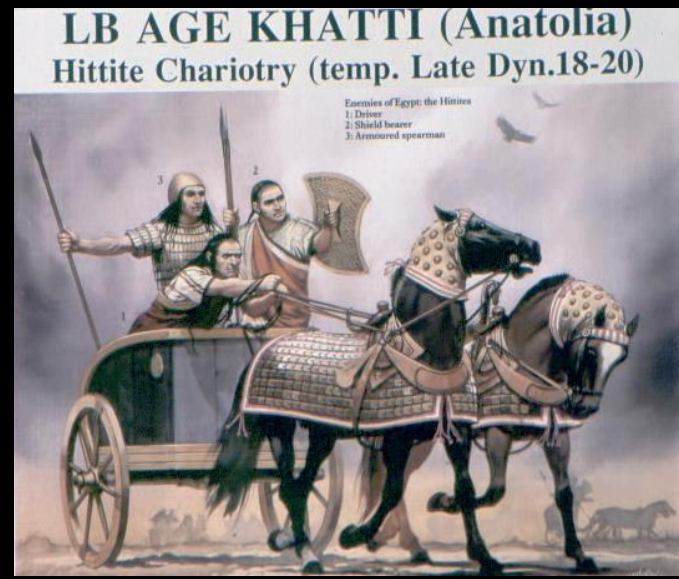


Ramesses III : 1184-1153 BC

Ugarit letter of response:

C. The seriousness and desperation of the situation is relayed in the “*last message*” (= **conjectured**) prepared by the subordinate ruler of Ugarit to the King of Alashiya

"To the king of Alashiya. My father, thus says the King of Ugarit to his son. I fall at my father's feet. Greetings to my father, to your house, your wives, your troops, to all that belongs to the King of Alashiya, many many greetings. **My father, the enemy ships are already here**, they have set fire to my towns and have done very great damage in the country. My father, did you not know that all my troops were stationed in the Hittite country, and that all my ships are still stationed in Lycia and have not yet returned? So that the country is abandoned to itself ... Consider this my father, there are seven enemy ships that have come and done very great damage. Now if there are more enemy ships let me know about them so that I can decide what to do" [or "know the worst"]



Ramesses III : 1184-1153

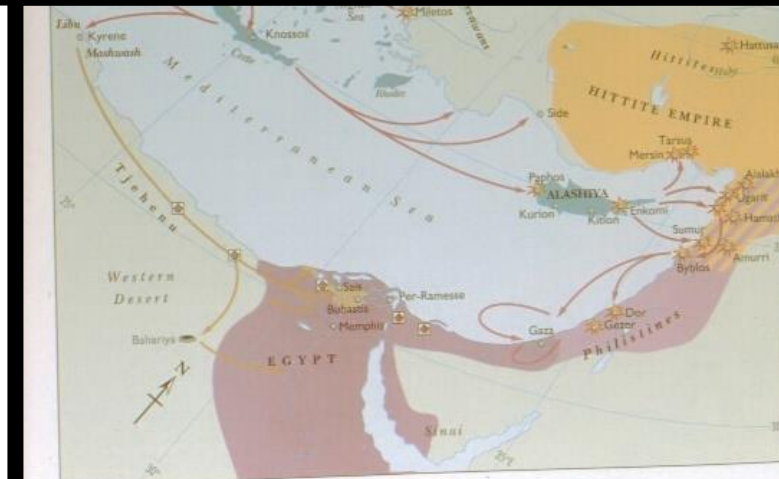
● Ugarit letter of response:

-These words may mark the “last official” dictation of the King of Ugarit **(this is debated).**

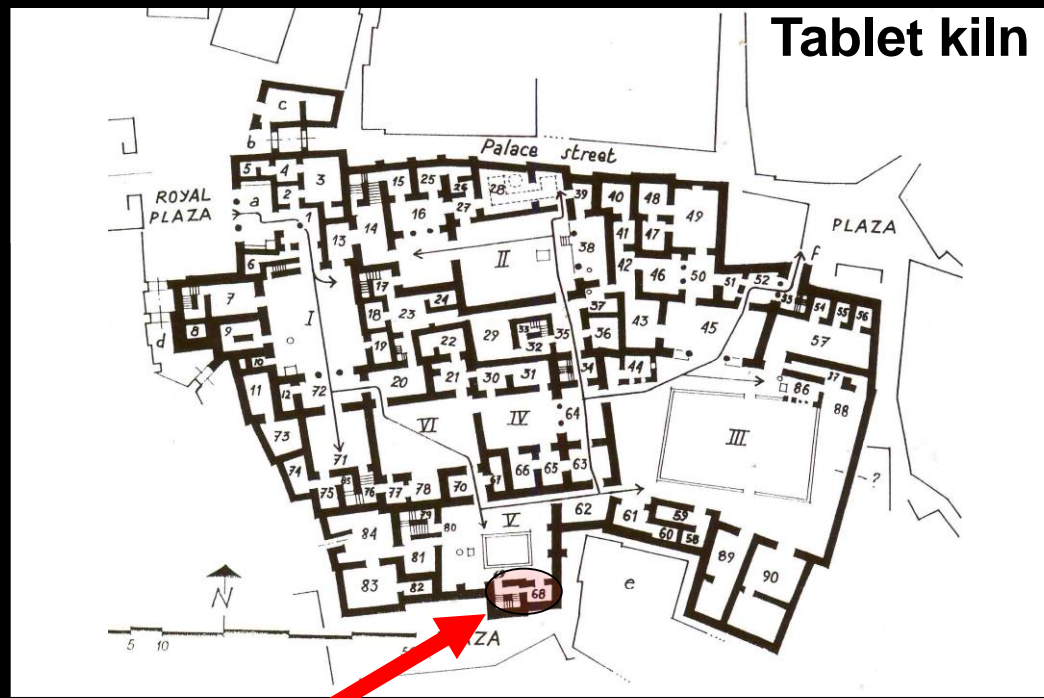
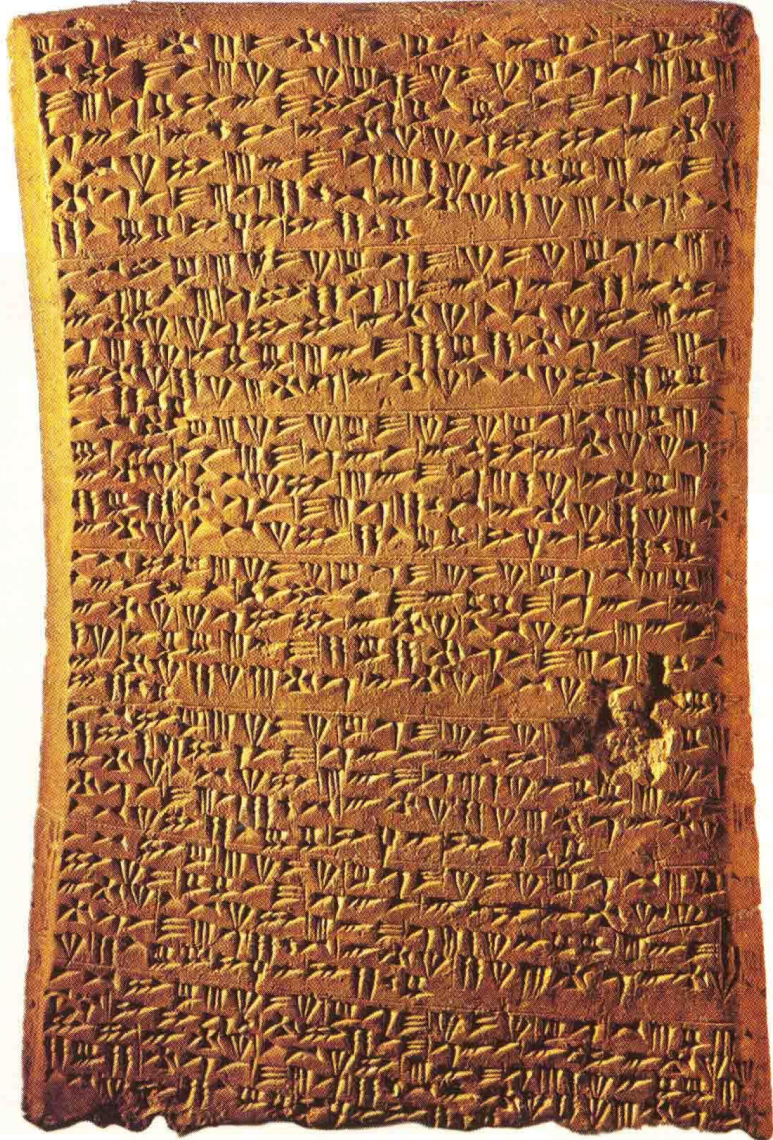
-The clay tablet was sent to the kiln to be baked --before being dispatched.

-But the city was attacked, plundered, and burnt down, *leaving the letter unbaked and still inside the palace kiln (disputed now!).*

-The diverse groups of Sea Peoples, invaders and migrants (displaced refugees) overran Syria and Amurru (near Byblos), *and halted briefly to reconsolidate before attacking Egypt's vassals in Palestine.*



Ras Shamra: Ugarit & palace.
Port city under Hittite domination
in LB 2B (Dyn.19): 1300-1200 BC

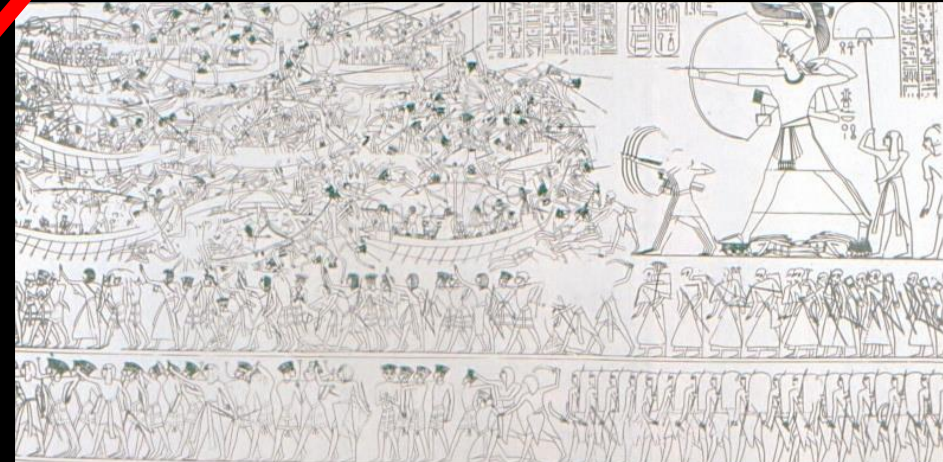


Palace

LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC



● Many cities destroyed in Cyprus are occupied by Aegean raiders/settlers.



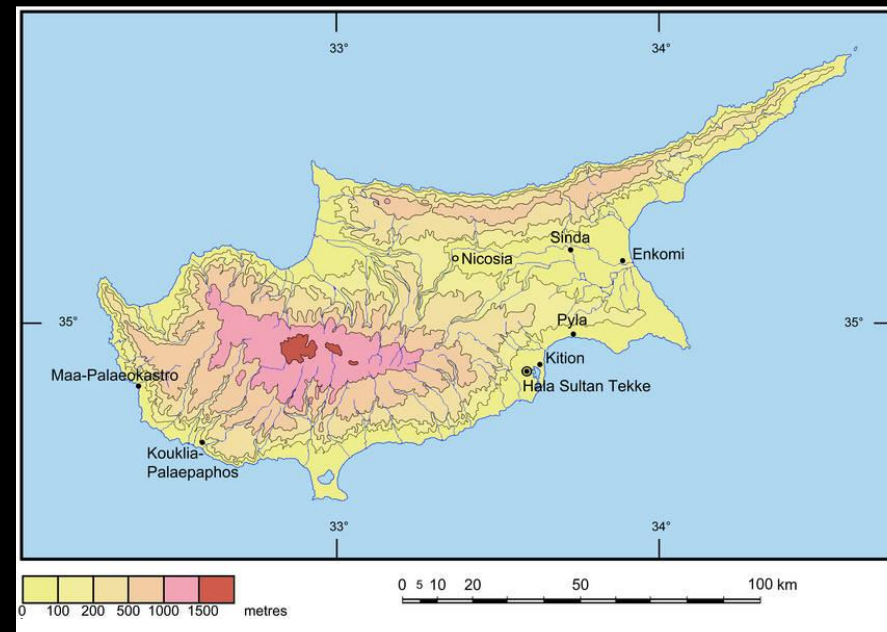
Cyprus Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details: Like Aegean, Anatolia & Levant...

- **Cyprus experienced similar ...**
 - a. site destructions (e.g., Kition; Enkomi),
 - b. abandonment (e.g., Maroni-Vournes; Kalavassos-Ayios Dimitrios), and
 - c. turmoil around 1200 BCE (Knapp 2013, 447–48), **but yields closer links to the Sea Peoples and related activities**
- **For much of the preceding 14th - 13th centuries BCE, the Hittites may have dominated or even controlled key portions of Cyprus:**

E.g., King Šuppiluliuma II refers to naval activity against maritime pirates in this region and a subsequent land battle on Alashiya (Cyprus)

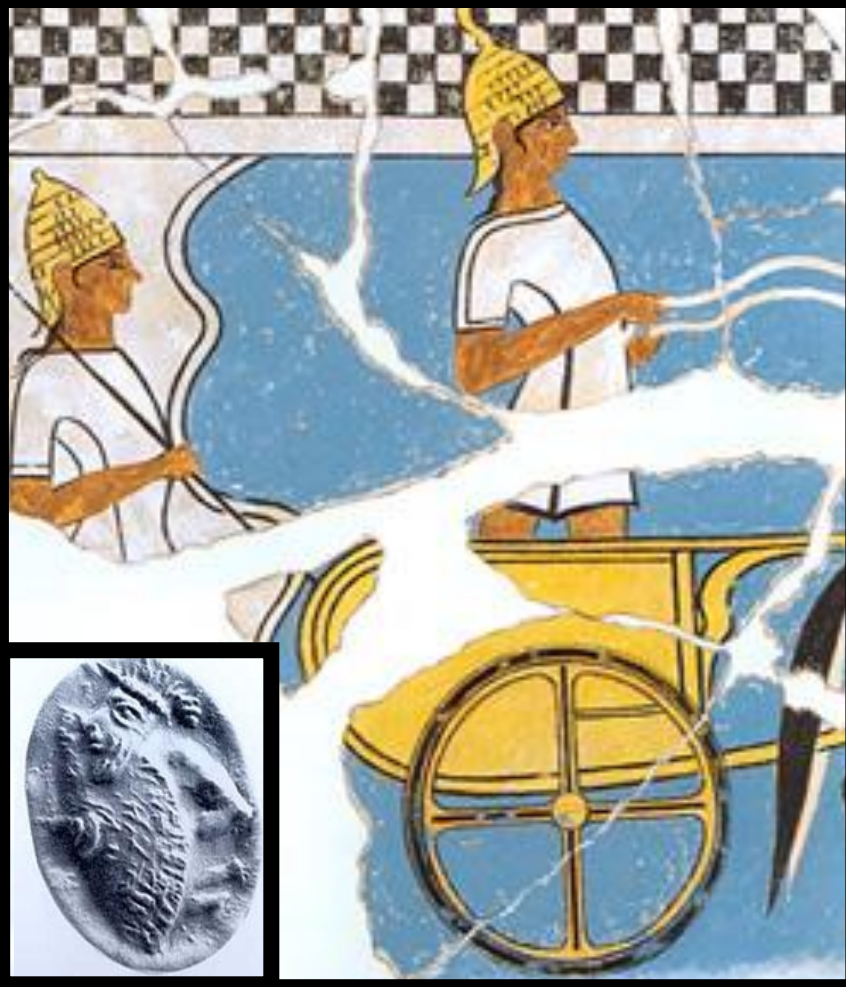
E.g., Correspondence between the Hittite vassal ruler of Ugarit & the king of Alashiya reveals hostile Sea Peoples' fleets, coastal raids, plus other maritime marauders in this region **immediately prior to ca. 1200 BCE** (Karageorghis 1982, 82–84; Knapp 2013, 448).



Cyprus Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

- One probable Sea Peoples-affiliated group, the Mycenaeans, display close links with Cyprus, especially during the 13th cent. BCE (Late Cypriot IIC) & later:
 - a. Imported & locally copied **Mycenaean** (Late Helladic) **IIIB pottery & motifs, bronze equipment & weaponry** (Enkomi Tomb 18: greaves & a Naue II-type sword), and **other items in settlements and burials;**
 - b. **Other Cypriot artifacts** have typical “Sea People”-type warriors with flaring helmets, circular shields, and tasseled kilts (e.g., **Enkomi stamp seal & ivory game box**) (Mee 2008, 375–77; Karageorghis 1982, 84–85, fig. 68).



Ayia Sotira Tomb 4: late LB Age

<http://cig-icg.blogspot.com/2012/10/>



Cyprus Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:



Late Cypriot burial assemblage at Enkomi

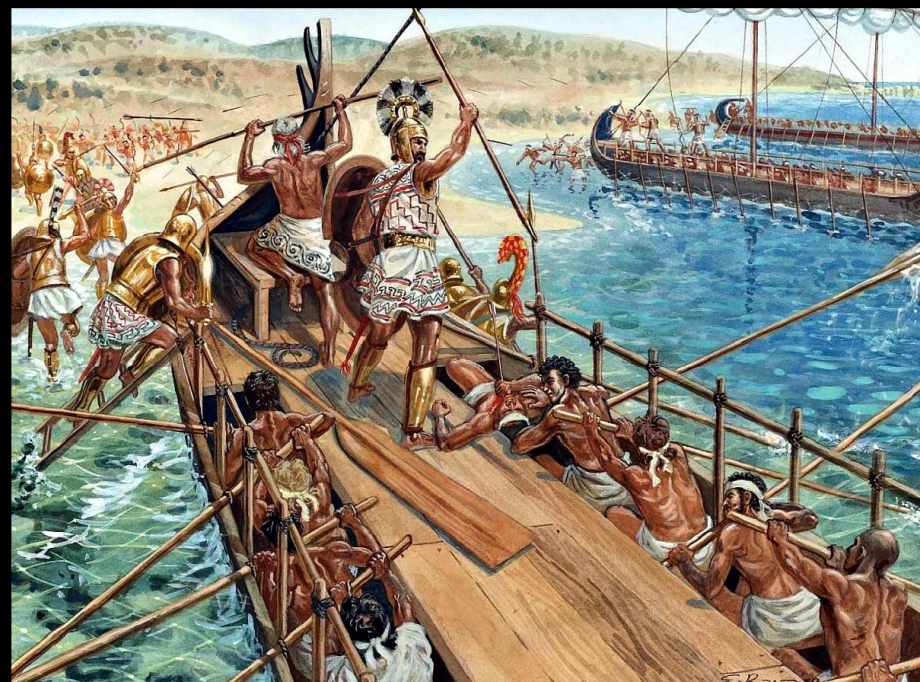
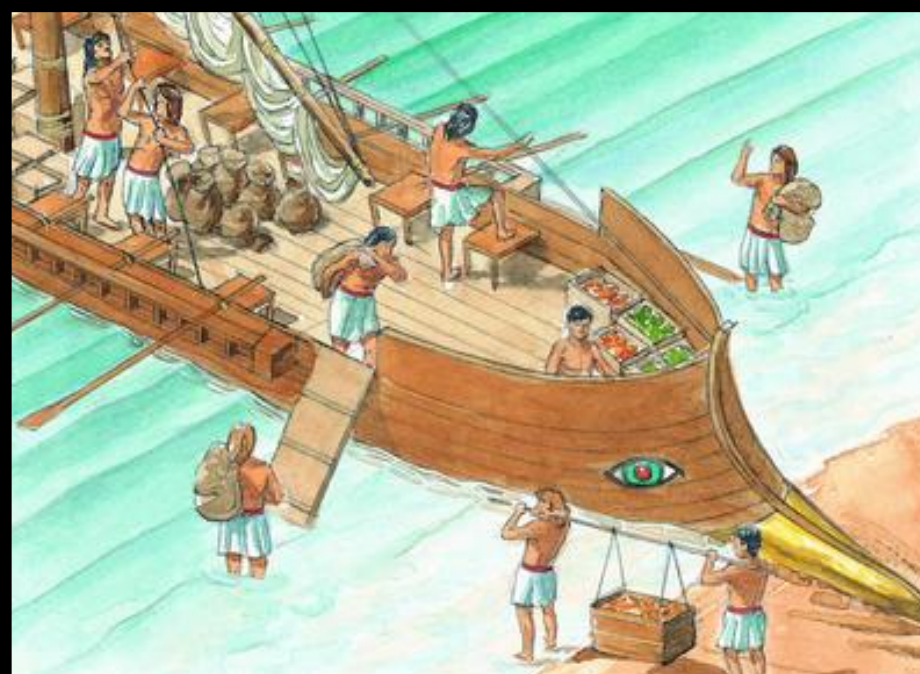
- Cyprus also contains ...:
 - a. Some imported “Trojan ware” (“Grey ware”) at Kition, Enkomi & elsewhere, suggesting *additional links with NW Anatolian & Aegean* (Karageorghis 1982, 86).



Cyprus Ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

- However, the archaeological and historical data enable a broad range of interpretations concerning the significance of Aegean and West Anatolian imported items, influences, and local copies.
- **For example:**
 - a. Indirect Aegean trade,
 - b. Mycenaean traders,
 - c. Transitory migrants (emissaries; mercenaries; raiders),
 - d. Captives/booty, and
 - e. Potential limited Aegean settlement (i.e., colonization) within a predominant **Cypriot population**.



5.

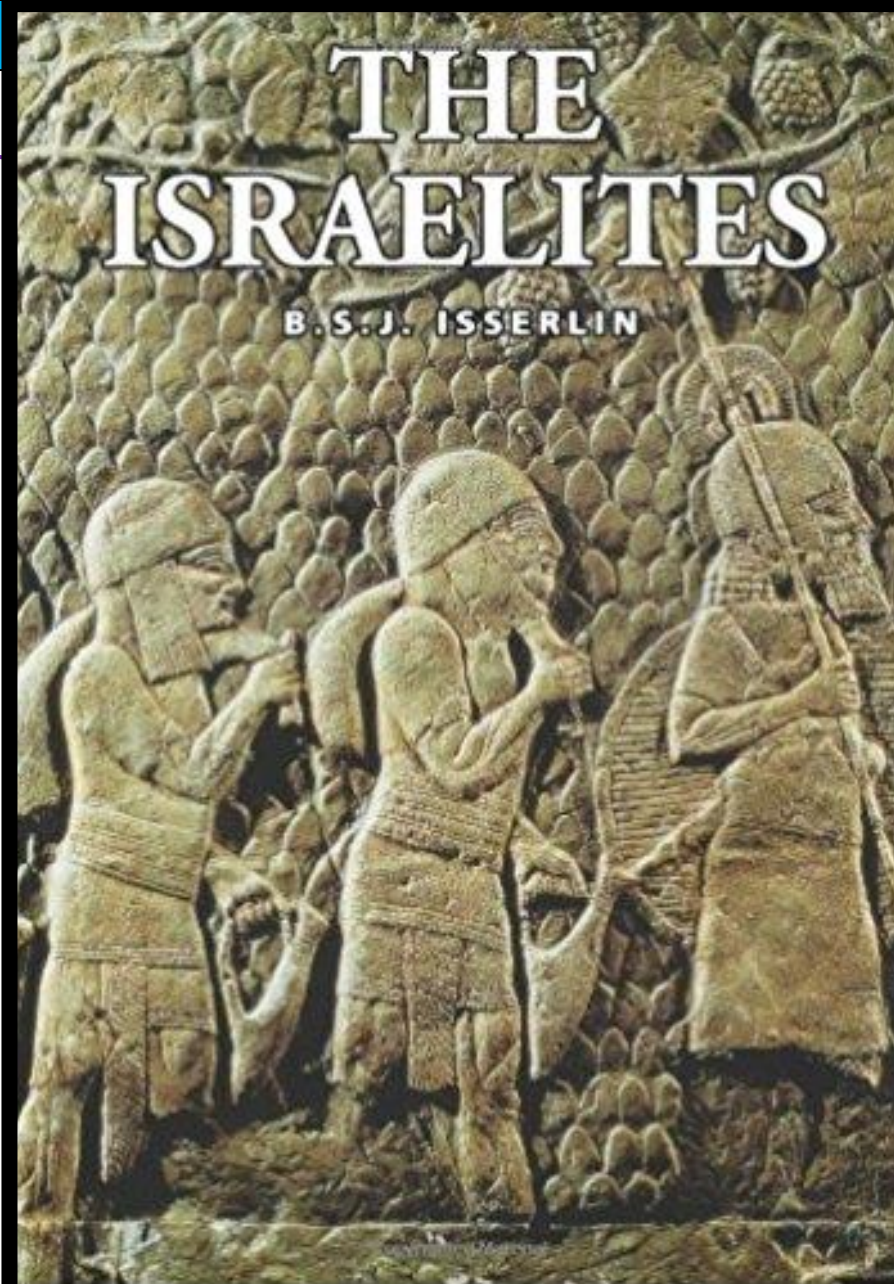
**End of the Late Bronze Age
Ca. “1200 BCE” (1177 BC)**

**From the perspective
of the Levant (i.e., mostly
Egyptian Empire):
Ramesse III ...**

Canaan ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

- Canaan exhibits a variety of destruction levels, decline, impoverishment, and abandonment at different sites during 13th cent. BCE → early Iron Age that can be attributed to different scenarios:
 - a. Local nomadic raids (e.g., Shasu; 'apiru);
 - b. Sea Peoples' attacks (e.g., Ugarit);
 - c. Egypt's subjugation of the Israelites and others (attested in Merenptah's "Israel" stela);
 - d. Israelite conquest (described in later biblical texts [see Merenptah Stela];
 - e. Warring city states (especially in the northern Levant);
 - f. Egyptian conflict with & suppression of rebellious vassal city states (e.g., Ashkelon);
 - g. Potential civil uprisings (**1250 BCE** destruction of Hazor XIII citadel).



Canaan ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

Details:

- h. Earthquakes (Deir el-'Alla; Lachish);
- i. and more obscure socio-economic, political, and other factors (e.g., depopulation: **Jericho** remained unoccupied for much of the LB Age).
- Although northern Syria fell under Hittite control during much of Late Bronze Age IIA-B (Bryce 2014), this region experienced fluctuating conflict with Egypt, Mitanni, Assyria, and Hatti, while the stabilization of a frontier between the Egypt and Hatti (in year 21 of Ramesses II: mid-13th cent.) did not end the internal strife and regional warfare during the remainder of the Late Bronze Age (Spalinger 2005).

E.g., 365 CE earthquake



Ramesses III.

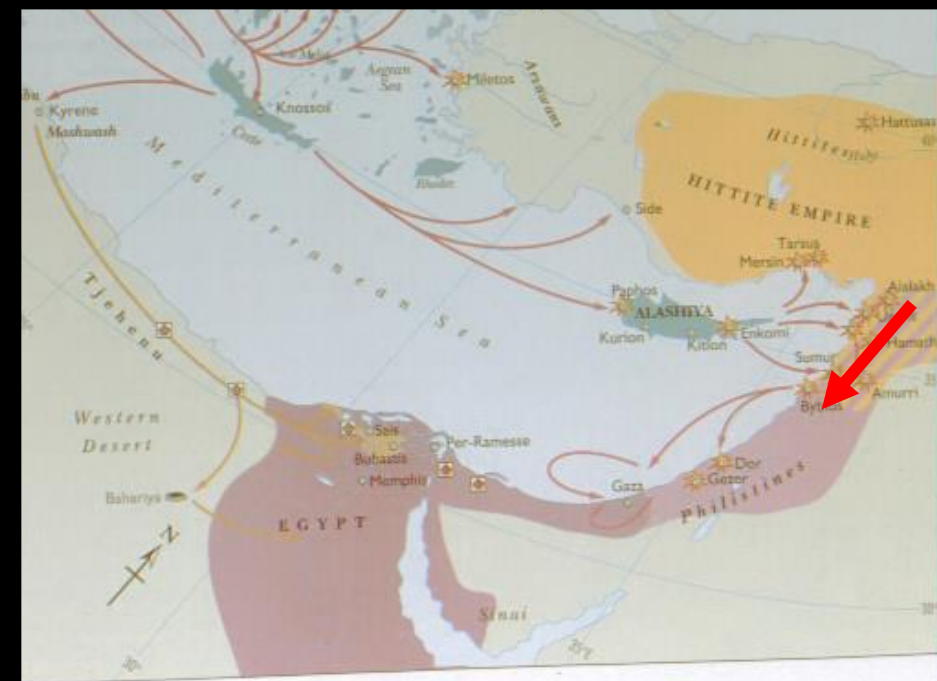
Sea Peoples advance on Egypt:

- Sea Peoples' preparations to attack Egyptian territory are described as follows:

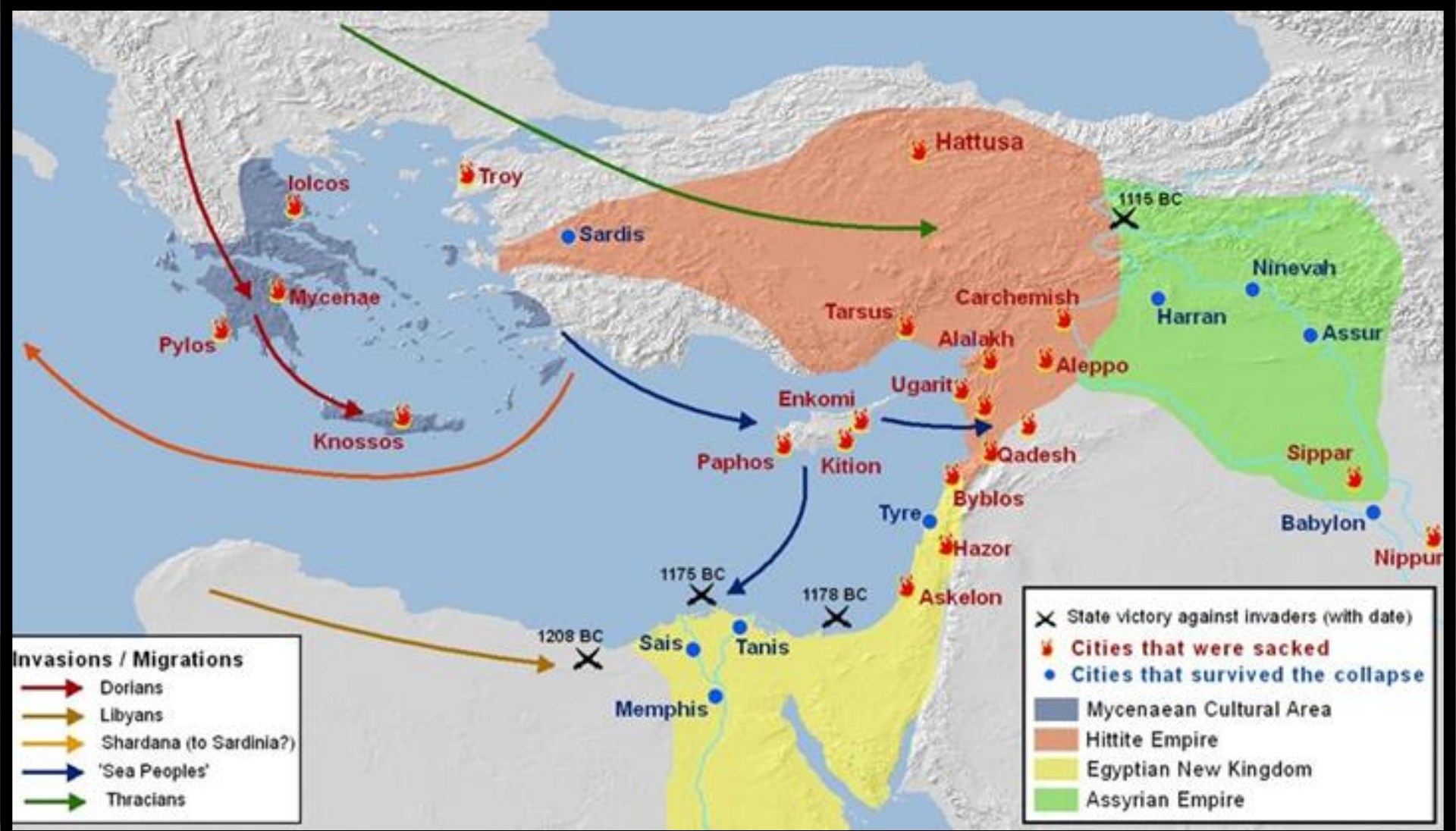
"A camp [was set up] in one place in Amor (Syria). They desolated its people, and its land was like that which has never come into being.

They were coming forward toward Egypt, while the flame was prepared before them.

Their confederation was the Peleset, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denye(n), and Weshwesh, lands united."



SEA PEOPLES & RISE OF EARLY IRON AGE KINGDOMS: 12th-11th cent. BCE



Ramesses III.

Land battle in Syria-Pal.:

- -R-III claims success in stopping
 - overland migrations and
 - Sea Peoples' maritime invasion:

"Now the heart of this god, the Lord of the Gods, was prepared and ready to ensnare them like birds ...

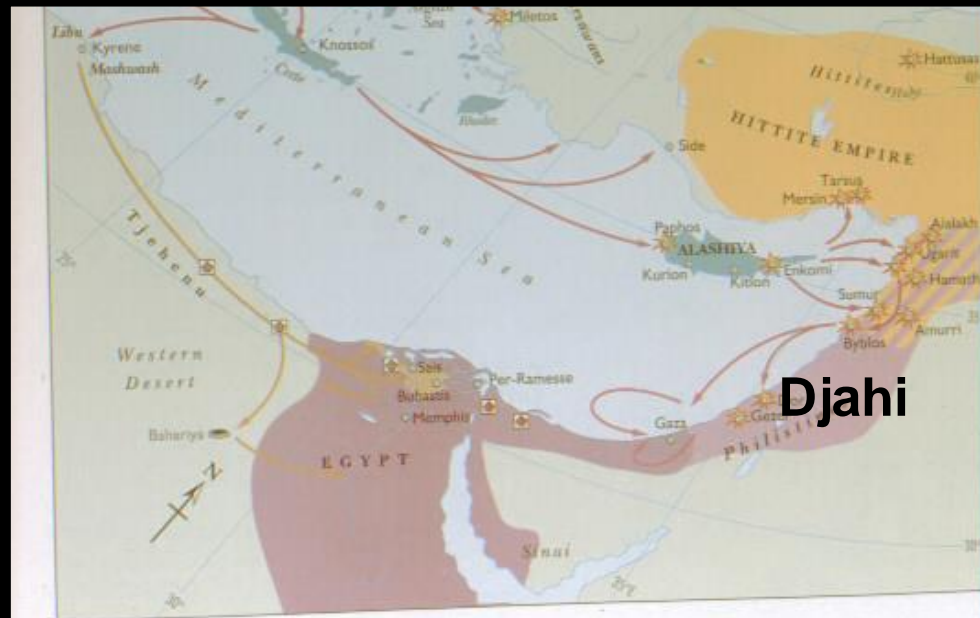
I organized my frontier in Djahi, prepared before them: princes, commanders of garrisons, and maryanu"

R-III is described as setting

"... out for Djahi, like unto Montu, to crush every foreign country that violates his frontier.

His troops are like bulls ready upon the field of battle; his horses are like falcons in the midst of small birds"

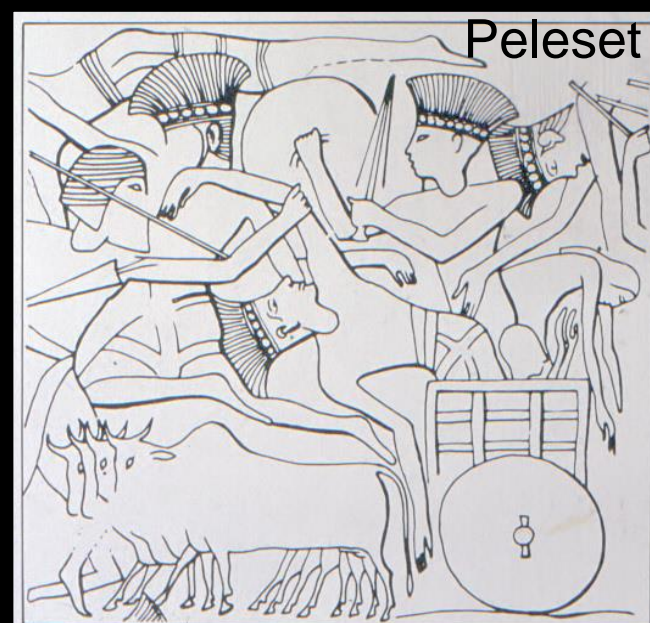
Dyn.20: Ramesses III (Medinet Habu)



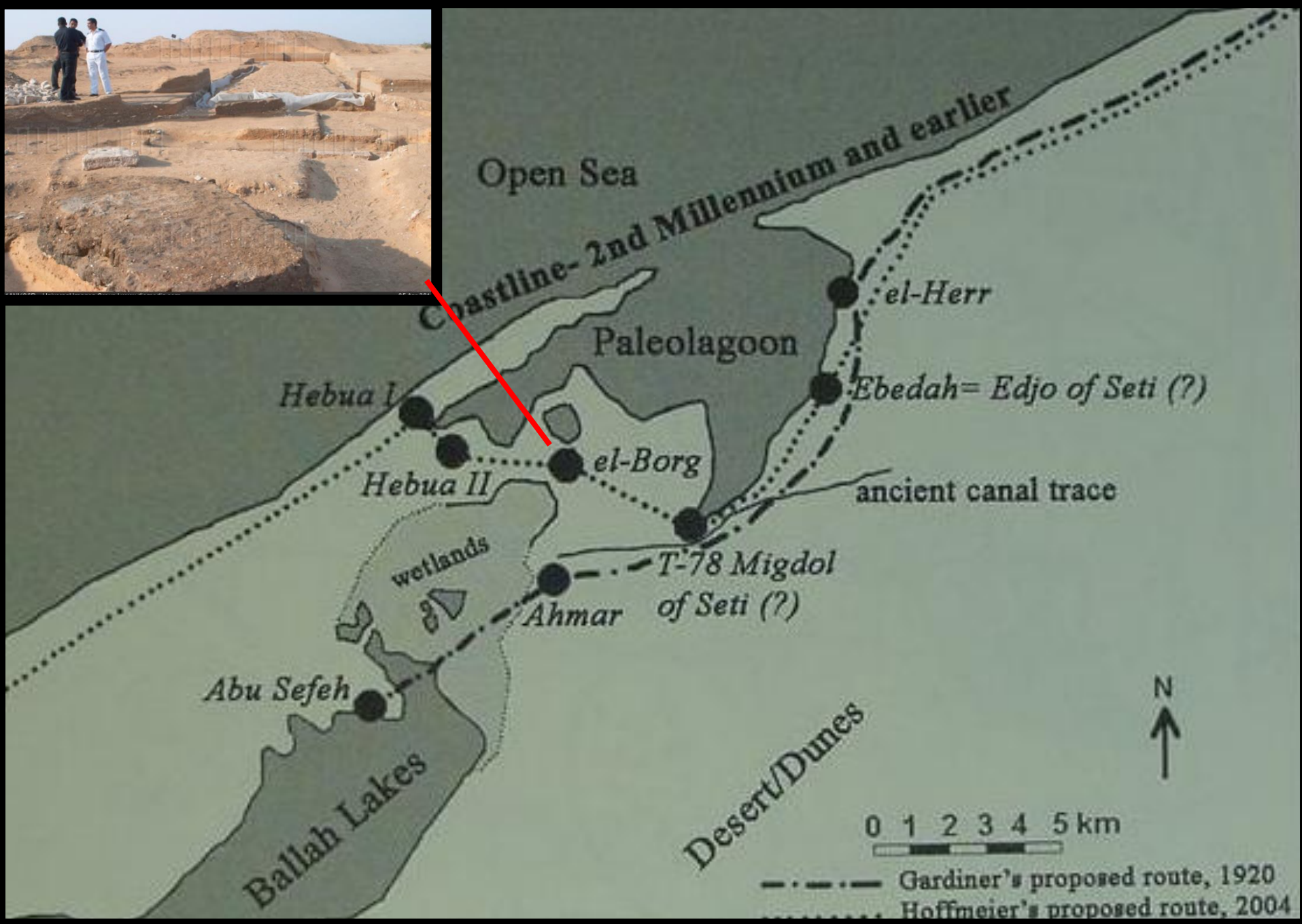
Ramesses III.

Land battle in Syria-Pal.:

- Depictions show the invaders included ox-drawn carts with women, children & possessions.
- This indicates a mass migration of refugees rather than a simple military raid.
- These displaced populations aspired to settle in Palestine and Egypt.
- But Egypt's forces effectively stopped them somewhere in Palestine -- before they reached the eastern frontier in the Sinai?
Hoffmeier now suggests they reached Tel Borg
In NW Sinai: Destruction of Ramesside fort ...
- Egypt incorporated captives into its military machine and state and temple institutions.



Tell el-Borg: Late Ramesside fort destroyed: Sea Peoples? Others?

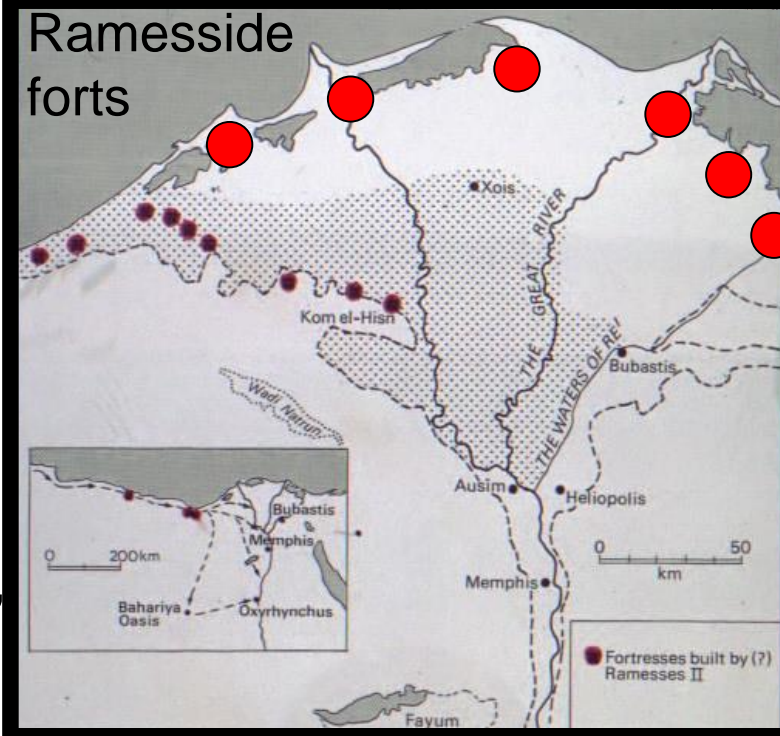
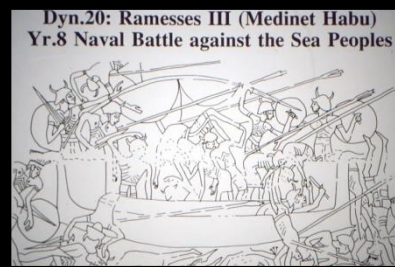


Ramesses III : 1184-1153 BC

Preparations for the Sea Battle:

- Sea Peoples' fleet → E. Delta.
- Texts relate R-III's preparation using troop ships & chariotry units:

"I have the river-mouths prepared like a strong wall, with warships, galleys and coasters, (fully) equipped, for they were manned completely from bow to stern with valiant warriors carrying their weapons. The troops consisted of every picked man of Egypt. They were like lions roaring upon the mountain tops. The chariotry consisted of runners, of picked men, of every good and capable chariot-warrior. The horses were quivering in every part of their hoofs. I was valiant Montu, standing fast at their head, so that they might gaze upon the capturing of my hands ..."



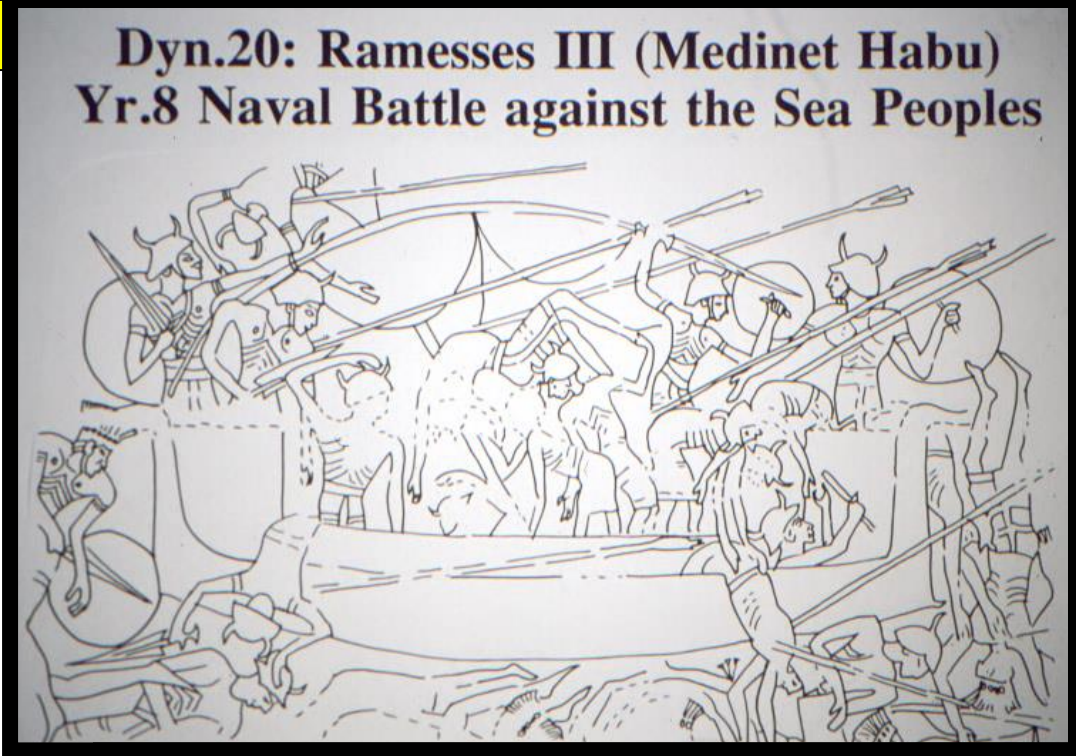
Ramesses III.

The Sea Battle:

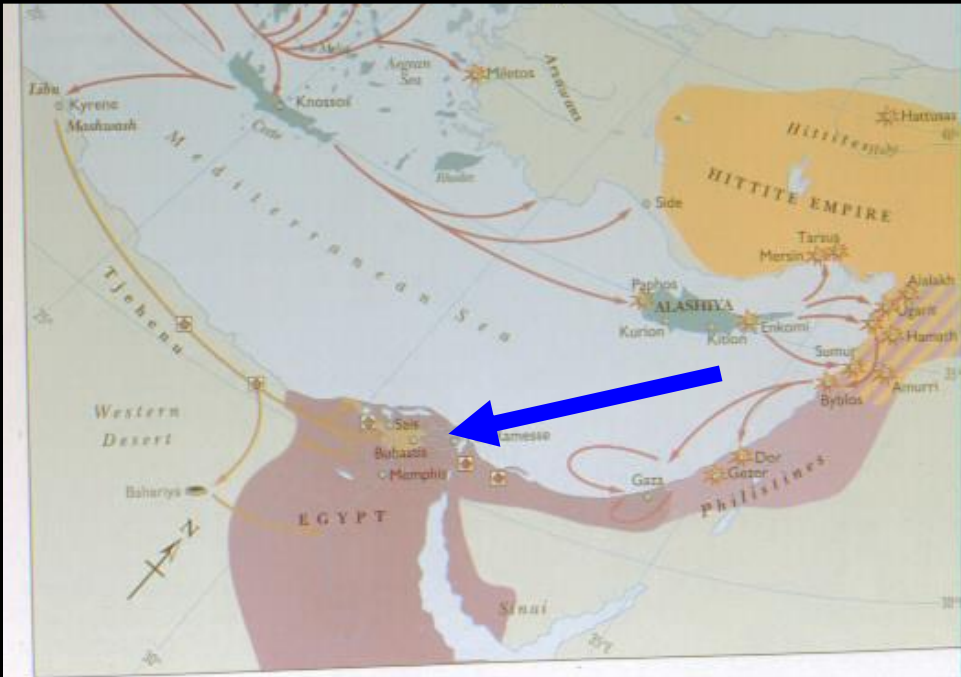
● Sea-battle = depicted at Medinet Habu:

-R-III battle narration:

"Those who came forward together on the sea, the full flame was in front of them at the river mouths, while a stockade of lances surrounded them on the shore. They were dragged in, enclosed, and prostrated on the beach, killed, and made into heaps from tail to head. Their ships and their goods were as if fallen into the water"



Dyn.20: Ramesses III (Medinet Habu)
Yr.8 Naval Battle against the Sea Peoples



Dyn.20: Ramesses III (Medinet Habu)



Ramesses III: Battle against the Sea Peoples' coalition



Ramesses III.

● The Sea Battle:

"Now then, the northern countries,
which were in their islands, were quivering in their bodies.

They penetrated the channels of the river mouths.

Their nostrils have ceased (to function,
so) their desire is to breathe the breath.

His Majesty has gone forth like a whirlwind against them,
fighting on the battlefield like a runner.

The dread of him and the terror of him
have entered into their bodies.

They are capsized and overwhelmed where they are.

Their heart is taken away, their soul is flown away.

Their weapons are scattered upon the sea.

His arrow pierces whom of them he may have wished,
and the fugitive is become one fallen into the water.

His majesty is like an enraged lion,
attacking his assailant with his arms:

plundering on his right hand and powerful on his left hand,
like Seth destroying the serpent 'Evil of Character'.

It is Amon-Re who has overthrown for him the lands
and has crushed for him every land under his feet"

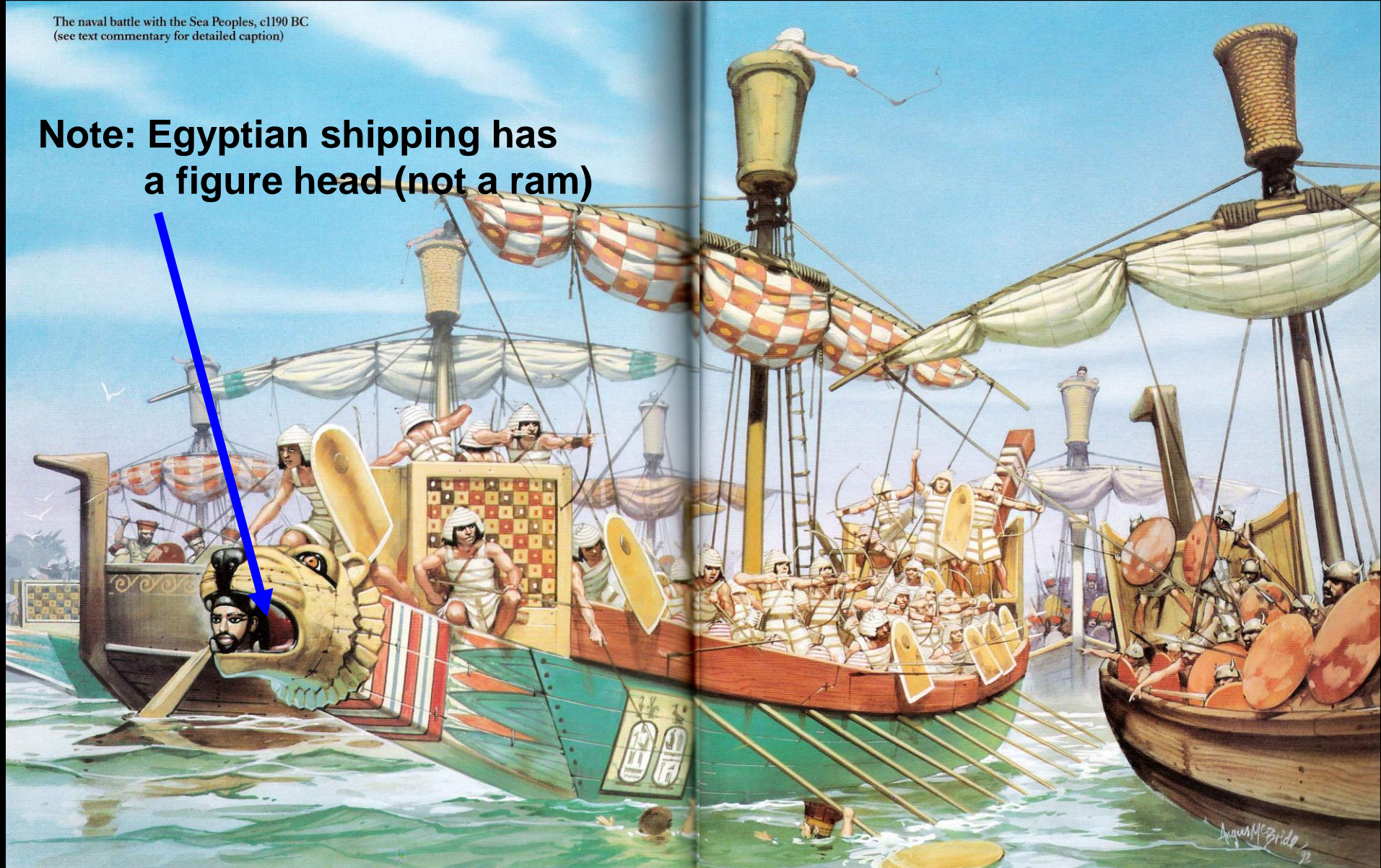
Dyn.20: Ramesses III (Medinet Habu)
Yr.8 Naval Battle against the Sea Peoples



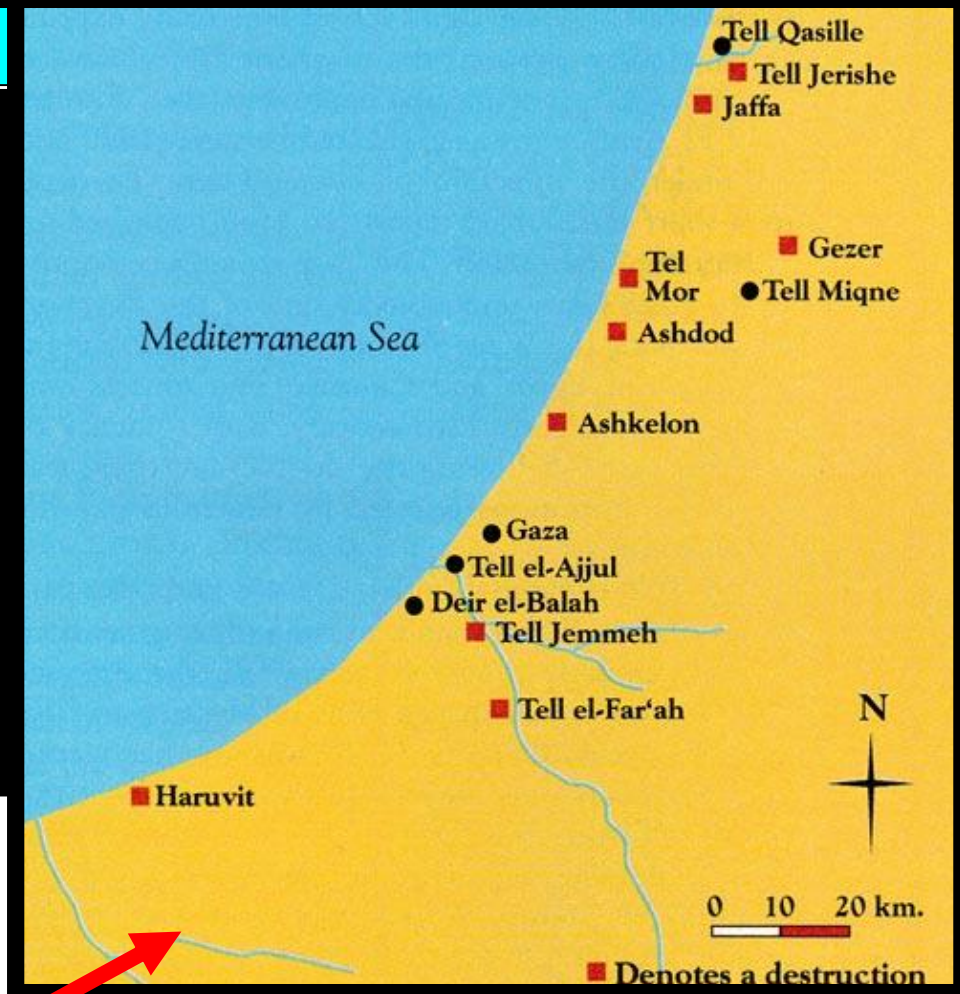
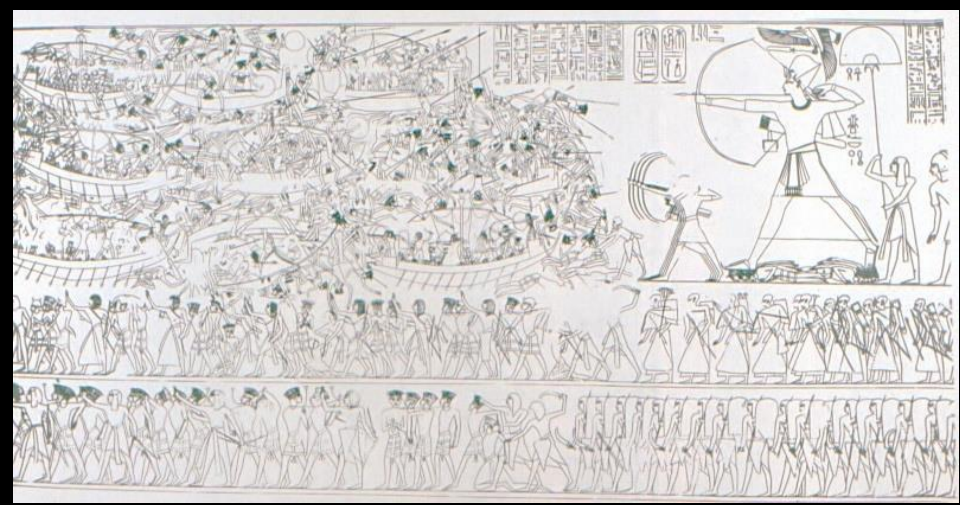
Ramesses III: Battle against the Sea Peoples coalition

The naval battle with the Sea Peoples, c1190 BC
(see text commentary for detailed caption)

**Note: Egyptian shipping has
a figure head (not a ram)**



LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC



- **Egypt & part of its northern empire, withstood the Sea People & refugee raids and migrations, and managed to maintain the empire in Palestine for almost 50 years: 1200-1150 BC. (early Dynasty 20: Ramesses III-VI).**
- **After mid-Dynasty 20 (Ramesses VI), Egypt's northern empire collapses and Egypt becomes progressively weaker.**

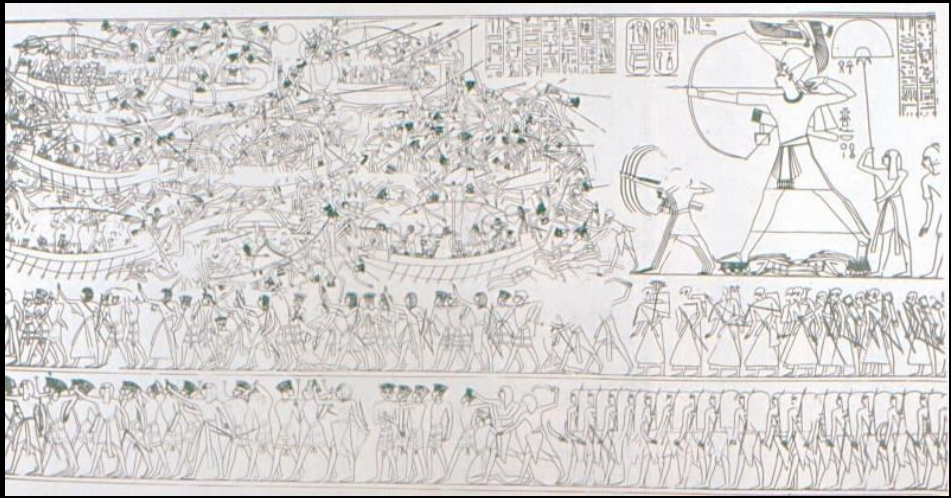


6.

**End of the Late Bronze Age
Ca. “1200 BCE” (1177 BC)**

**Aftermath of the
Sea Peoples’ movements
against Egypt & Canaan:
Ramesse III ...**

LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC



●Egypt & part of its northern empire, withstood the Sea People & refugee raids and migrations, and managed to maintain the empire in Palestine for almost 50 years: 1200-1150 BC. (early Dynasty 20: Ramesses III-VI).



Ramesses III.

Aftermath of sea battle:

-Ramesses III 'allowed' remnants of Peleset & Tjekker to settle in coastal areas of Palestine, *perhaps bound in garrisons in his service.*

-Great Harris Papyrus:

a. Fate of Sea-Peoples in yr-8

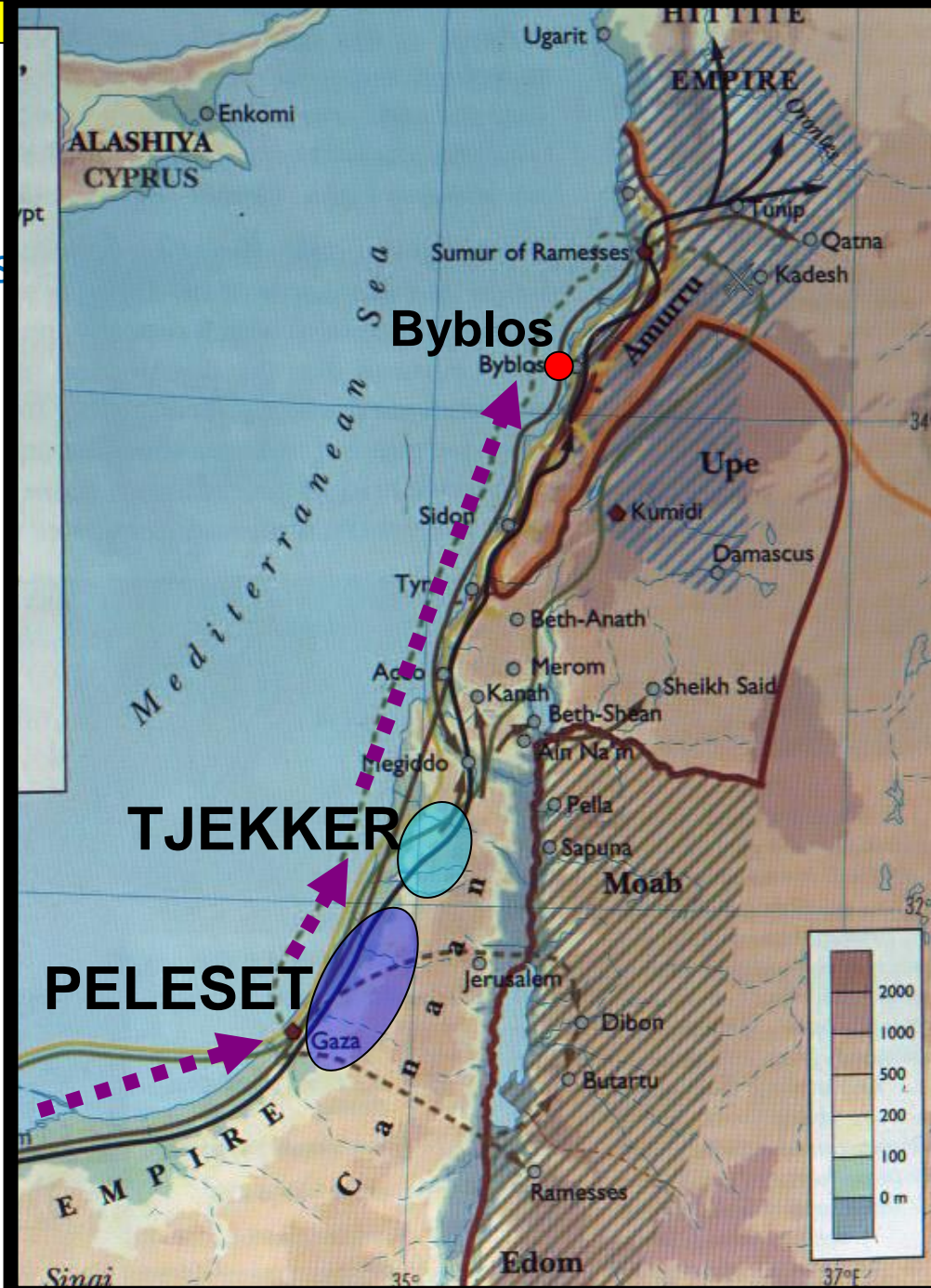
"...I settled them in strongholds, bound in my name. Their military classes were as numerous as hundred-thousands.

I assigned portions for them all with clothing and provisions from the treasuries and granaries every year"

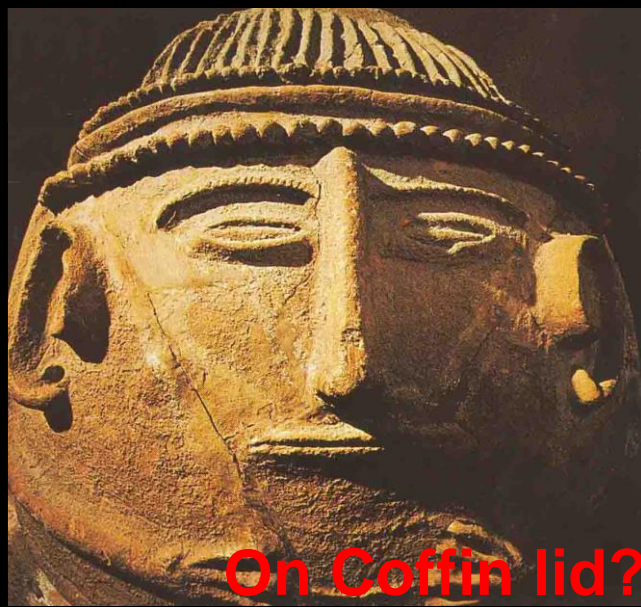
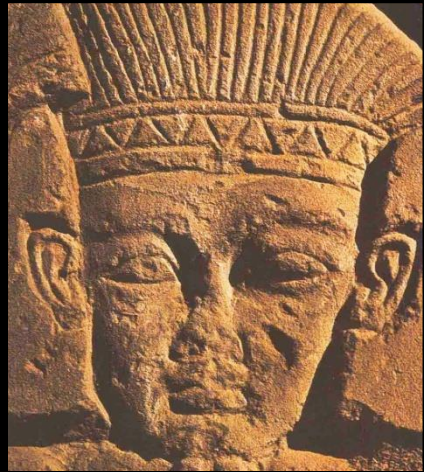
-Both Tjekker and Peleset are attested in Palestine ...

(a). 100 years later in Wenamun's journey to Byblos, and

(b). in later Biblical accounts.



1200 BC Peleset
= the Philistines

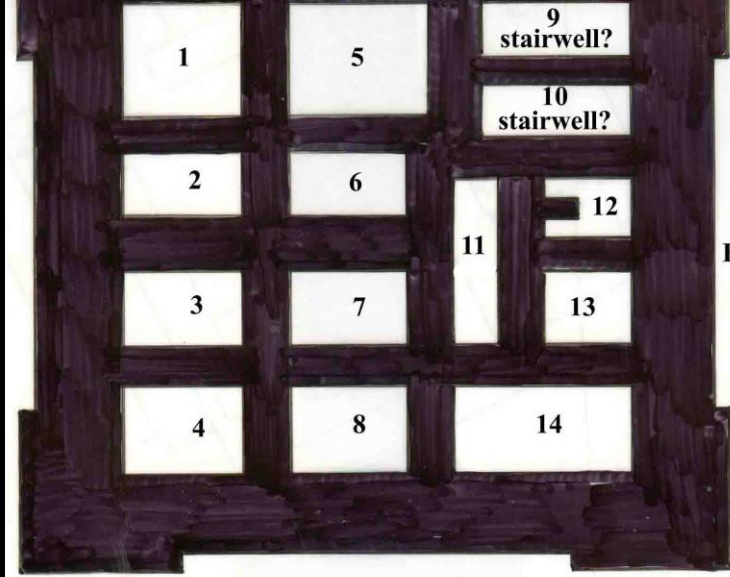
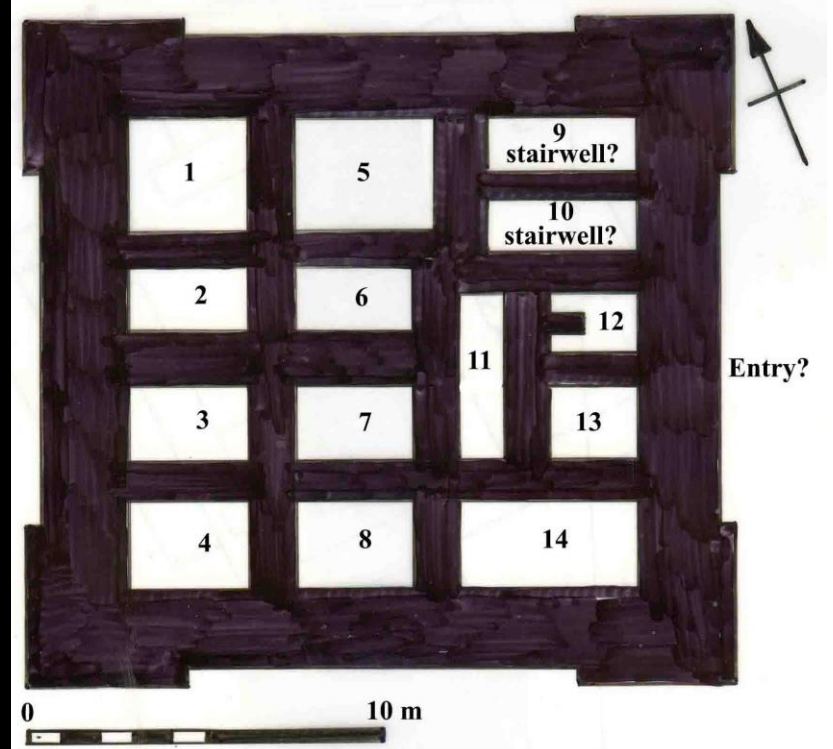
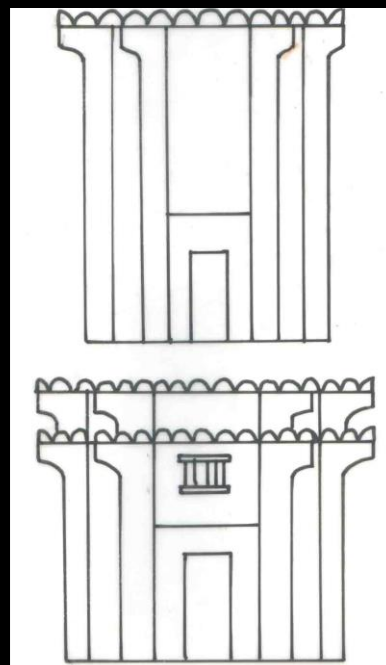


On Coffin lid?



POWs →
Egy. troops

Deir el-Balah



Entry?

0 10 m

Ramesses III.

Year 11:

● Second Libyan invasion.

- Libyan coalition:

1. Libu tribes (eg, Tjehnu)

2. Meshwesh tribes (member of Sea Peoples)

3. Five other tribes (eg, Seped).

- Libyan invasion caught R-III off guard

- Libyans managed to penetrate W. delta *before Egyptian army repelled them & defeated Libyans in W. Delta fringes.*

-W. Delta forts & garrisons participated.



Ramesses III.

Year 11 Libyan invasion:

- Egyptian army slew 2000+ Libyans

- Captured massive amounts of booty e.g., captives and cattle.

- Egyptians captured commander of Meshwesh: **Meshu**.

- R-III killed Meshu's father Keper, and Keper's escort, when they came to beg R-III to release Meshu.

- Despite R-III's claims for total victory (Libyan) raiders infiltrated as far south as Thebes over the next 17 years.

Aftermath: Libyan raids.

- E.g., Ostrakon Deir el-Medina 35: mentions enemy forces raiding Thebes and disrupting work on the royal tomb.



Ramesses III.

Campaign against Edom:

-Great Harris Papyrus mentions a minor campaign against Edomites (in Mt. Seir region of the Negev).

Mining missions to Atika (Negev)

-R-III sent copper mining expeditions to Atika (= Timna).

-Left votive offerings & 1 rock-stela

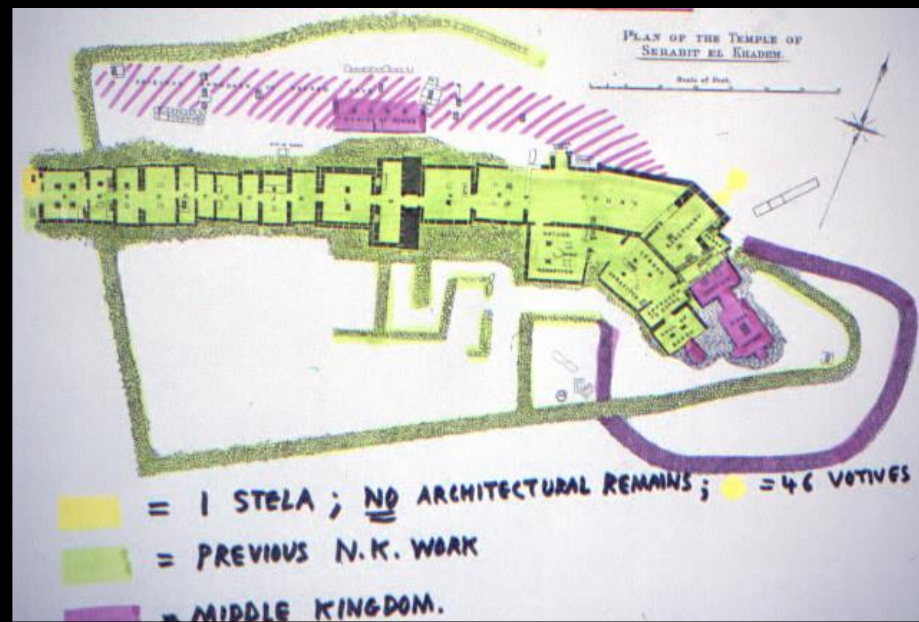
-Rock-cut cartouches in Wadi Radadi 9 km NW of Gulf of Elat (in Negev).

-NEW: Rock-cut cartouches at Tayma

Sinai:

-R-III sent mission to Serabit el-Khadim to mine turquoise.

-He left 45+ royal votives, one stela, & an architectural element at Serabit.



Ramesses III.

● R-III undated campaign:

Subjugation of Seir-Beđu:

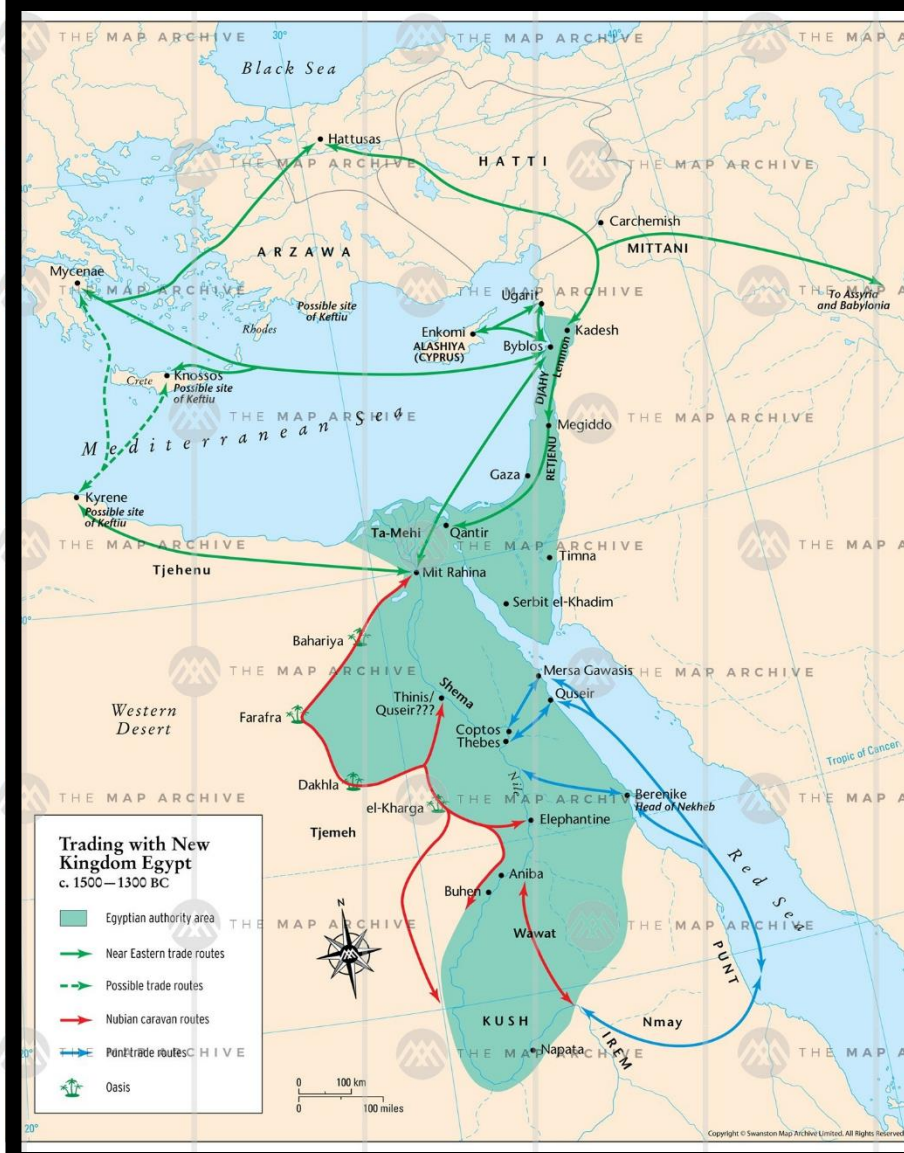
"I destroyed the people of Seir among the Bedouin tribes. I razed their tents: their people, their property, and their cattle as well, without number, pinioned and carried away in captivity, as the tribute of Egypt. I gave them to the Ennead of the gods, as slaves for their houses"



Canaan ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

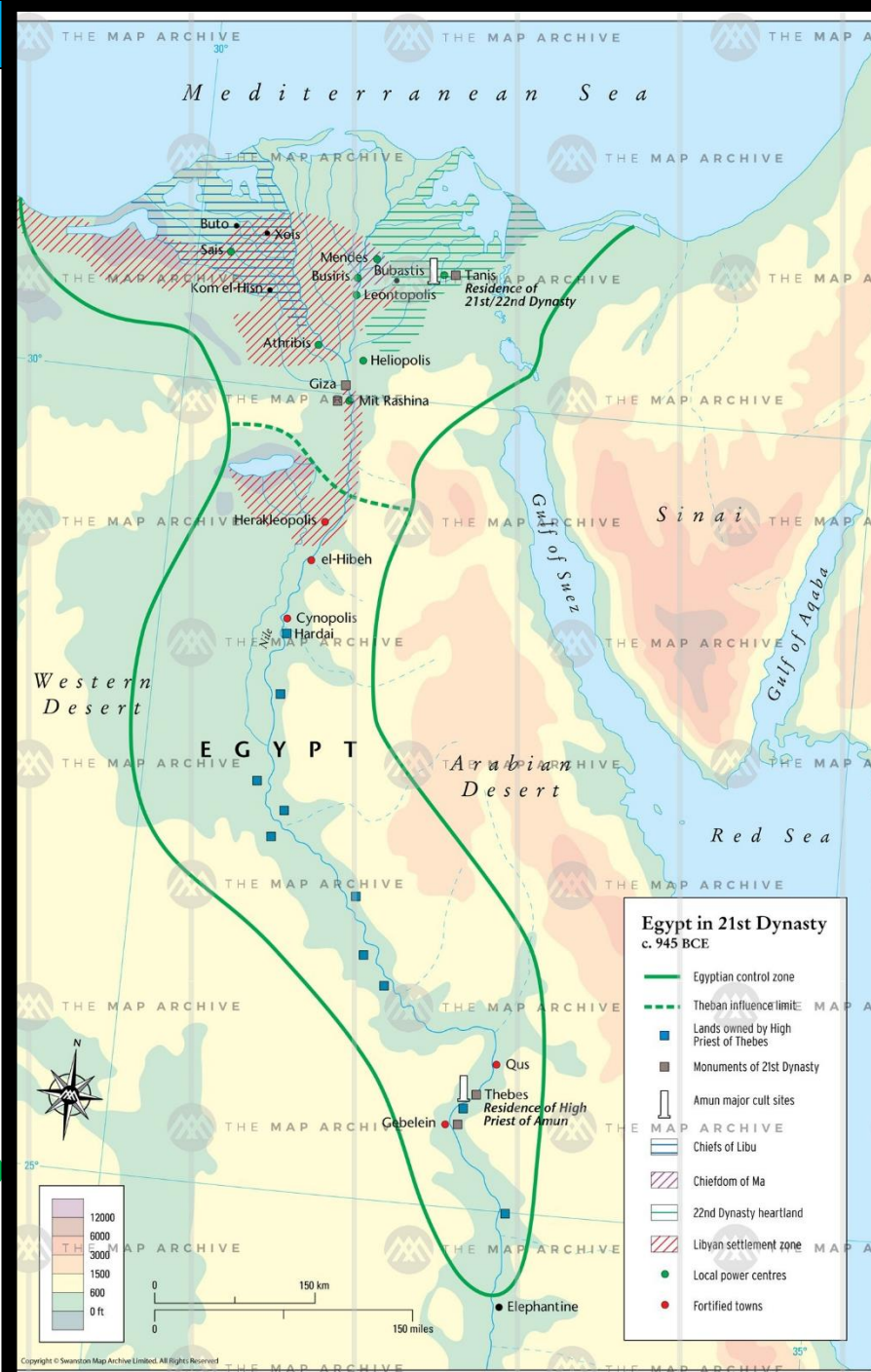
Details:

- Aside from the failed Sea Peoples' attacks around 1200 BCE, Egypt also experiences increasing turmoil throughout Dynasties 19–20 (1300–1069 BCE):
 - Declining climatic conditions** (droughts; low Niles; famines);
 - Vassal revolts** in Canaan & Nubia (Sety I; Ramesses II; Merenptah; Ramesses III–IV);
 - Campaigns** abroad (Sety I and Ramesses II's attempts to regain Amurru and Kadesh from Hatti);
 - Bedouin hostilities** (Libyan and Meshwesh incursions from the Western Desert; Shasu raids across North Sinai; subjugation of the Seir Bedu [Negev?]);



Canaan ca. 1300-1200 BCE:

- e. Egypt's **militarization** of key frontier regions and imperial territories (fortifying the western Delta, north Sinai and Canaan);
- f. **Economic hardship** (depletion of Nubian gold mines; growing inflation; royal tomb workmen's strikes; increasing tomb robberies),
- g. An evident **rise in corruption** (theft of temple wealth; widespread involvement in Theban tomb robberies),
- h. **Civil strife** (fights over the royal succession; the assassination of Ramesses III [slit throat]; power struggles between the king and Amun cult), and ...
- i. the eventual dissolution of Egypt into a southern Theban theocracy and a northern Tanite kingdom *under the nominal leadership of Ramesses XI.*



7. Iron Age:

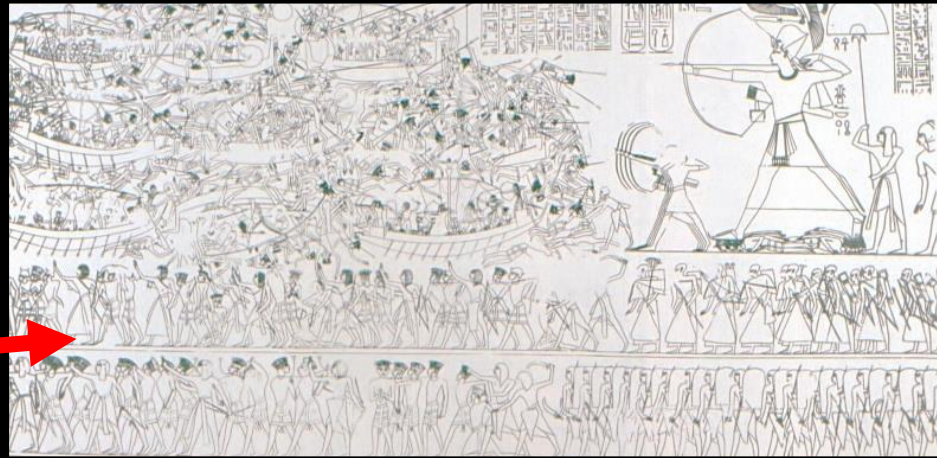
Iron Age IA

(1,200 – 1,150 BCE)

Post-Sea Peoples'

Egyptian empire ...

LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC



● **Egypt & part of its northern empire, withstood the Sea People & refugee raids and migrations, and managed to maintain the empire in Palestine for almost 50 years: 1200-1150 BC. (early Dynasty 20: Ramesses III-VI).**

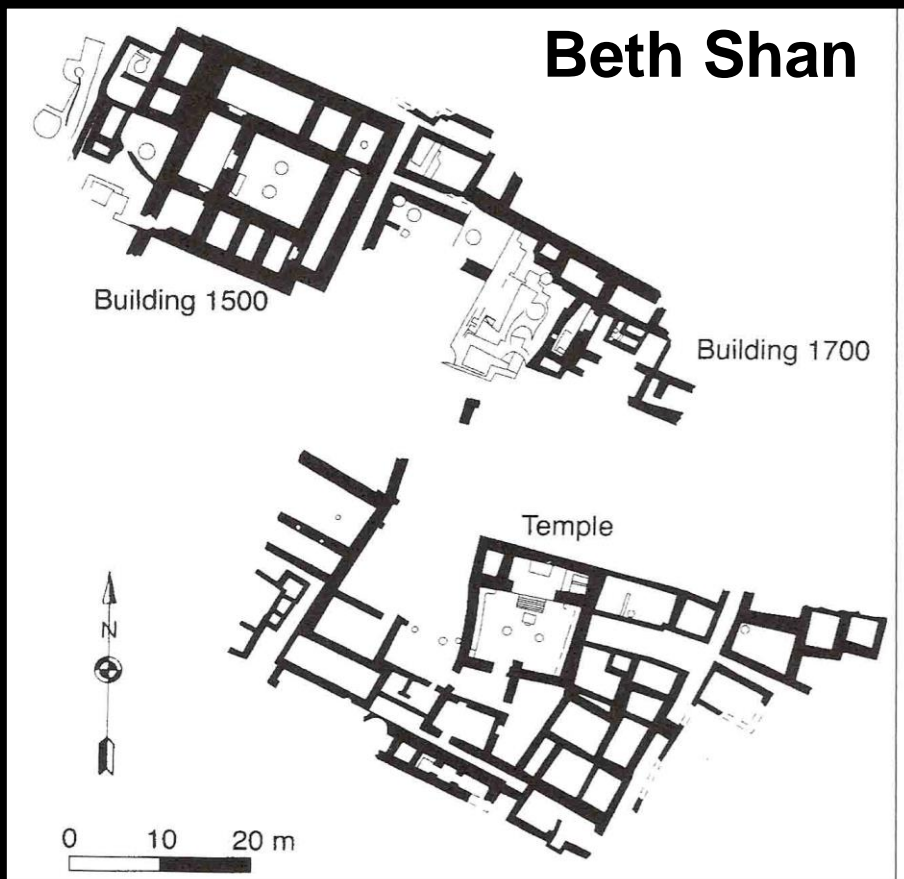


Figure 29. Nineteenth Dynasty Canaan

Beth Shan: Houses 1500 & 1700

Contents: during reign of Ramesses III

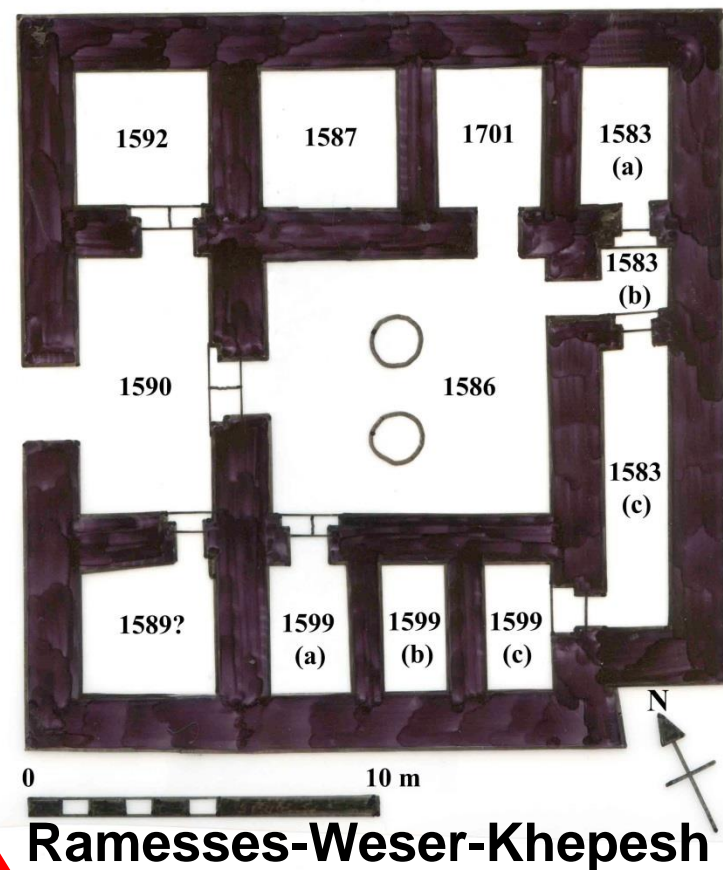
- **64 Canaanite potsherds:** 3 cooking pots; bowls; cup-and-saucer; bowls; chalices; jars; juglets; lentoid flasks; pyxides; stand.
 - **8-10 Egyptian potsherds:** 4 beer bottles; 2 bowls; 3 spin.-bowls; duck-headed bowl.
 - **5 Cypriot sherds:**
 - **3 Mycenaean sherds:**
 - **20 Egyptian architectural pieces**
 - **12 generic architectural pieces**
 - **Artefacts:** Containers (of var. materials); basalt mortar; toiletries (comb); jewellery; seals; figurines; spindle whorls; fittings; +.
- **151 artefacts:**

Local – regional = 74% (111)

Egyptian(izing) = 23% (35)

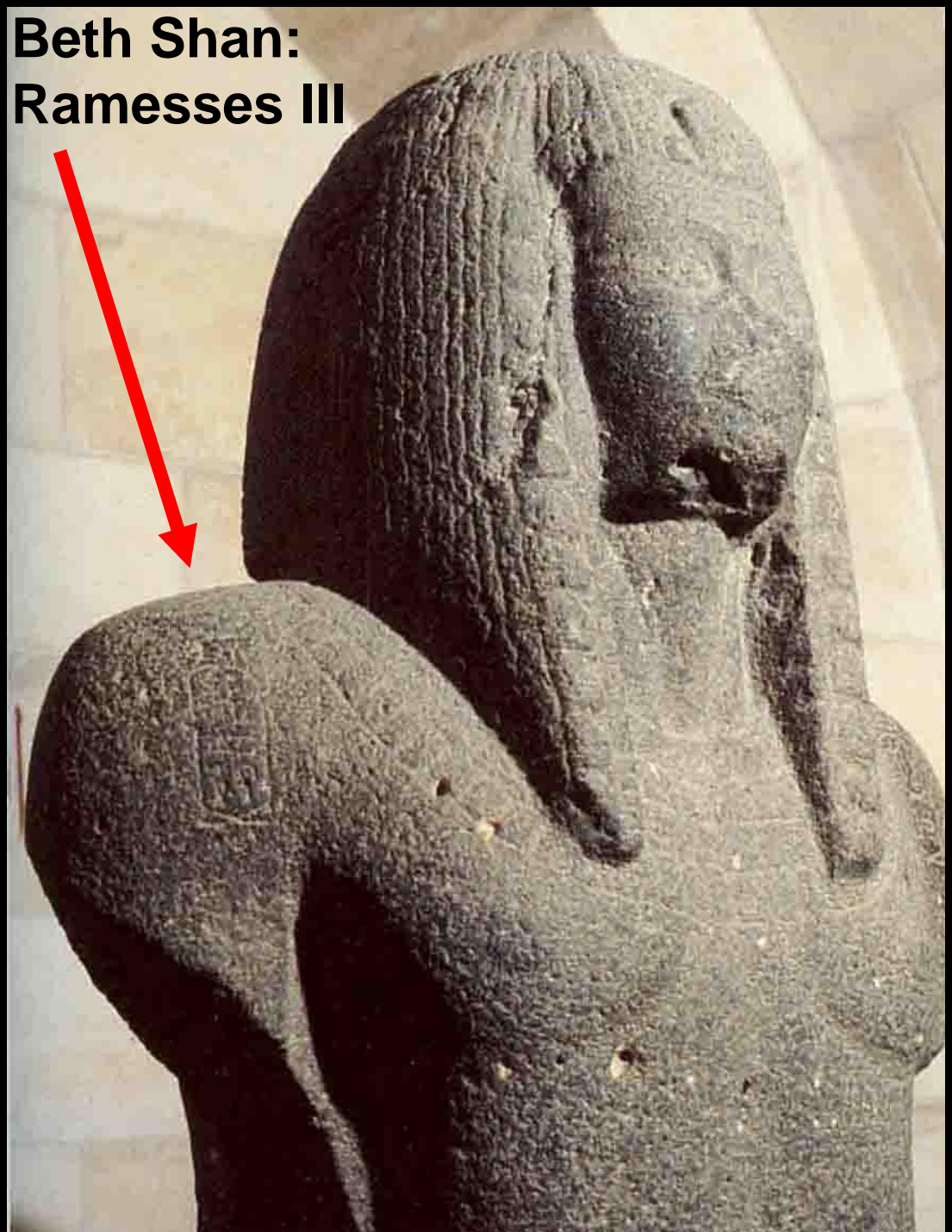
Cypriot = 3% (5)

Mycenaean = 2% (3)



Stratum VI: lintel showing the Egyptian official Ramses-Weser-Khepesh and, next to him, cartouches of Ramses III.

**Beth Shan:
Ramesses III**



Ramesses III.

● Syro-Palestinian vassals:

-3 Egyptian cults owning land and revenues in Syria-Palestine:

- Amun of Thebes,
- Re of Heliopolis,
- Ptah of Memphis.

Ramesses III:

- built mercantile & naval ships
- provisioned crews & troops
- shipping Levantine products to the estates of each cult.



Ramesses III : 1184-1153 BC

● Syria-Palestine: R-III's name

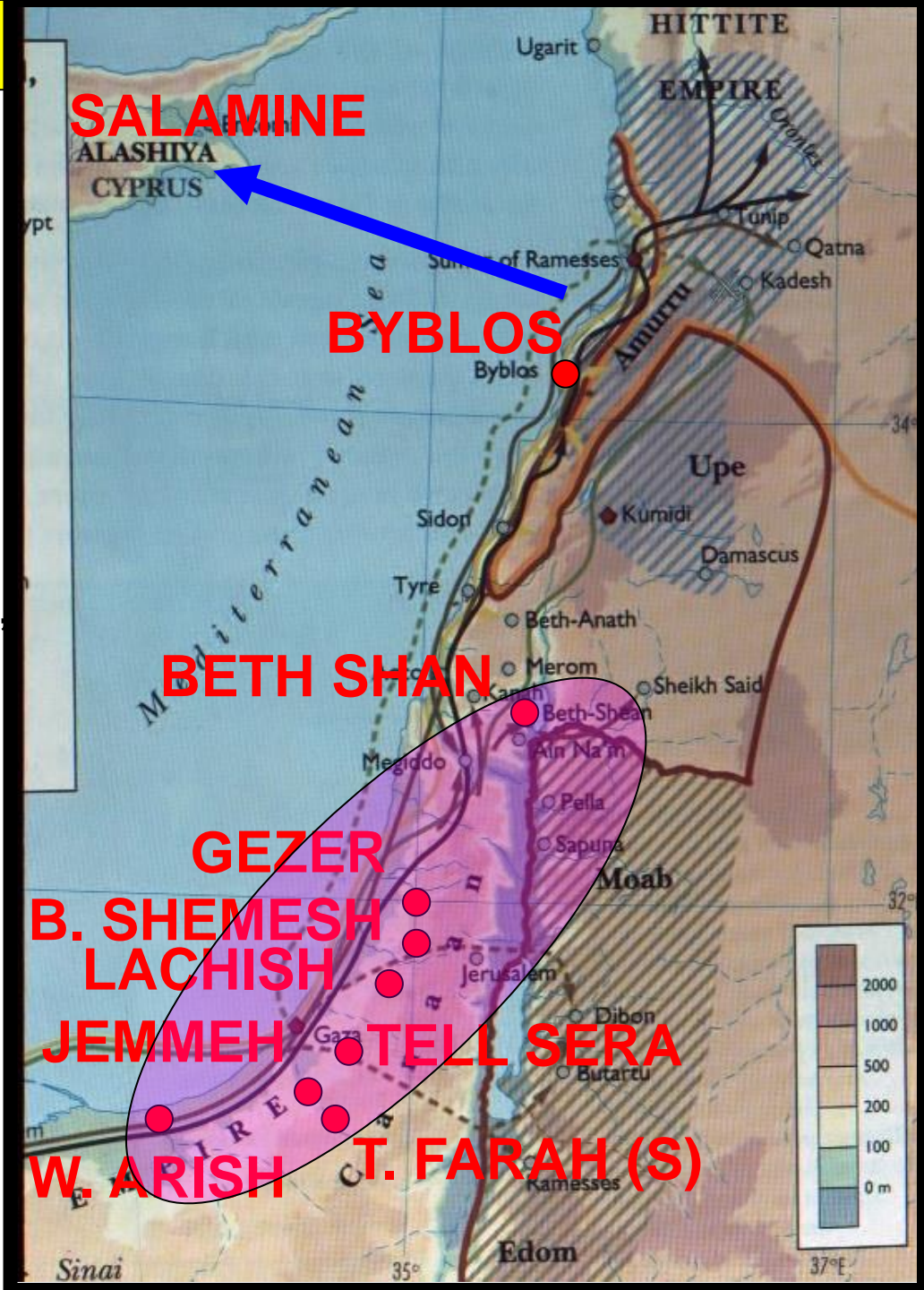
- a. Wadi el-Arish (scarab),
- b. Tell Farah South (scarab),
- c. Tell Jemma (scarab),
- d. Beth Shemesh (scarab),
- e. Lachish (AE gate? plaque),
- b. Gezer (faience vase frag.),
- c. Beth Shan (basalt statue),
- d. Byblos (calcite vessel frag.),
- e. Tell Sera (potsherd)

● Cyprus: R-III's name

- a. Salamine (11th cent. BC tomb)
- b. other sites in Cyprus

● Punt:

-R-III dispatched an expedition across eastern desert to Red Sea; expedition assembles boats for voyage to Punt.



Ramesses IV.

Syria-Palestine:

-R-IV's name occurs on scarabs:

- Deir el-Balah,
- Tell Farah (S),
- Tell el-Safi,
- Gezer
- Aphek.

-R-IV's name occurs on a stone block at Tell Delhamia.

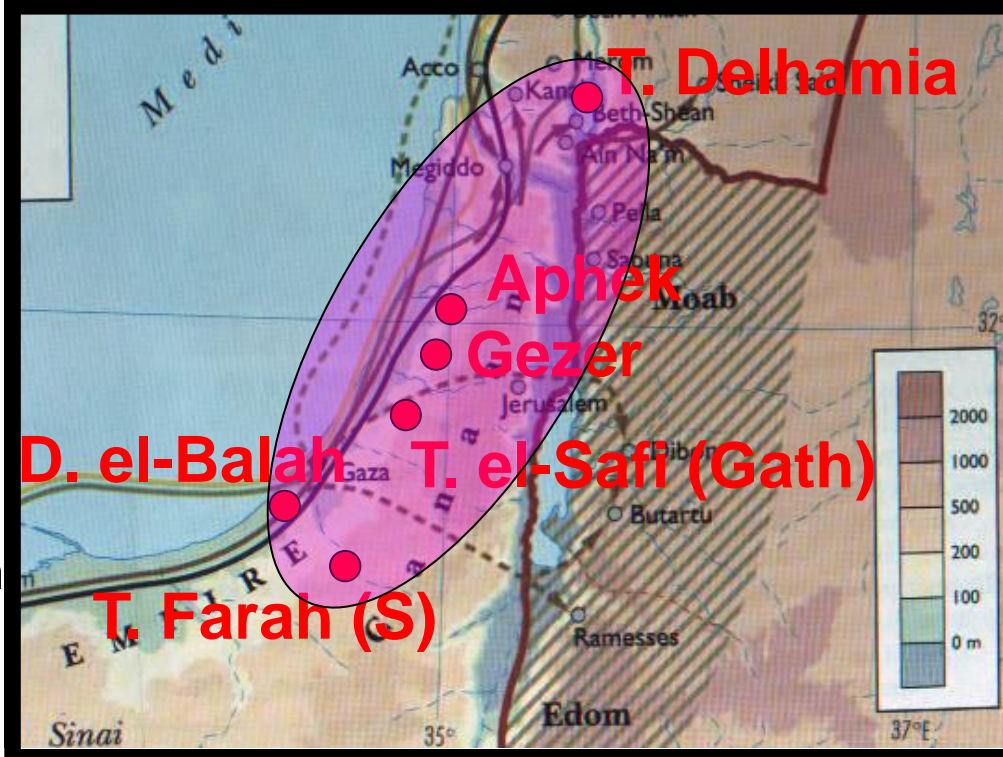
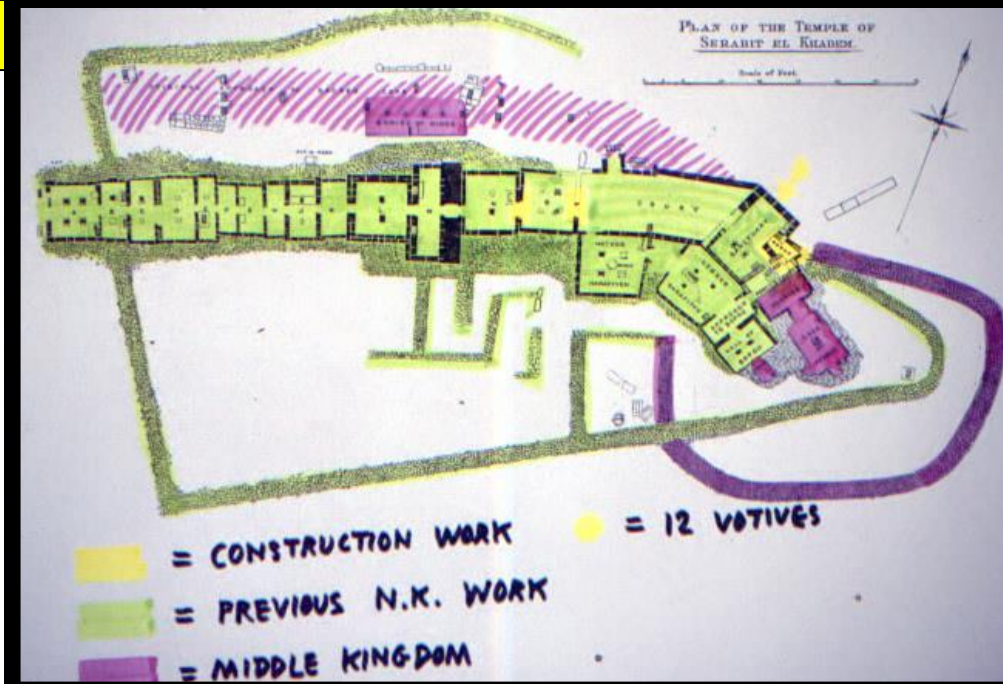
Sinai:

-R-IV attested building and depositing 12 votives at Hathor Temple at Serabit.

Nubia:

-Mining expeditions sent to Second Cataract region, near Buhen

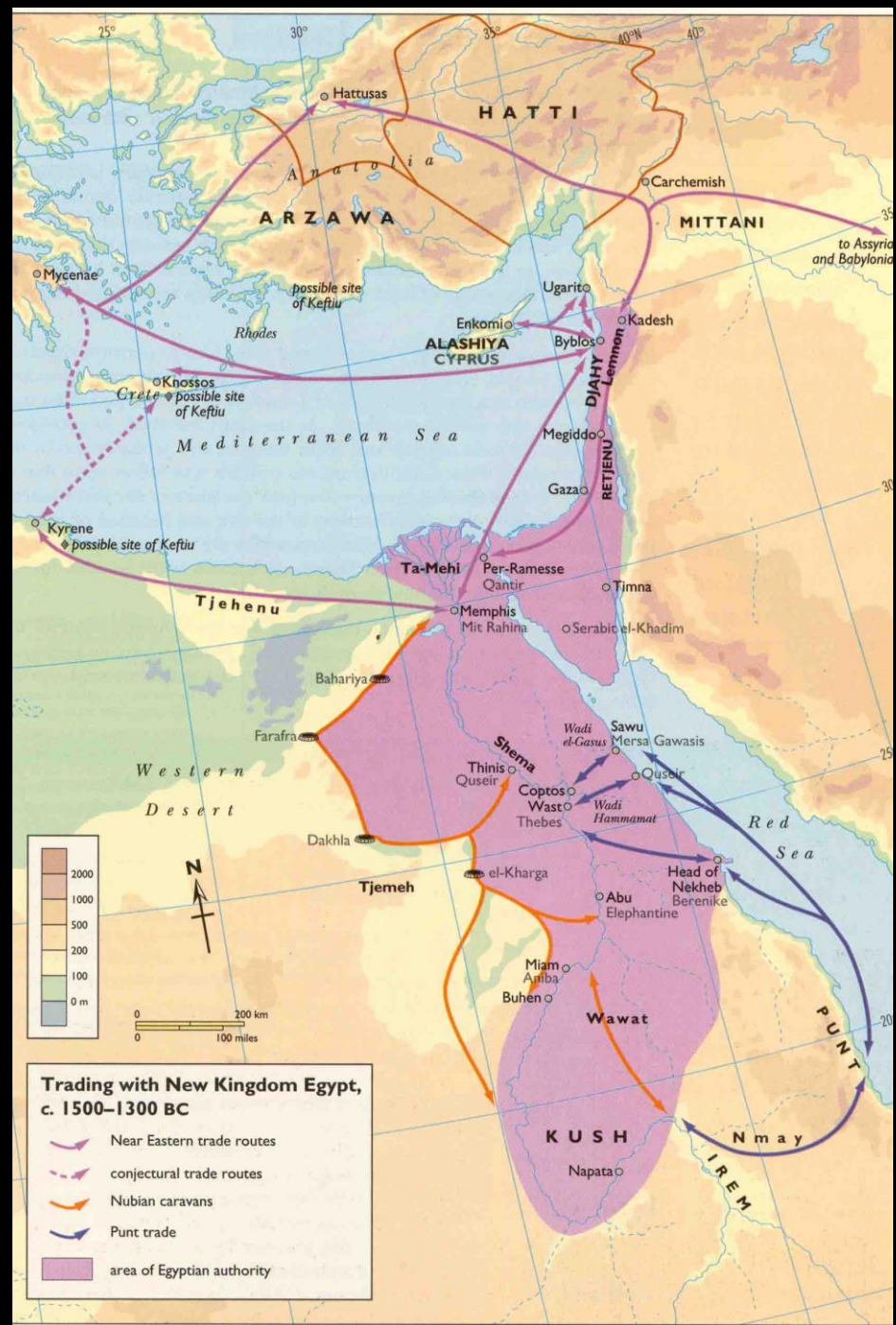
-R-IV: texts at Buhen & Gerf Husein.



LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC

Egypt & Egyptian empire's collapse:

- More ambiguous
- Seems to be a slow decline in Dyn.20
Ramesses III-VI.
i.e., Timna mine abandoned after **Ramesses V** (R-VI not attested)
i.e., Serabit el-Khadim abandoned after **Ramesses VI** (last king here)
- Last major Egyptian monuments & construction in Palestine date to Ramesses IV, and partly Ramesses VI
- Minor royal name scarabs from **Ramesses VII-XI** appear in South Palestine, but provide evidence for continued trade and diplomatic relations.
- Egypt's Nubian empire collapses under **Ramesses XI**.



LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC

Egypt & Egyptian empire's collapse:

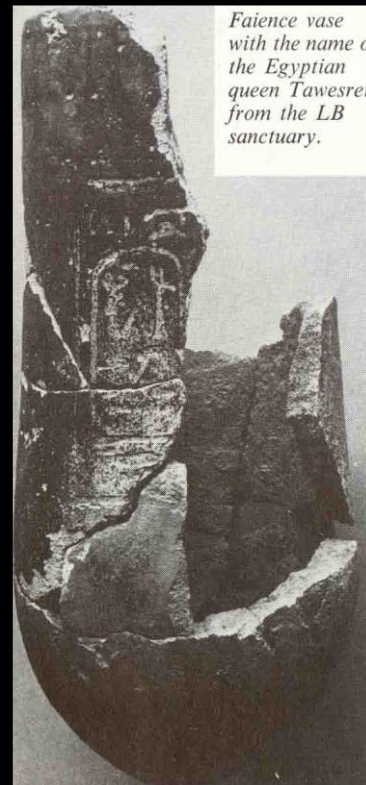
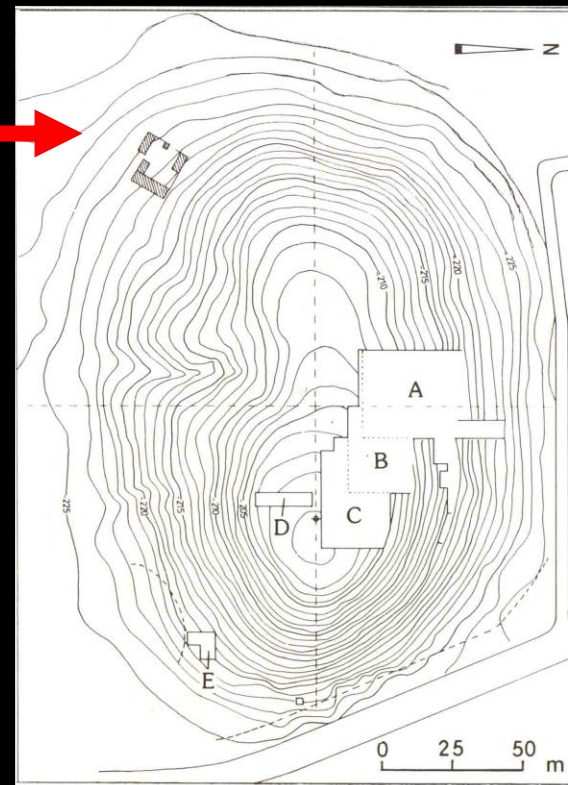
- The end of the Late Bronze Age in Canaan is much more complex
ca.1200-1150 BC:

- Some Canaanite cities are destroyed thoroughly in late LB 2B (1250-1200):
E.g., Hazor.

- Some Canaanite towns are destroyed at the end of LB 2B (1200 BC):
E.g., Tell Deir Alla (Jordan Valley).

- A faience vessel of Queen Tawosret and Mycenaean & Cypriot pottery in the last stratum prove a *terminus post-quem* of ca. 1200 (or 1185) BC.

- Many further settlements = destroyed
ca.1200 BC / 1150 BC:



Faience vase with the name of the Egyptian queen Tawosret from the LB sanctuary.

Egypt & Egyptian empire's collapse:

1250-1200 BC destructions:

- Hazor stratum XIII

1200 BC destructions in Canaan:

- Megiddo stratum VIIB

- Beth-Shan stratum VII

- Tel Abu Hawam stratum V

- Tel Zeror destr.

- Aphek destr.

- Tell Deir Alla destr.

- Gezer stratum XV

- Timnah (T. Batash) stratum VI

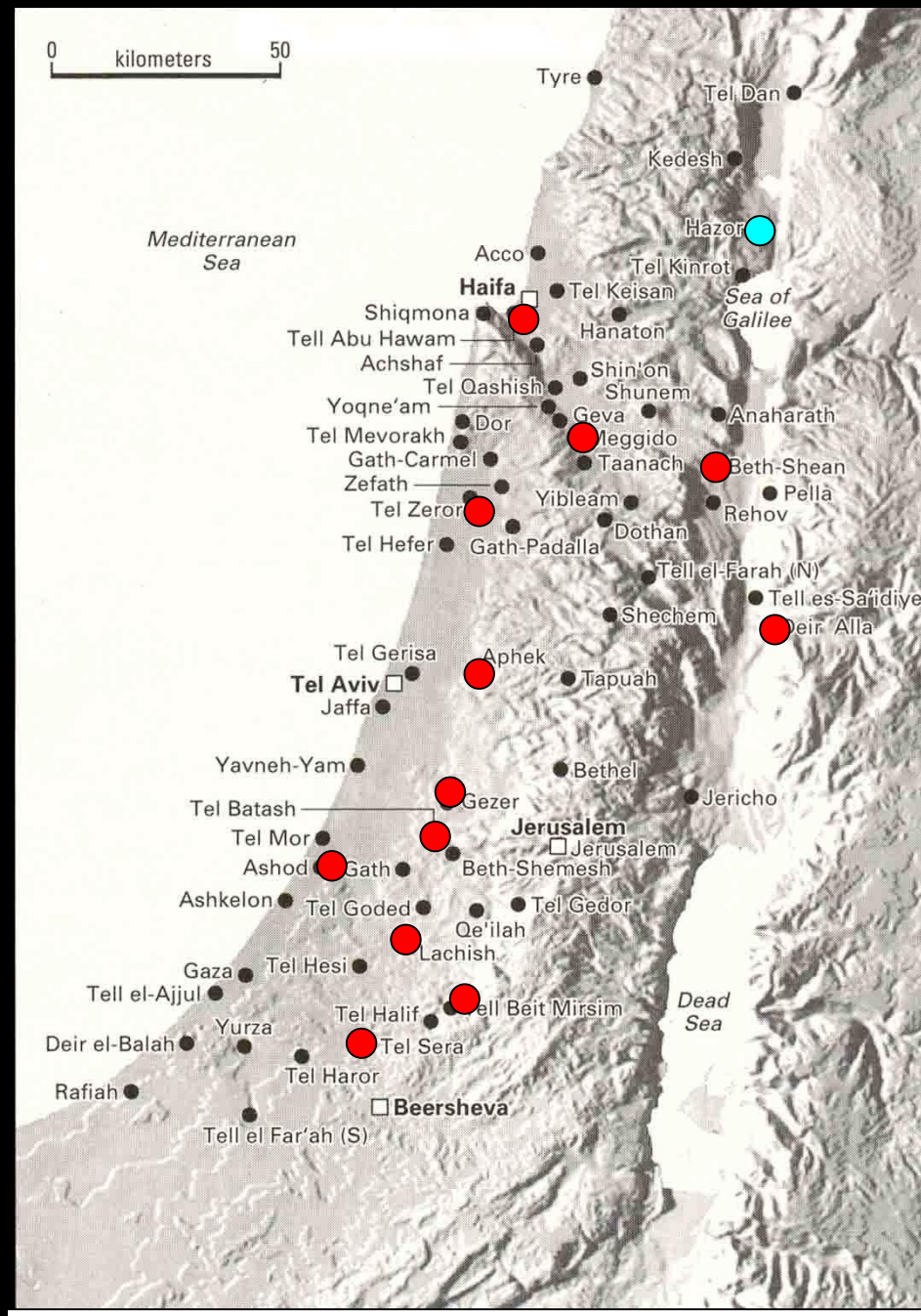
- Lachish town stratum VII

- Lachish F-Temple Phase III

- Tell Beit Mirsim stratum C

- Tel Sera' stratum X

- Ashdod stratum XIV



DESTRUCTIONS ca.1200 BC

LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC

Egypt & Egyptian empire's collapse:

● Some cities display a gap in settlement following their destruction:

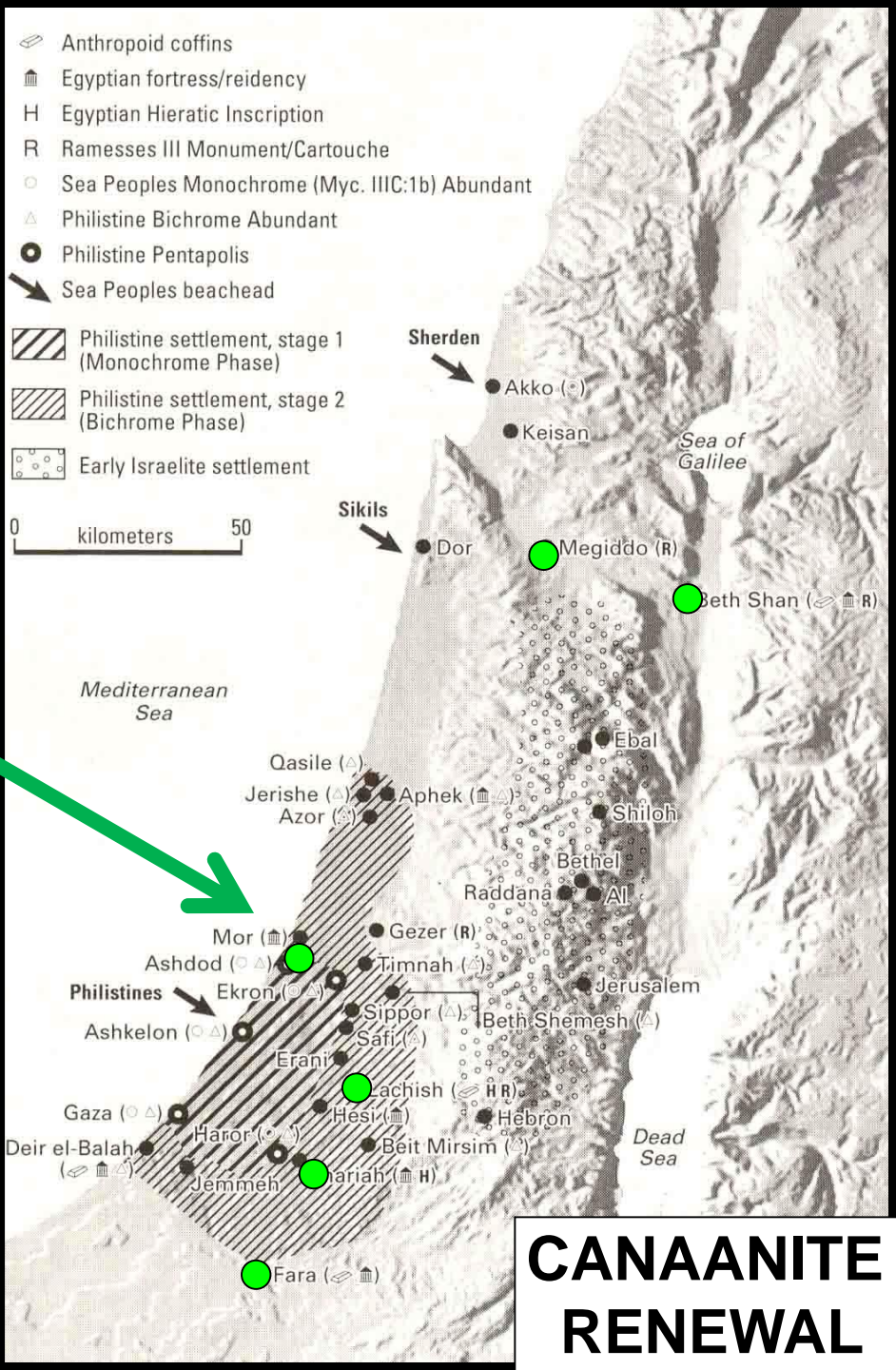
E.g., Hazor and Aphek

● Other cities experience an entirely new form of culture and occupation after their destruction ca. 1200 BC.

● Further settlements are rebuilt in the subsequent Iron 1A period (1200-1150) along a similar pattern by Canaanites:

- Megiddo
- Beth-Shan
- Lachish
- Tel Sera'
- Ashdod
- Tell Farah South

● Such cities lasted another 50 years until another series of destructions ended Egypt's control of Palestine.

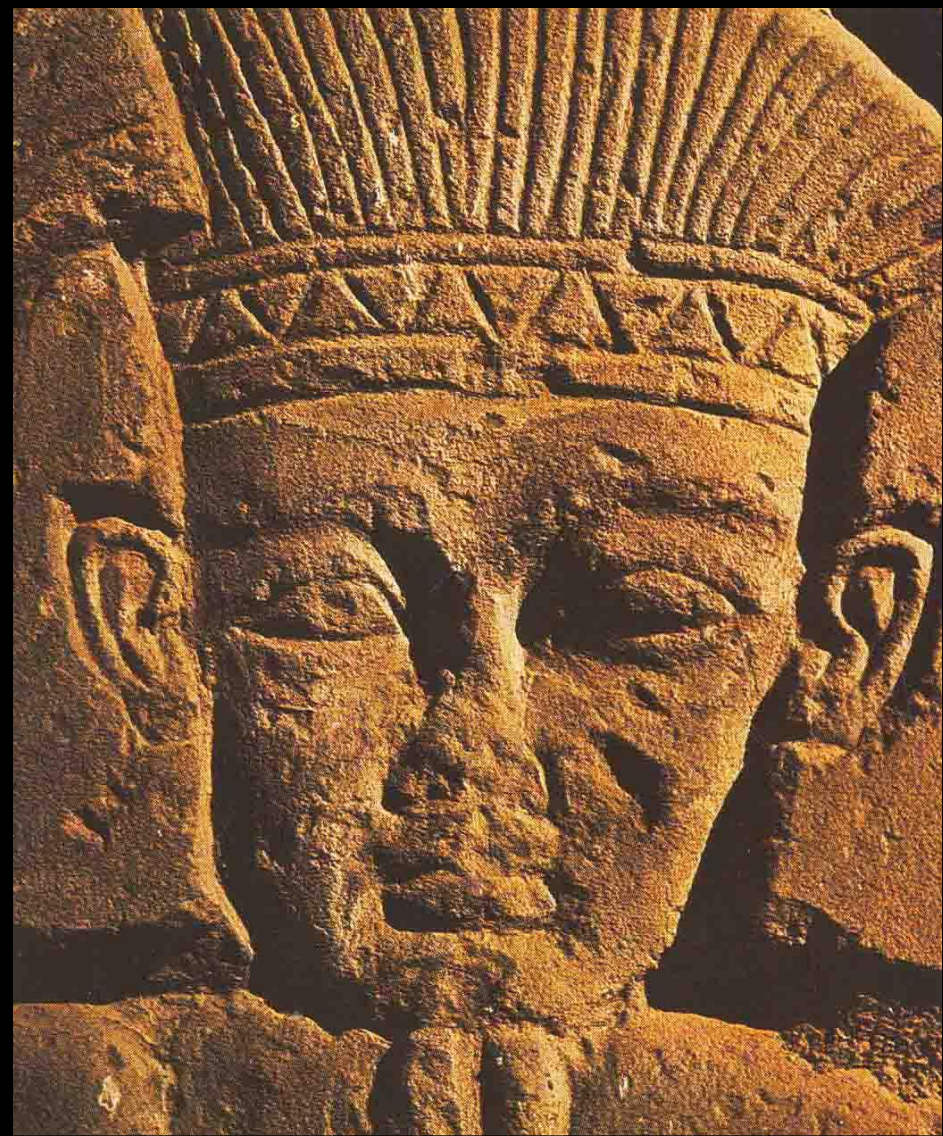


CANAANITE RENEWAL

LB Age: ca. 1550 – 1200 BC

Egypt & Egyptian empire's collapse:

- W.F. Albright & G.E. Wright divided the Late Bronze Age from Iron Age at ca.1200 BC.
- The last phase of Egyptian control in early Dynasty 20 and brief revival of some Canaanite settlements is called **Iron 1A**: ca.1200–1150 BC.
- Some scholars argue for placing the end of LB Age at 1150 BC (→ LB 2C?)
- Most people retain the LB 2B-Iron 1A division to minimize confusion.
- **In addition, after ca.1200 BC:**
 - International trade virtually “ceases”
 - Major Canaanite cities disappear
 - Other Canaanite cities → turmoil
 - Some Iron Age features appear:
E.g., Initial Sea Peoples settlement,
Israelites gathering in hill country



**The initial arrival of the *Peleset*
→ Biblical “Philistines”
→ Partly modern “Palestinians”**

8.

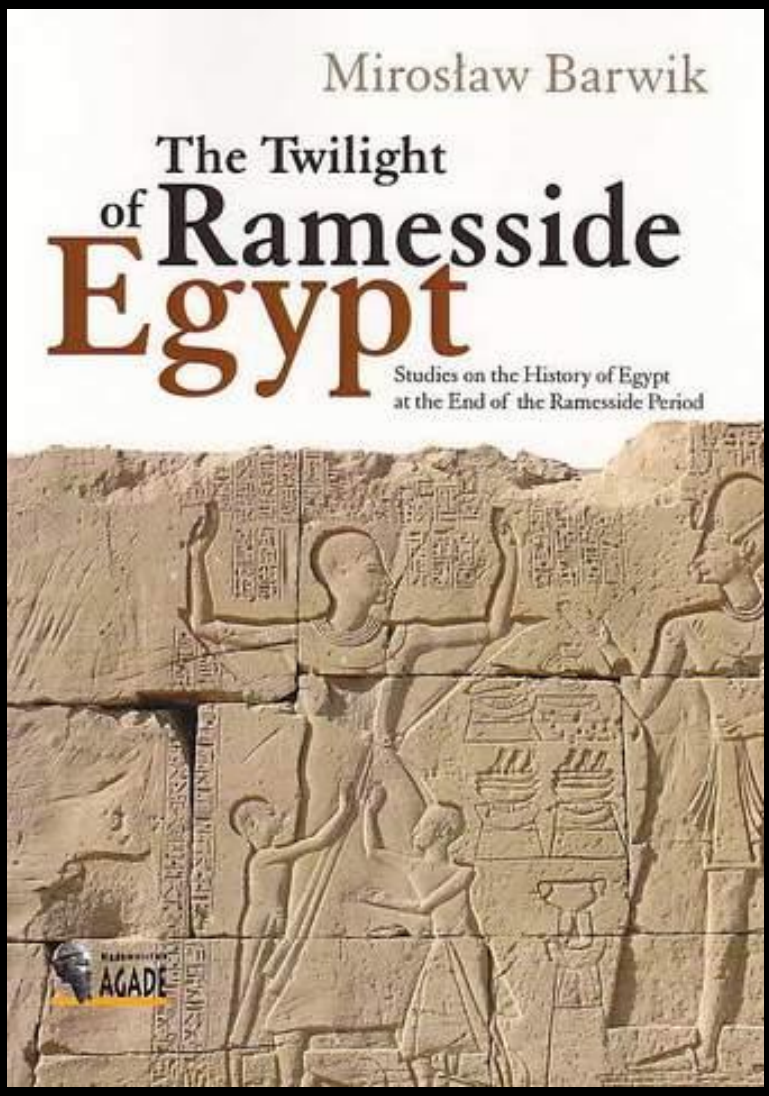
The later Iron Age I (1B)

Ca. 1150 - 1000 BCE

Post “Late Bronze Age”

(mostly transitional)

in the Near East ...

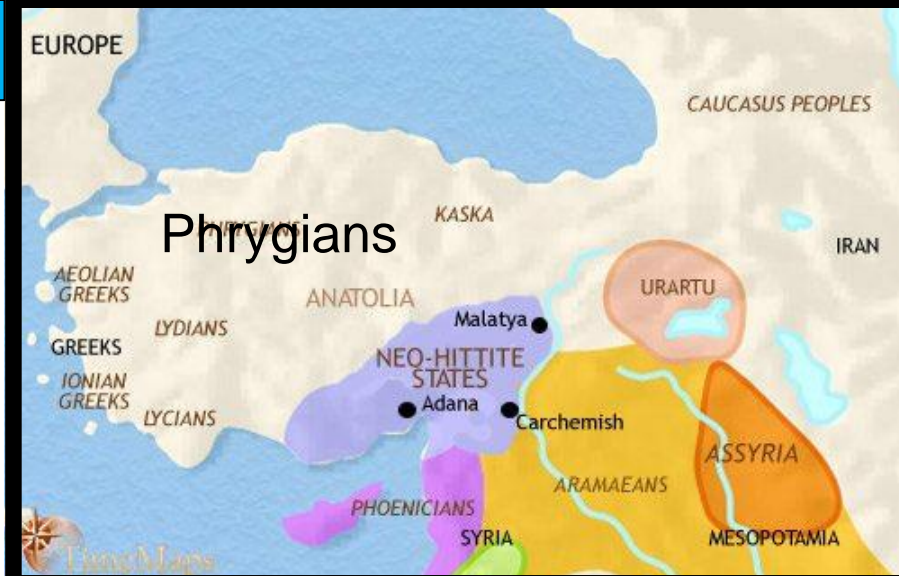


● After mid-Dynasty 20 (Ramesses VI), *Egypt's northern empire collapses and Egypt becomes progressively weaker.*

Near East ca. 1000-1000 BCE:

Aftermath:

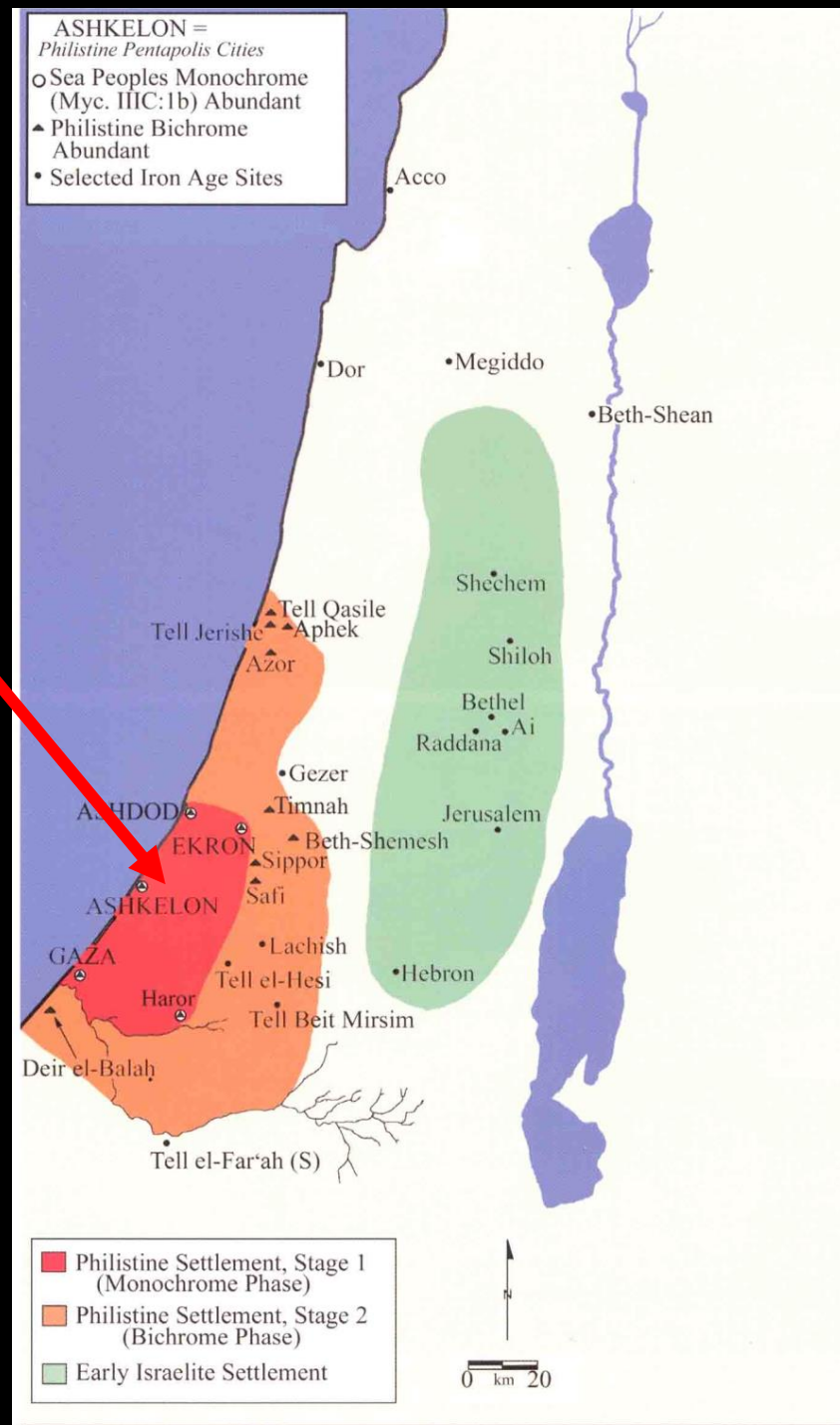
- **During the Iron Age IA-IB aftermath following the 1250–1200 BCE coastal and inland conflicts, migrations, flight, and settlement, new peoples integrate variously into the indigenous & diverse populations of the East Mediterranean:**
 - a. The **Phrygians**, kingdom of **Urartu**, and **others** emerge in **Anatolia**.
 - b. Some **Aegeans** appear in **Cyprus**;
 - c. The neo-/**Syro-Hittites** forge new states in **northern Syria**
 - d. **Aramaeans** shift into **SE Syria** (forming Aram-Damascus);
 - e. the **Israelites** (and others) coalesce in the **hill country** (Gilboa 2014)



Near East ca. 1000-1000 BCE:

Aftermath:

- f. **Egypt** (Ramesses III–VI) controls an increasingly reduced area of **Canaan** during Iron Age IA.
- g. **The Peleset** (Philistines) merge with Canaanites in the southern coastal plain of **Philistia**
- h. **Other Sea Peoples** may have settled **elsewhere in the Levant** (e.g., Phoenicia), including the **Tjeker** at Dor, **Sherden** at Akko, and perhaps others inland (e.g., **Sherden?** at Tell es-Saidiyeh in the Jordan Valley)
- i. Leading up to and during the Iron Age, **tribal societies** establish chiefdoms and subsequent kingdoms in **Ammon, Moab, and Edom** in Transjordan and the Negev.



9.

The later Iron Age I (1B)

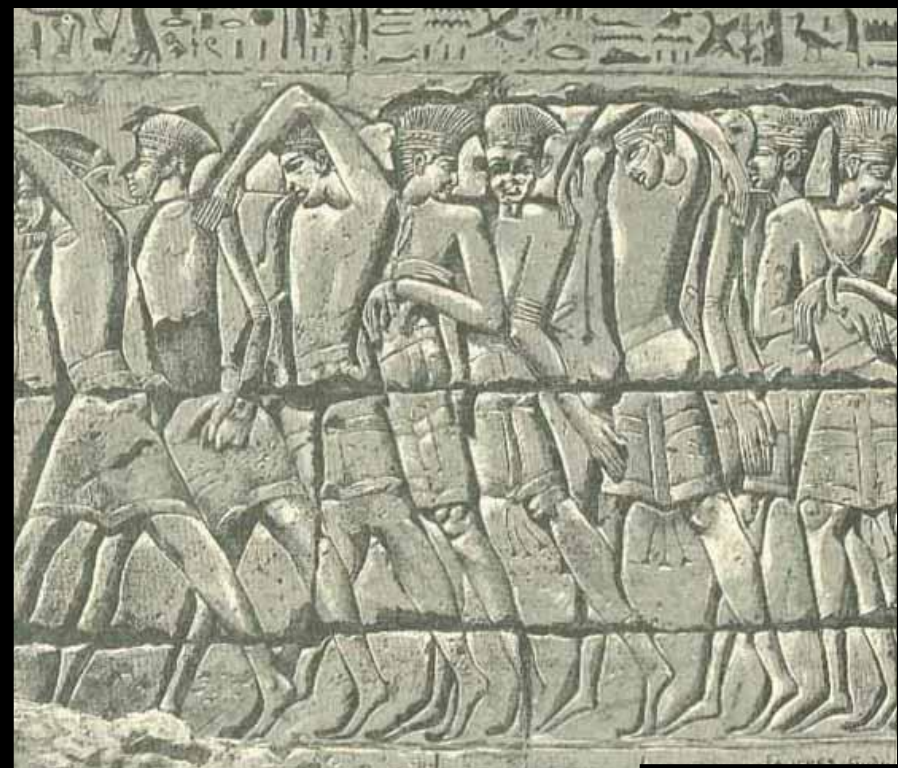
Ca. 1150 - 1000 BCE

**The legacy of
the Canaanites, Peleset
and elusive “Sea Peoples”
in the Near East ...**

Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

Legacy:

- Following ca. 1200/1177 BCE, Ramesses III–VI retained political control of Canaan in Iron Age IA;
- The specific relationship with the Sea People captives, migrants, other peoples *remains less clear*:
- It is uncertain whether captured warriors (e.g., Peleset) served as auxiliaries in Egyptian garrisons within Canaan **versus mainly in Egypt**:
 - a. Some Iron Age IA, ceramic anthropoid coffins bearing striped headdresses appear in Egyptian garrison cemeteries at Deir el-Balah (which also has LB Age IIB coffins), Tell Farah South, Beth Shan, and perhaps elsewhere (e.g., a body fragment occurs at Lachish).



Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

Legacy:

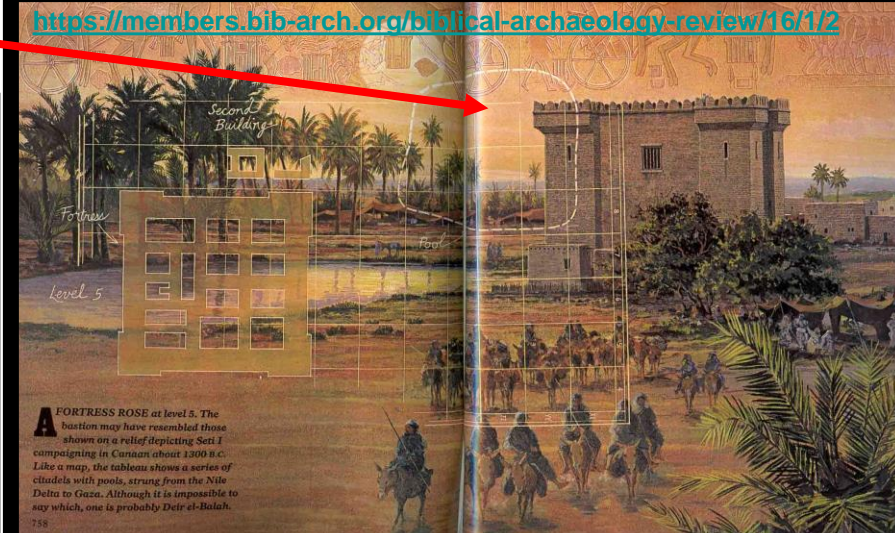
- These examples have often been equated with the flaring helmets sported by some Sea People mercenaries (i.e., Peleset; Tjeker; Denyen).
- However, this equation remains speculative and contested (Killebrew 2005, 65–67, 218; Dothan 2008, 94–95).
- Of note, a pottery deposit associated with the Deir el-Balah residence/fort may reflect a Philistine practice.



<https://members.bib-arch.org/biblical-archaeology-review/16/1/2>



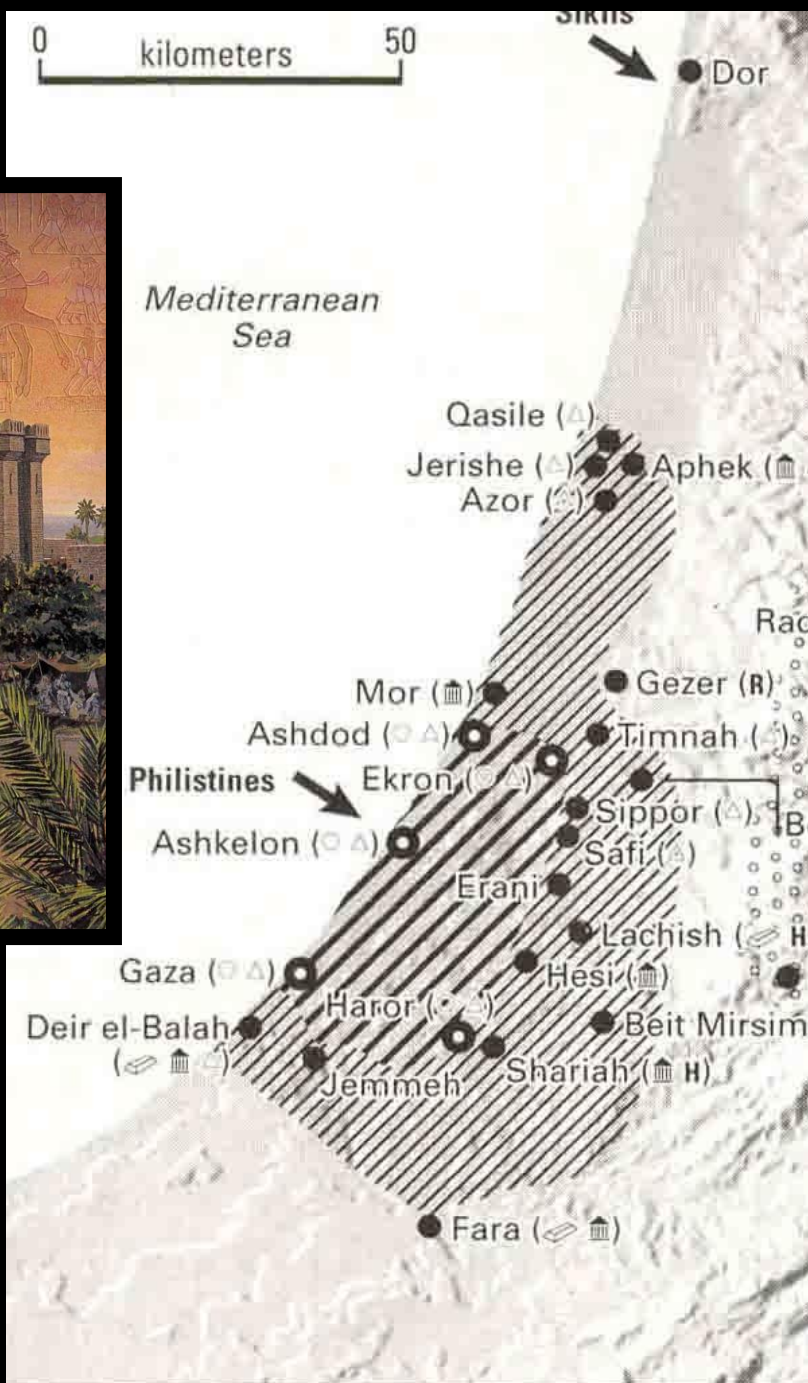
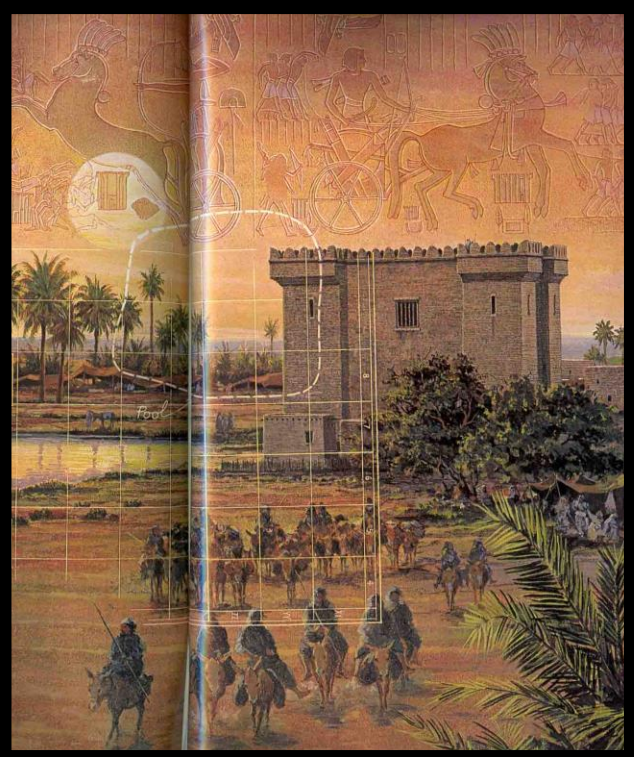
Photo 5.135. Square E/9 looking east: **Locus 426A** with foundation deposit consisting of two bowls and an oil lamp.



A FORTRESS ROSE at level 5. The bastion may have resembled those shown on a relief depicting Seti I campaigning in Canaan about 1300 B.C. Like a map, the tableau shows a series of citadels with pools, strung from the Nile Delta to Gaza. Although it is impossible to say which, one is probably Deir el-Balah.

Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

Legacy:



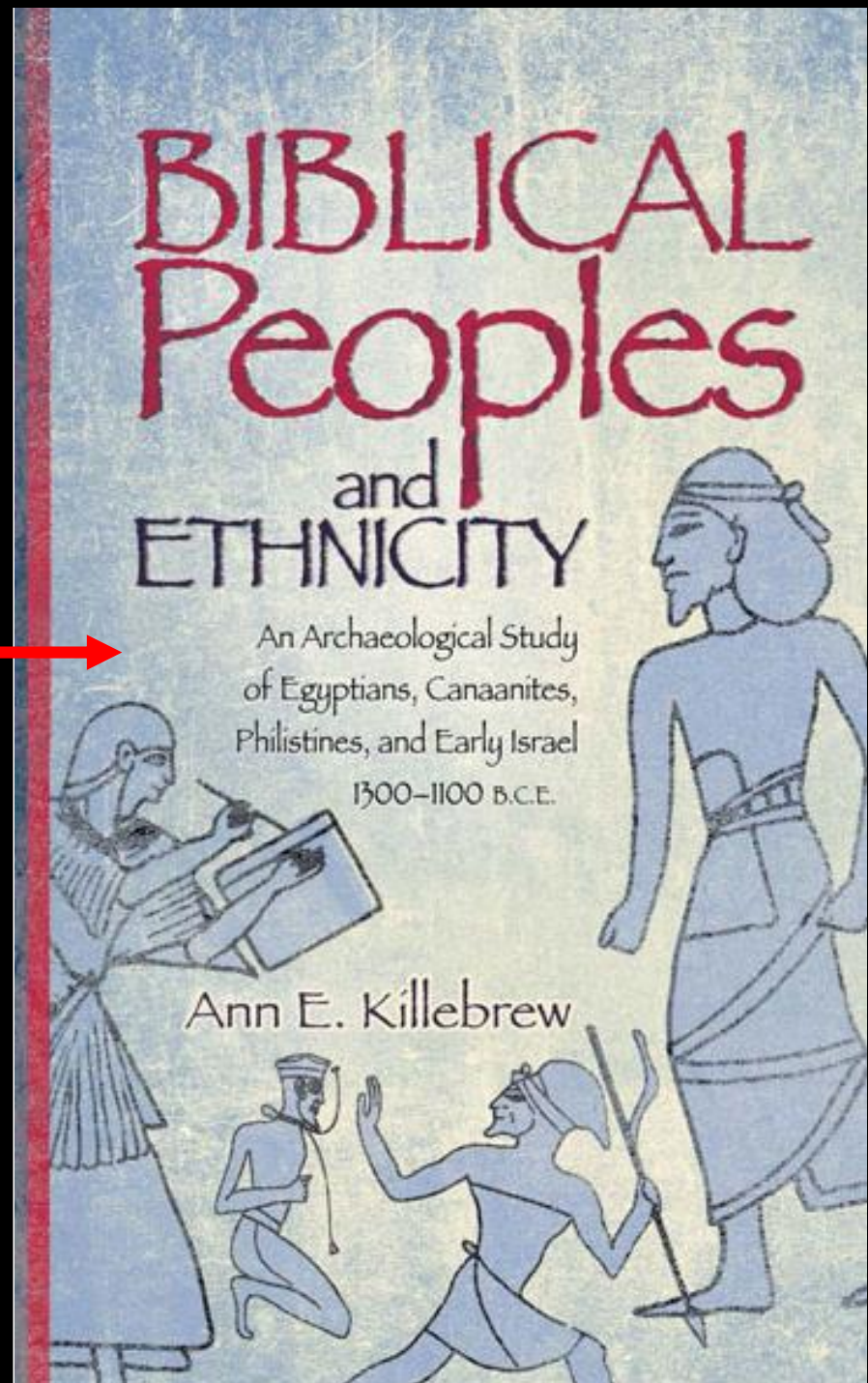
- Regardless of individual areas and circumstances, **Iron Age I displays a major shift** in the political and cultural landscape of the Levant (and beyond).

Personal communication John S. Holladay, Jr; see Dothan & Nahmias-Lotan 2010, 111–13.

Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

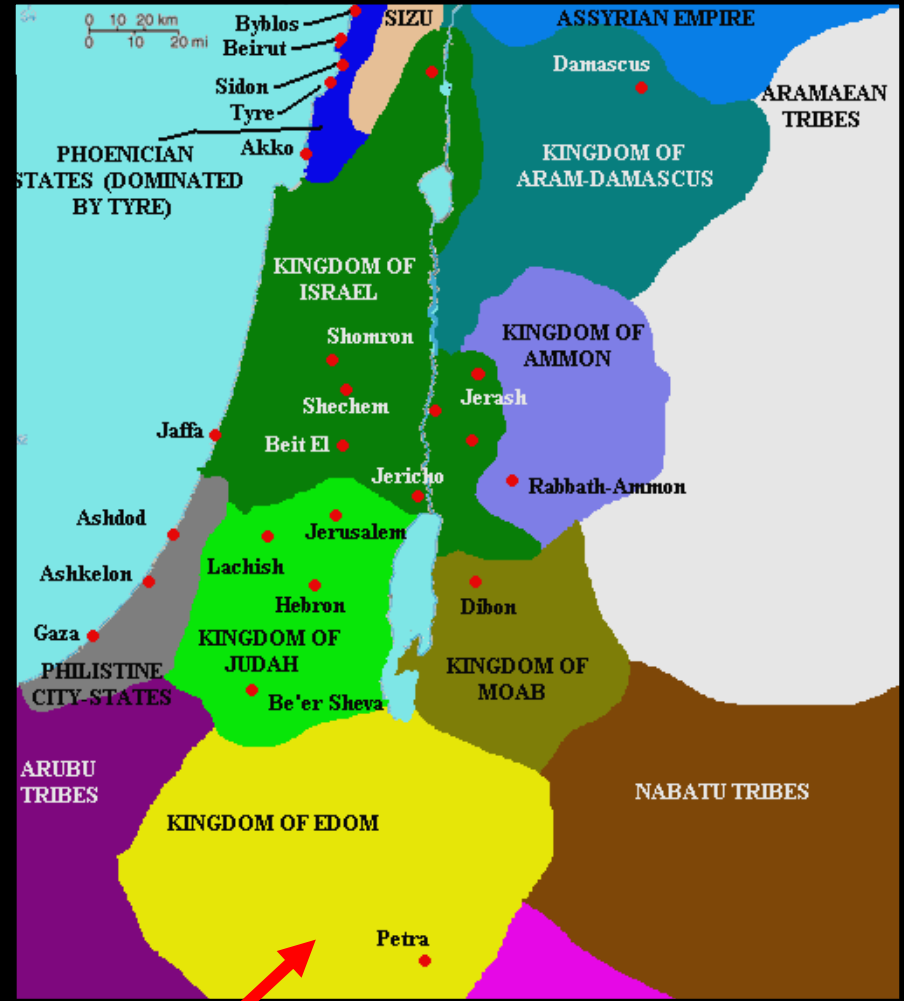
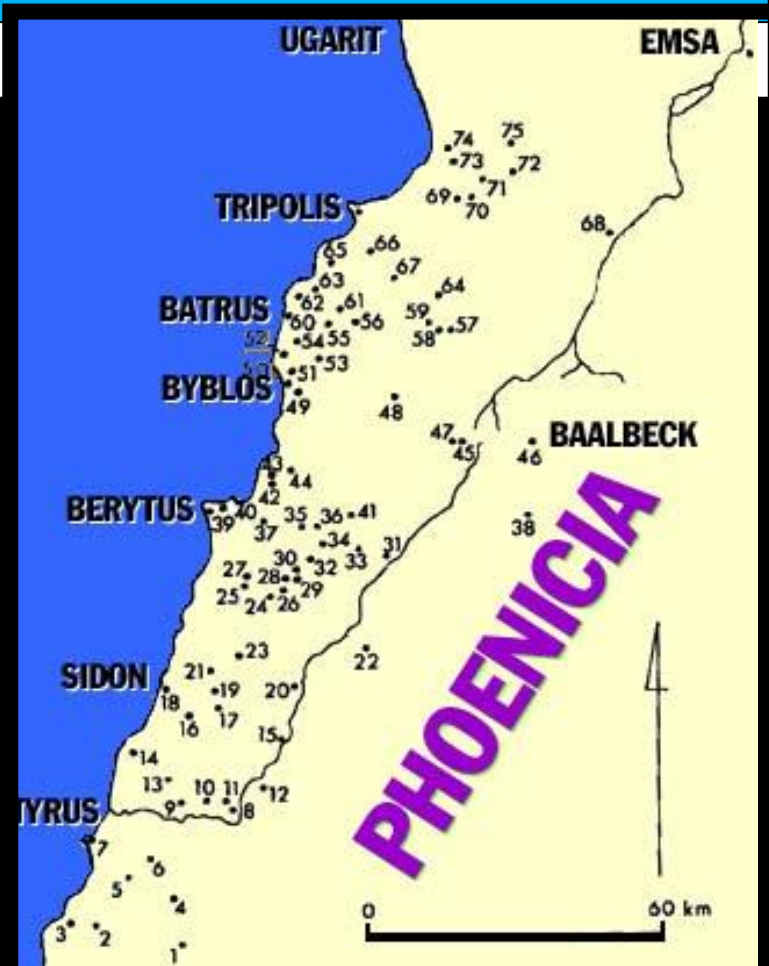
Legacy:

- Iron Age I also witnesses the influx and blending of
 - (a). the Philistines,
 - (b). Tjeker,
 - (c). Sherden,
 - (d). Israelites, and
 - (e). other peoples ...with the former Canaanites and other ethnic groups (e/g/. 'Apiru; Shasu; Seir Bedu).



Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

Legacy:



- This also includes the consolidation of (a) powerful Phoenician city-states to the north (e.g., Byblos; Tyre; Sidon), and (b) new polities to the east (Aram-Damascus; Ammon; Moab; Edom).

Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Sea Peoples & Canaanites in the Levant:

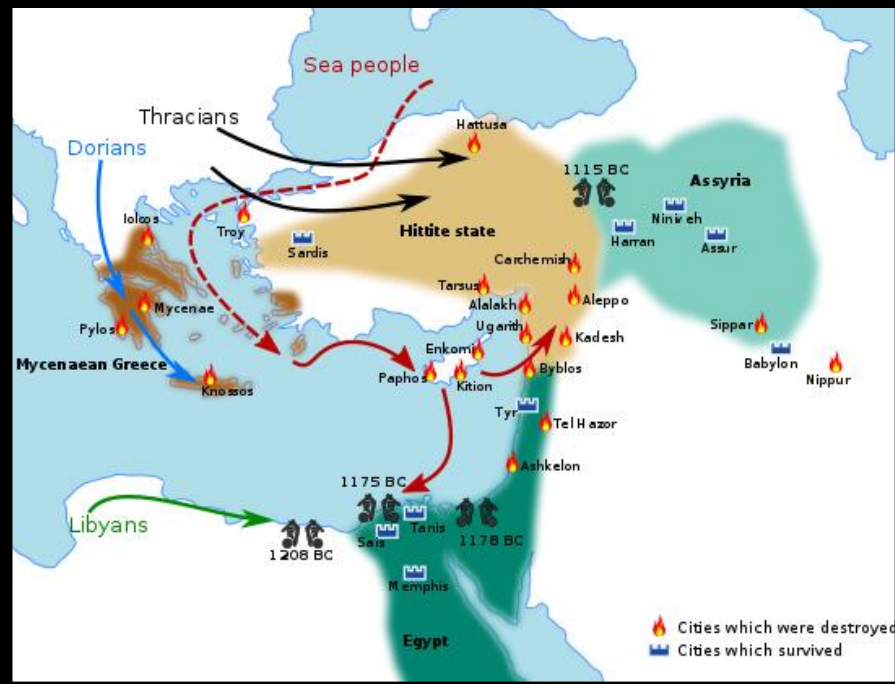
- The archaeological & historical records suggest that the **Peleset** and other Sea Peoples (**Tjeker**; **Sherden**) settled amongst the Canaanite population, probably via Cyprus (which yields much locally made Mycenaean IIC1b pottery) (see Killebrew and Lehmann 2013).
- **The Peleset initially concentrated at and around the towns of Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ashdod in the Plain of Philistia during Iron Age IA:**



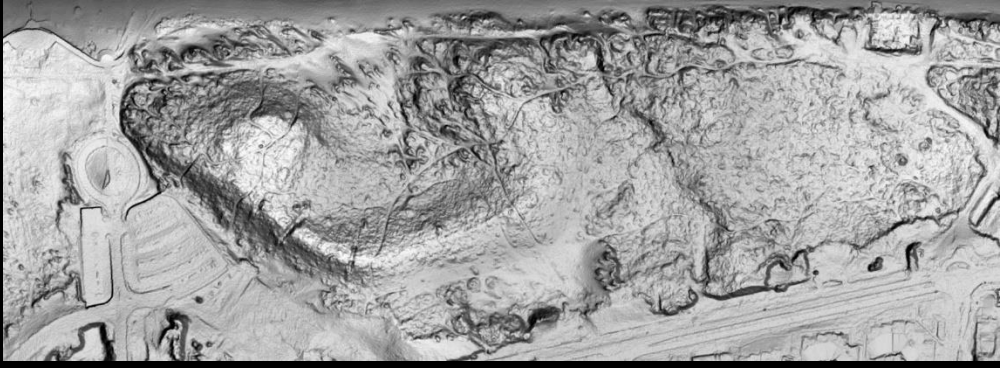
Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Sea Peoples & Canaanites in the Levant:

- An emerging hybrid Peleset, Tjeker, Sherden, and Canaanite population ...
 - (a) replace some LB IIB Canaanite towns (e.g., Ashdod),
 - (b) abandon other sites (e.g., Ugarit; a hiatus occurs at Lachish in Iron IB),
 - (c) establish new towns (Iron IB Tell Qasile), and
 - (d) continue occupying other towns (e.g., Tell el-Farah South; Gezer).

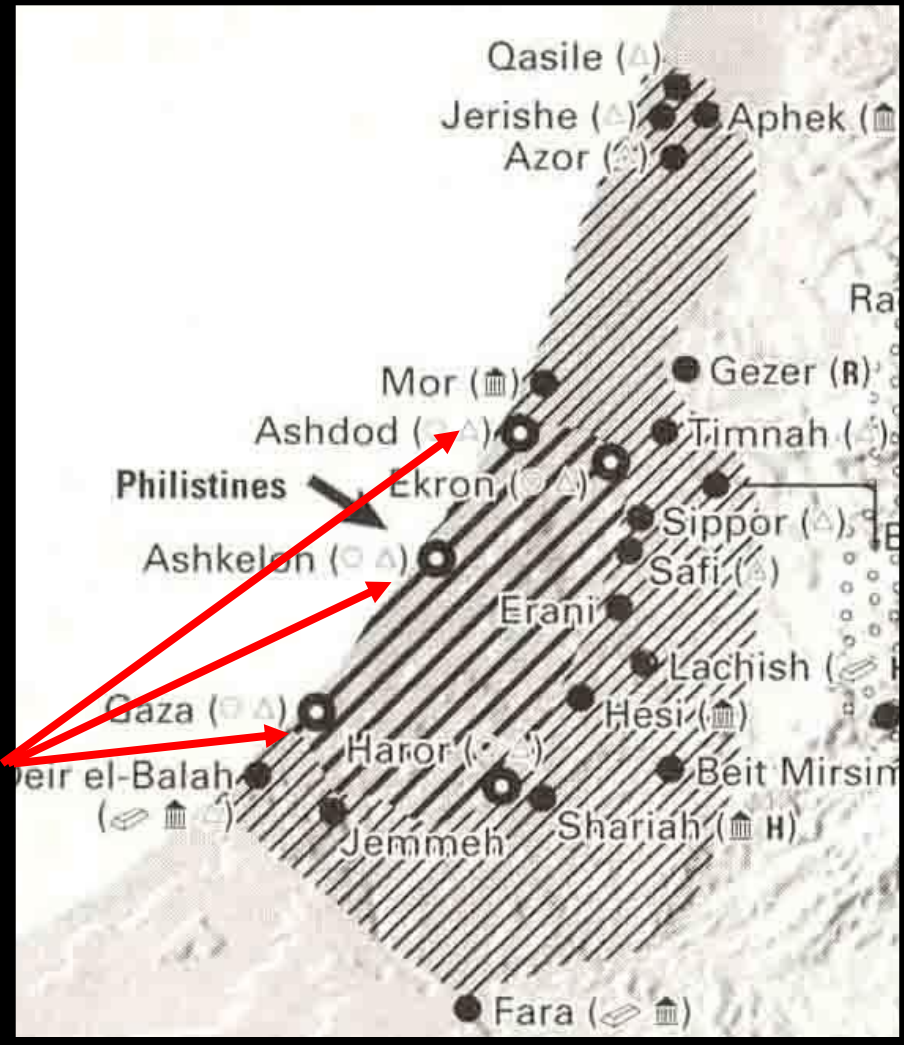


Ashdod



Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Sea Peoples & Canaanites in the Levant:



- The Onomasticon of Amenemope confirms the presence of the **Sherden**, **Tjeker**, and **Peleset** in Canaan, plus the importance of **Ashkelon** (150 acres), **Ashdod** (20 acres), and **Gaza** (mostly unexcavated).

Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

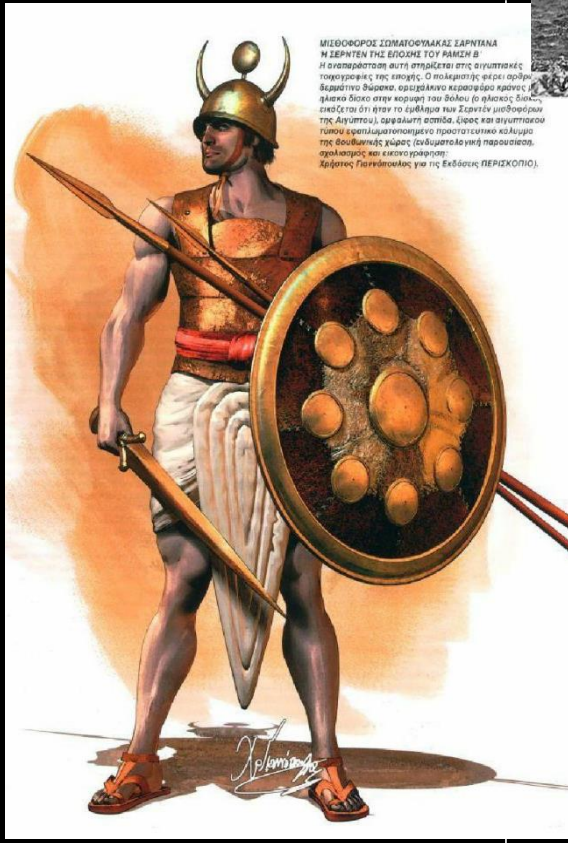
The Sea Peoples & Canaanites in the Levant:

- These settlements are associated with the biblical Philistines, implying that these migrants had become quite settled by 1150–1100 BCE (Mazar 1990; Lipinski 2006, 49–57).
- *The Journey of Wenamon* (ca. 1069 BCE), mentions an Egyptian emissary stopping at a **Tjeker port-town** of Dor (Plain of Sharon);
- **Wenamon** also relates that the Tjeker operated many ships along the Levantine coast, while the prince of Byblos is called Tjeker-baal.



Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Sea Peoples & Canaanites in the Levant:



ΜΙΣΘΟΦΟΡΟΣ ΣΙΜΑΓΟΥΡΥΑΚΑΣ ΣΑΡΠΤΑΝΑ
Η ΣΕΡΠΕΝΤΗ ΤΗΣ ΕΠΙΘΙΜΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΡΑΜΣΗ Β
Η απεικόνιση αυτή απεικονίζει έναν αιγυπτιακό
πολεμιστή της εποχής. Ο πολεμιστής φέρει αρθρο-
διδάκτυλο Σέρπεντα, οριζόντιο κερατόμο κρόνος, φλακί-
ακικό δίσκο στην κορυφή του κράνους (ο φλακίος δίσκος,
σημαίνει ότι ήταν το εμβλημα των Σερπεντα μισθοφόρων
της Αιγύπτου), σφραγιστή ασπίδα, λόφος και αιγυπτιακό
τυκίσι κρηπίδατοπονημένο προστατευτικό κάλυμμα
της δουλοειδούς χιάρας (συνδυασμένο για παράδειγμα,
σφραγιστής και κρηπίδατοπονητής
Χρήσιμος Γραμμοτέκτης για τις Εκδόσεις ΠΕΡΙΣΧΟΠΙΟ).



- The Sherden also may have occupied the northern valleys and plains of Canaan, including Tell es-Saidiyeh (Tubb 2000).

Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

Helladic/Mycenaean III C pottery

The Sea Peoples & Canaanites in the Levant:

- Regarding Aegean links, northern Palestine and coastal Lebanon and Syria have produced locally made Mycenaean III C1b pottery (e.g., Acre; Beth Shan), *albeit in much smaller amounts than Philistia.* (see Mee 2008, 378, 382).



Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

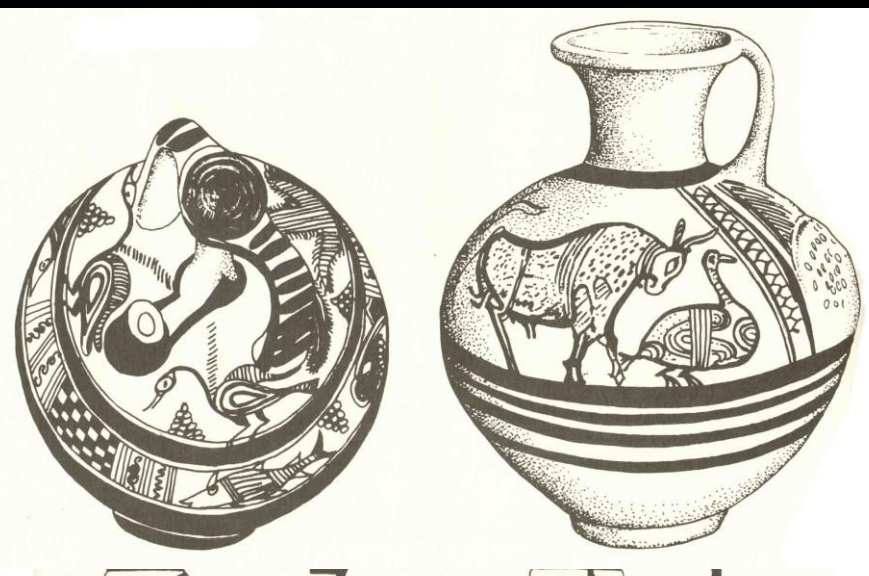
The Philistines (& Canaanites):

- **The Pelest**, who are best equated with the biblical Philistines, may have roots from **Crete** (biblical Kaphtor [Amos 9:7; Jeremiah 47:4]), *but also display strong ties with the **Ionian coast** (Western Anatolia) and the **Aegean** in general:*

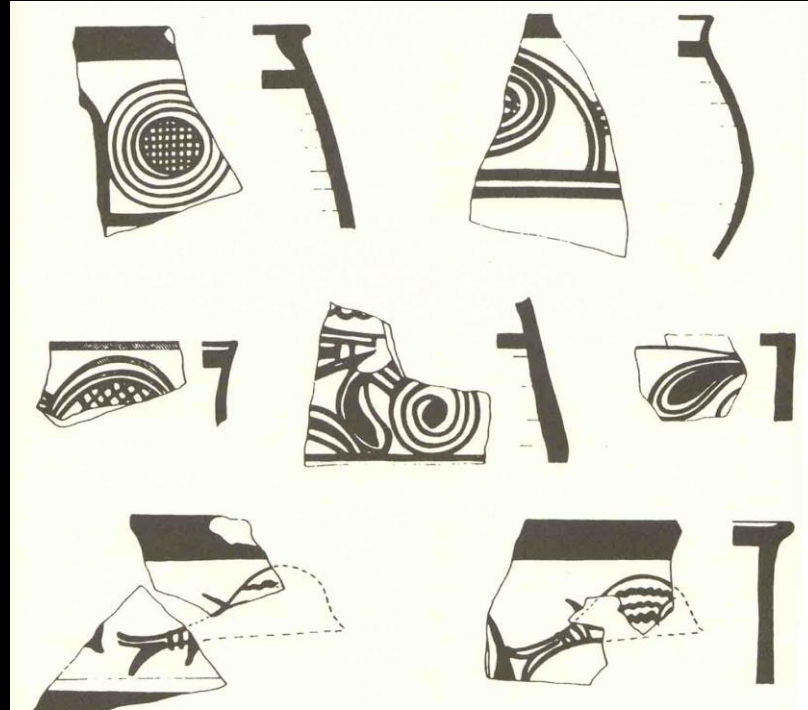
E.g., The Plain of Philistia yields

(a). Mycenaean pottery forms (Late Helladic IIIc bell-shaped bowls and kraters; stirrup jars; strainer jugs; pyxides),

(b). Mycenaean-style art and motifs (e.g., birds),



Mycenaean IIIc.1b pottery from Rhodes and Cyprus



Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Philistines (& Canaanites):

- The Pelest, who are best equated with the biblical Philistines, may have roots from **Crete** (biblical Kaphtor [Amos 9:7; Jeremiah 47:4]), *but also display strong ties with the **Ionian coast** (Western Anatolia) and the **Aegean in general**:*
E.g., The Plain of Philistia yields

replica

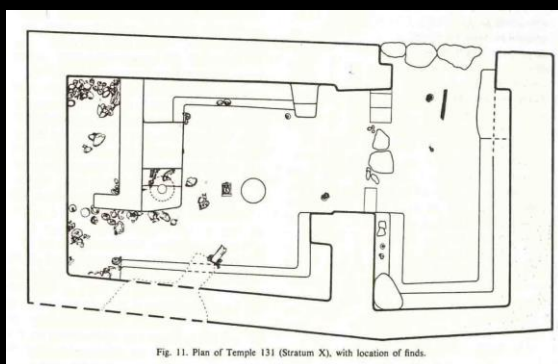
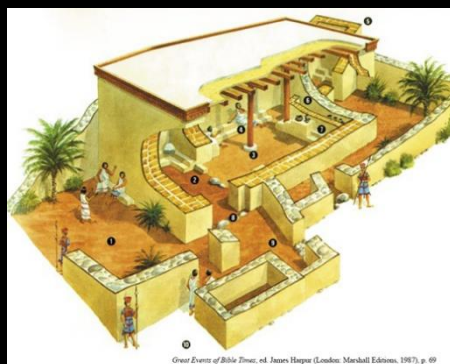
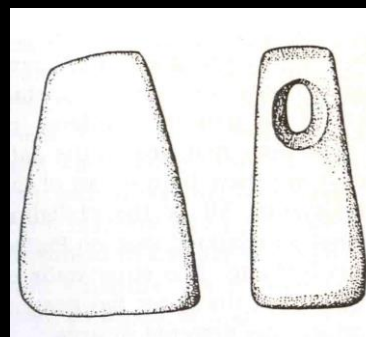


Fig. 11. Plan of Temple 131 (Stratum XI), with location of finds.



Great Events of Bible Time, ed. James Hays (London: Marshall Editions, 1967), p. 69

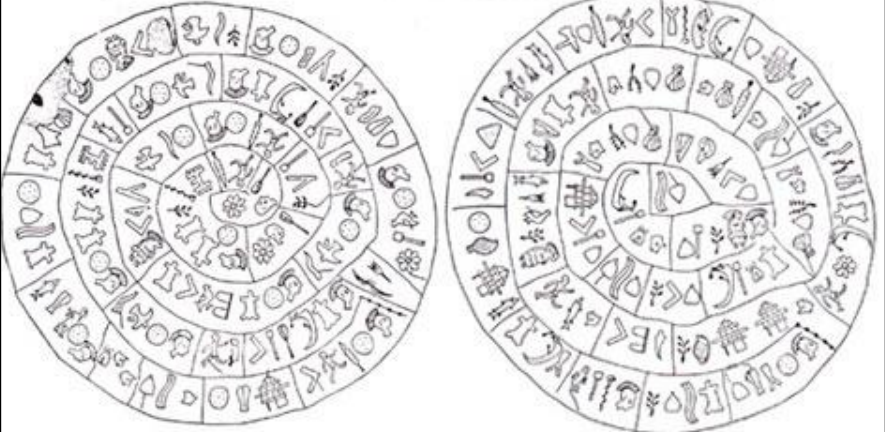
- (c). figurines (e.g., seated & standing human figures),
- (d). seals with glyptic art (resembling Cypro-Minoan script),
- (e). architecture (megera; bench-shrines) &
- (f) other components (Dothan 1982; Mazar 1990)



Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Philistines (& Canaanites):

- Regarding the Pelest, ...
(g). A flaring headdress similar to the style associated with the Pelest is found on the Phaistos Disk from Late Bronze Age Crete (Gardiner 1947, 203* *kftyw*).



Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Philistines (& Canaanites):

- Regarding the Pelest, ...



(h). The Bible has some Philistine names and designations with apparent, albeit contested, links to Luwian languages from Western Anatolia (Singer 1988, 243).

(i). Anatolian parallels to the Sherden(?) and Tjeker(?) may be reflected by the introduction of many double pithos burials at **Tell es -Saidiyeh** (Jordan Valley) and some double pithos and cremation burials at **Azor** (near Tell Qasile).



Azor: double pithos burial

Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

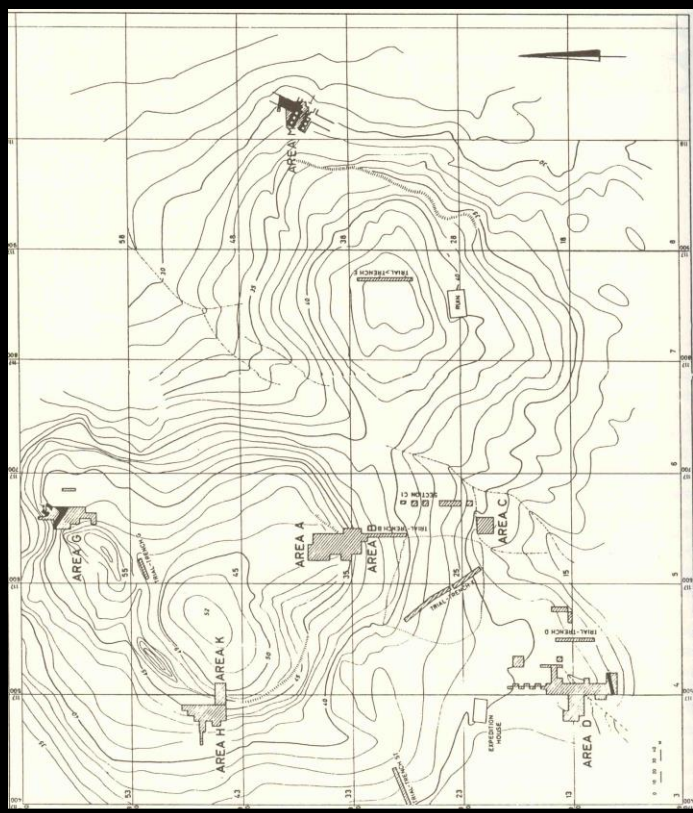
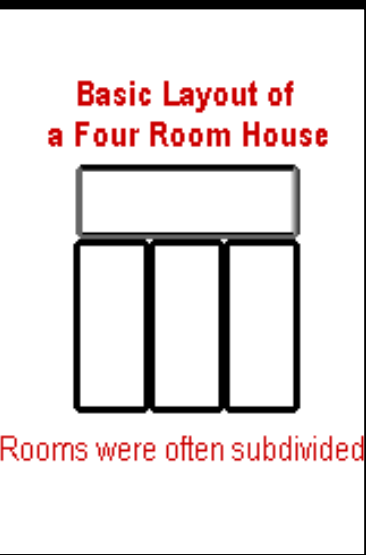
The Philistines (& Canaanites):

- During Iron Age IB, *after Egypt lost control of Canaan*, the characteristic **Philistine material culture expands further north and inland**, including the settlements of Ekron (Tel Mique) and Gath (Tel Safi), which biblical texts (Judges 16) ascribe to a Philistine confederacy of five towns: **pentapolis** (Yunker 2003, 372; Yasur-Landau 2010, 282–97).

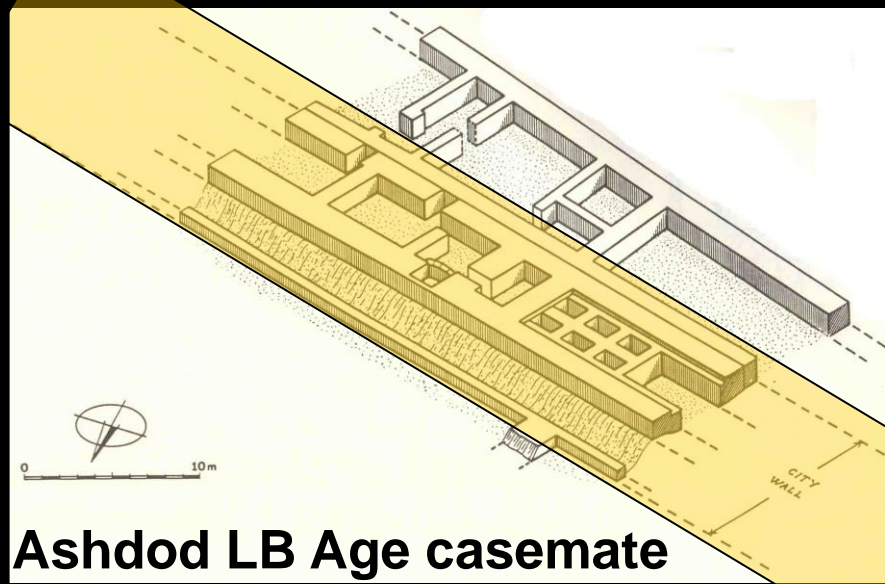


Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Philistines (& Canaanites):



- This autonomy enabled the Philistines to fortify their growing cities (Ashdod increased to 100 acres).
- Some elite housing includes Myc-style buildings with a central hearth and four pillars (Miqne-Ekron);
- A few homes adopted a “four-room house” plan, which becomes typical for mainly Iron Age Israel and Judah (Holladay 1997, 337).



Ashdod LB Age casemate

Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Philistines (& Canaanites):

- Philistine temples, exemplified at Tel Qasile and partly exposed at Tel Safi (Gath), exhibit Aegean-style roots (e.g., Kition; Phylakopi):
 - Rectilinear structural plans,
 - two central pillars,
 - interior benches for votive offerings,
 - an altar,
 - treasury,
 - outer courtyard, and
 - other features.

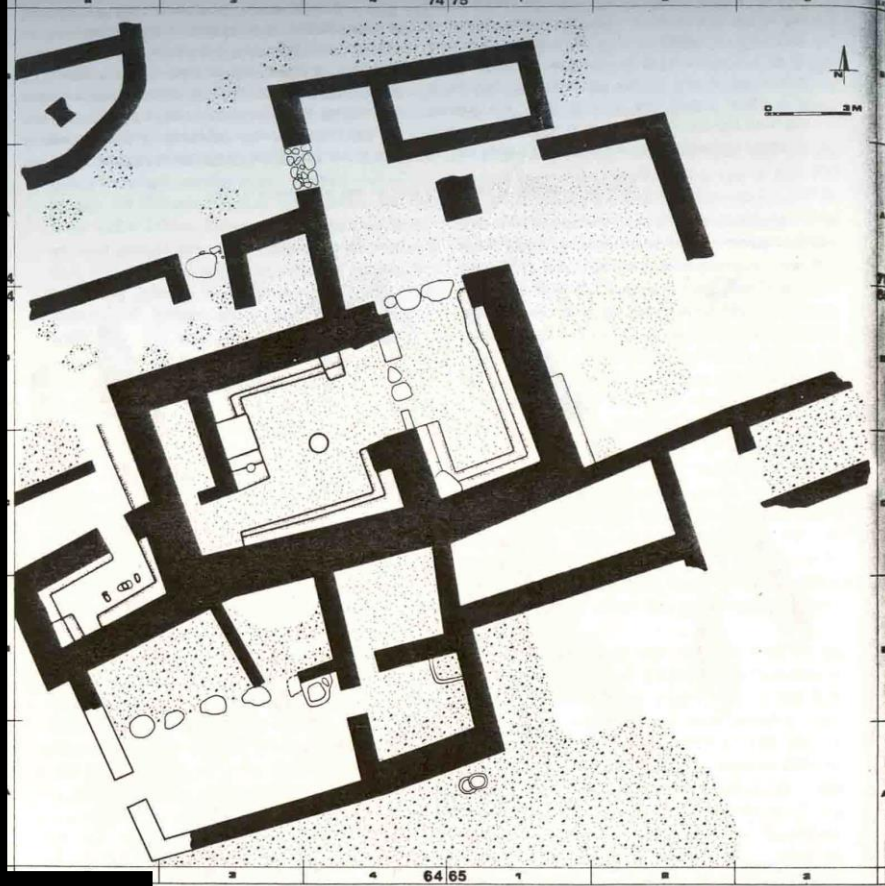
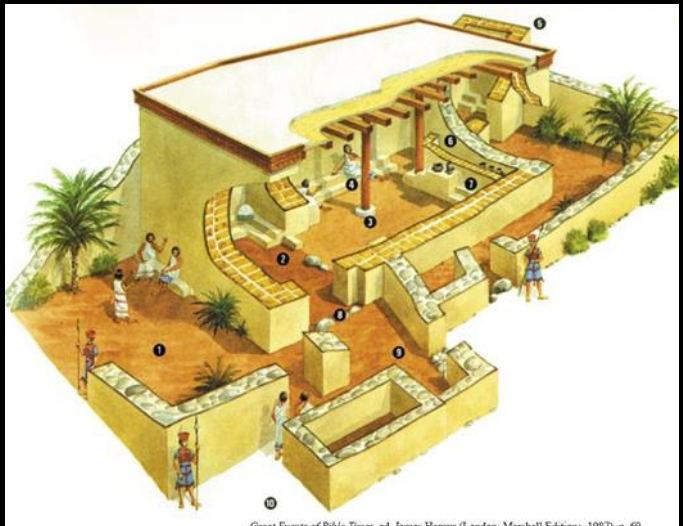
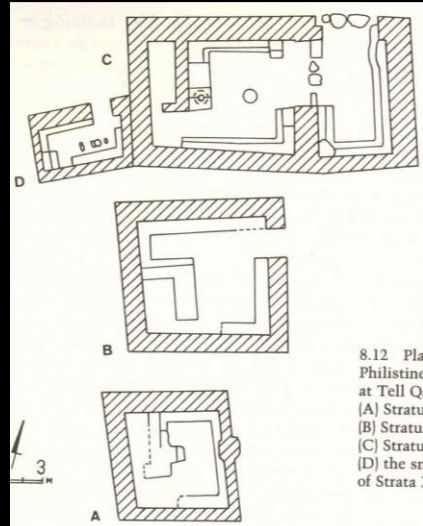


Fig. 9. Area C, Stratum X, schematic plan.



Great Events of Bible Times, ed. James Harpur (London: Marshall Editions, 1987), p. 69



8.12 Plan of Philistine temple at Tel Qasile. (A) Stratum X, (B) Stratum IX, (C) Stratum VIII, (D) the structure of Stratum VII.

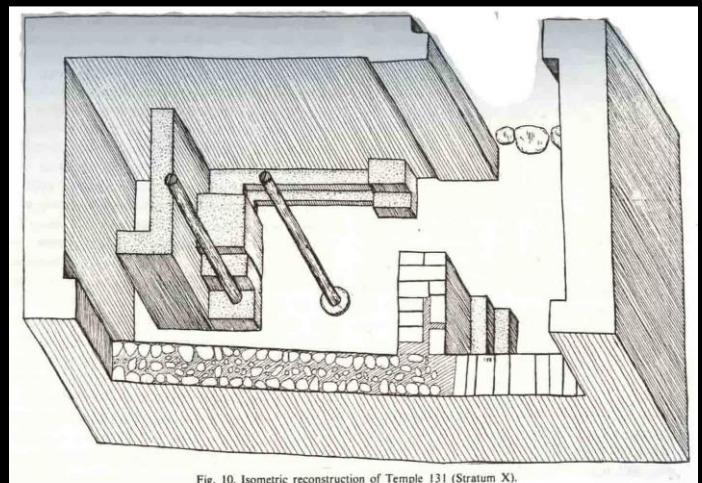
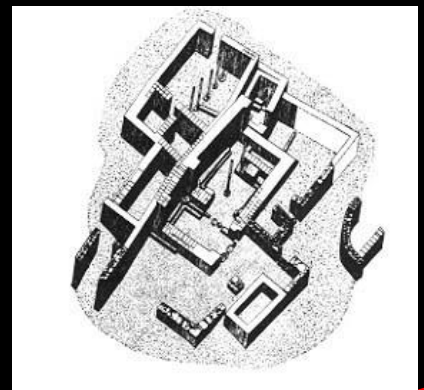
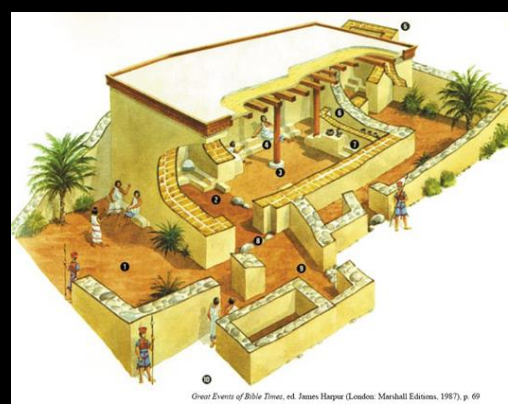


Fig. 10. Isometric reconstruction of Temple 131 (Stratum X).

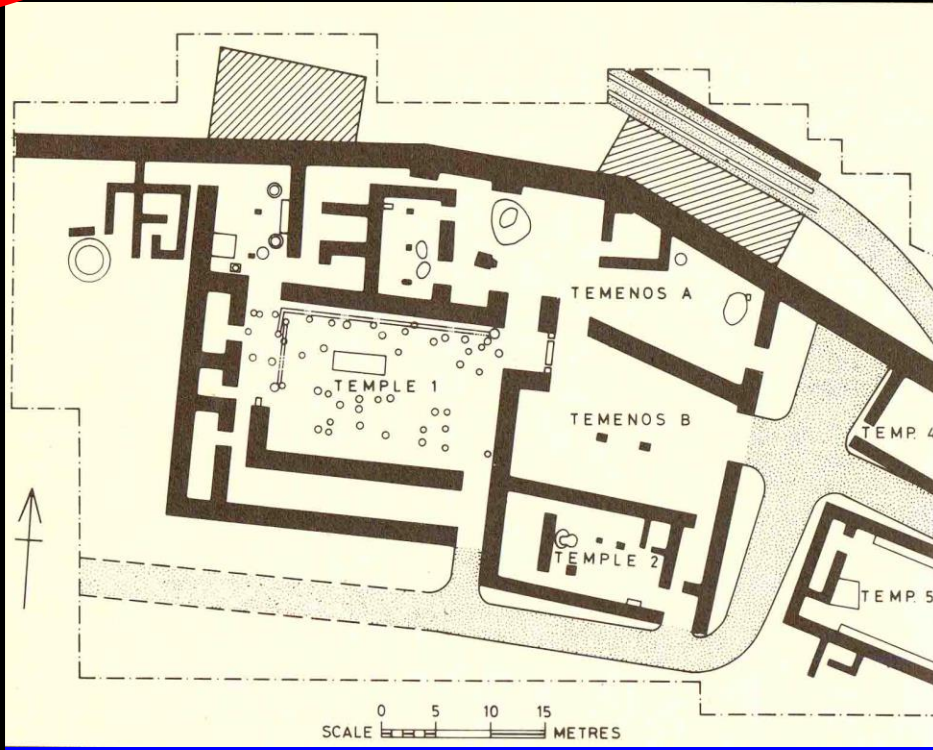
Iron Age 1: ca. 1200 – 1000 BC

Qasile Strata XII-X temple summary:



Kition temple on Cyprus.

- There may have been influences between temple architecture in the Aegean, Cyprus and the Levant.
- However, the temple at Tel Qasile appears to have more parallels with the Aegean and Cyprus than with Canaan, thereby reflecting the overall Philistine's Mycenaean and Cypriot (in-transit) heritage.

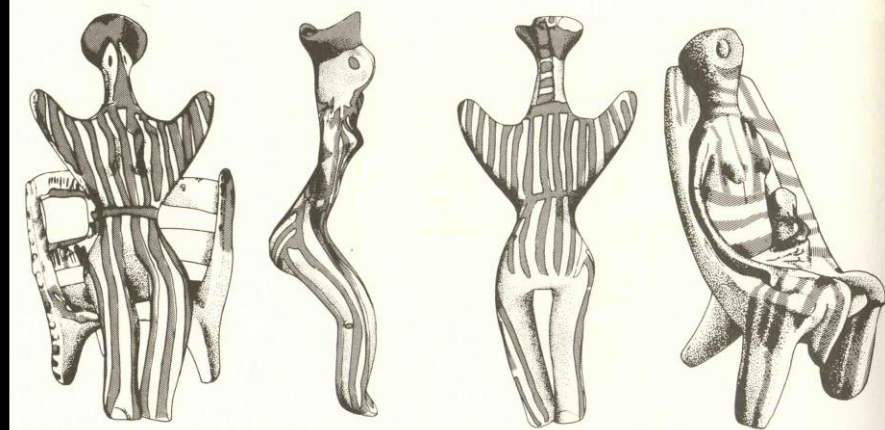


Cyprus: LB Age Kition, shrine

Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Philistines (& Canaanites):

- Philistine temples, ...



- They contained ritual equipment such as Aegean-derived Ashdoda female figurines, mourning female figurines (hands-to-head), pottery stands, rhyta, and kernoi, plus triton shells (possibly a horn for ritual calls), alabaster vessels, jewelry, seals, and other votives (Mazar 1980; 1985; 1990).

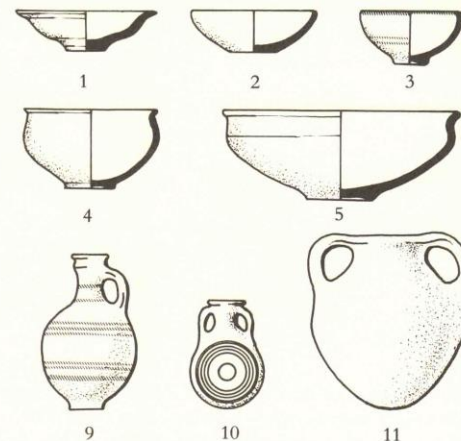


Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

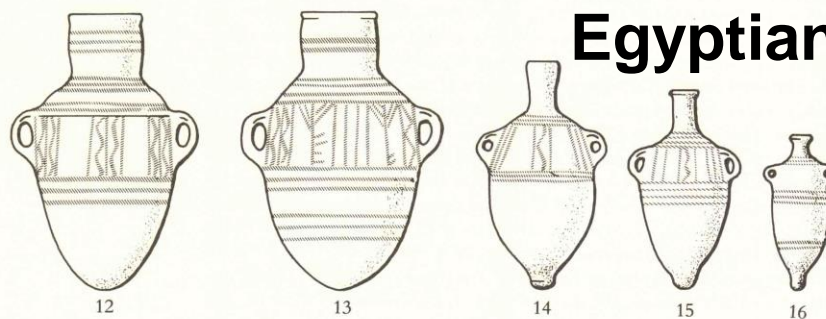
The Philistines (& Canaanites):

- One popular misperception concerning the Philistines introducing and having a monopoly on iron production and superior weaponry (see I Samuel 13:19–22) is misplaced:
- I.e., **Iron items** appear earlier in the Levant and are manufactured and dispersed widely during the Iron Age, including in Israelite territory (see Dever 1990, 80).
- In addition to the continuation and dominance of typical Canaanite pottery forms in Iron Age IB Philistia, **Philistine pottery** shifts to a hybrid, Bichrome ware with a more stylized bird motif, painted spirals, frames, rarely fish, and sometimes an Egyptian-style lotus blossom.

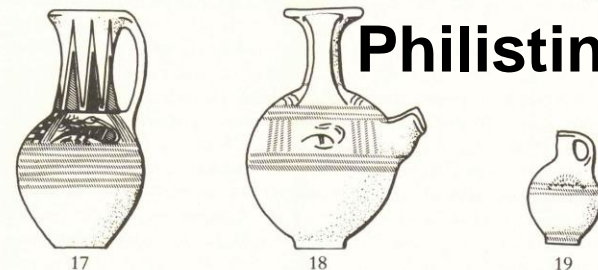
Canaanite



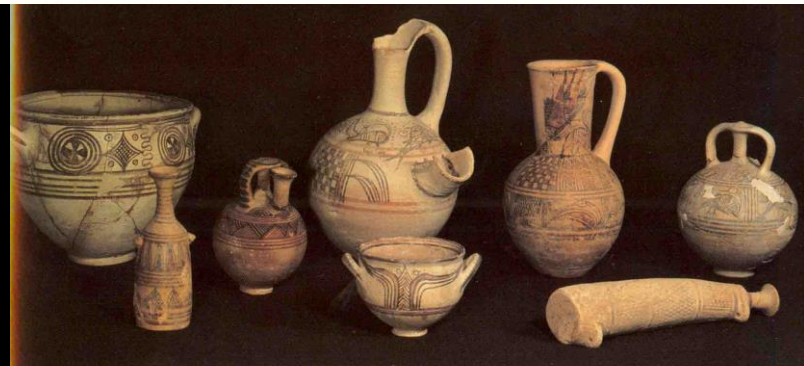
Egyptian



Philistine



Pottery assemblages from a Tell el-Farah tomb. The pottery spans a period from the twelfth century B.C. to the first half of the eleventh and combines three different traditions: local Canaanite (1–11); reciprocal Canaanite–Egyptian (12–16); and Philistine (including Egyptianized long-necked jugs) (17–19).



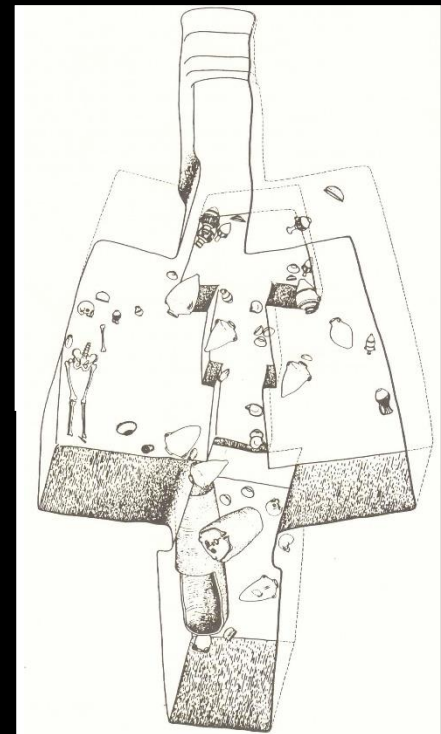
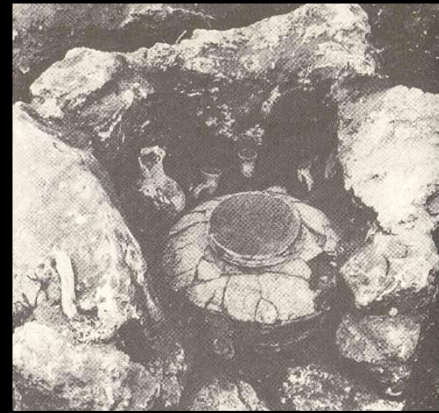
Sea Peoples in Near East 1000-1000 BC

The Philistines (& Canaanites):

- Although other Aegean-derived items continue in Iron IB, and likewise merge with Canaanite material culture (e.g., hybrid “Orpheus” jug from Megiddo Stratum VIA), **Bichrome pottery characterizes Philistine culture:** I.e., It is also exported to settlements along the borders of Philistia and reaches the foothills of the Israelite hill country.
- **The Philistine heartland** contains multiple burial types, from the common indigenous simple pit-graves and rectilinear cist graves to foreign-derived pithos burials (Azor; Tell Zeror), some Aegean(?) -derived rock-cut bench tombs (Tell el-Farah South), and sporadic cremation burials (e.g., Azor) (Dothan 1993, 128, 129; Kochavi 1993, 1525; Yisraeli 1993, 442–43).



Philistine bichrome



10.

SUMMARY

OF MAIN

POINTS:

Theories behind the Sea Peoples:

● “*Dorian*” invasion from the north into Greece (Mycenae) → now discounted.

● **Other suggestions for Mycenaean collapse** (in complex, multi-causal ...):

- Drought (Aegean, Anatolia, Egypt),
- Famine (Aegean, Anatolia, Egypt),
- Population movements (some places)
- Economic decline (some places),
- Systemic collapse of Mycenaean palace system (Renfrew: systems collapse)
- Earthquake destruction (some places)
- Raids (textual attestations)

● **Hittite empire collapses:** suffered from

- Drought & famine,
- Strife over royal succession,
- External pressures (raids; revolts),
- Invasion from northern tribes (Kaska).
- Etc.



Sea Peoples & collapse of the Bronze Age.

Date: 1200-1150 BC (Iron Age 1A).

- 1. Egypt:** Ramesses III records at Medinet Habu that in his year 8 (ca.1200 BC) the Sea Peoples had destroyed Arzawa (S. Turkey), the Hittites (Turkey), Alashiya (Cyprus), Qode (Syria), Carchemish (Syria), invaded Egypt's northern empire with refugees (from Amurru) & attacked delta river mouths;
- 2. Composition:** The Sea Peoples included the Shekelesh (S. Italy?), Peleset (Anatolia/Aegean/Crete), the Tjekker (NW Turkey), Weshwesh (W. Anatolia), Teresh (Lydia: W. Anatolia), Denyen (SE Turkey) & Shardana (N. Syria);
The land-based forces included Libyan tribes & Levantine refugees;

Sea Peoples & collapse of the Bronze Age.

- 3. Impetus:** The impetus for the Sea Peoples' movements is complex and spans 50 years, including drought, famine, earthquakes, displaced populations, raids, economic decline, and Mycenaean palace system collapse in southeast Europe, with a ripple effect into the East Mediterranean: refugees, etc.
(Note: "Dorian" invasions = totally discounted)
- 4. Hittite collapse:** The additional pressures of the Sea Peoples to the Hittite empire compounded their existing problems with drought, famine, internal strife over royal succession, north raids by the Kaska tribes and various revolts and raids within and along the borders of the empire: e.g., Assyria.

Sea Peoples & collapse of the Bronze Age.

- 5. Syrian collapse: Correspondence between Ugarit (Lebanon) and Alashiya (Cyprus) reveals diverse coastal raids upon these Hittite vassals by sea raiders, who destroyed many coastal settlements and city states whose defences were weakened whilst many troops were off in Hatti aiding the Hittites.**
- 6. Canaan: Ramesses III (Egypt) apparently defeated the land attack somewhere in Canaan, but took many captives and settled some in Egyptian forts as auxiliary forces/garrisons. Later texts and the archaeological record reveals the Philistines, Tjekker and others settled along the coast of the Levant (see the Journey of Wenamon; the Onomasticon of Amenemope)**

Sea Peoples & collapse of the Bronze Age.

- 7. Egypt:** Ramesses III claims victory over a Sea Peoples' fleet that attempted to enter the delta; he placed Egypt's fleet at several delta river mouths, alongside land-based troops, and slaughtered many Sea Peoples within their ships.
The Sea Peoples' ships display bird-headed prows and sterns.
- 8. Aftermath:** The Sea Peoples attacked and destroyed many sites and settle along the Levantine coast: Peleset in Southwest Canaan (Plain of Philistia), Tjekker in northern Palestine (e.g., Byblos), and the Sherden possibly in the north (e.g., Jonathan Tubb: double pithos burials at Tell es-Saidiyeh).

Sea Peoples & collapse of the Bronze Age.

8. Aftermath:

The entire East Mediterranean was left altered substantially in the wake of the Sea Peoples' migrations & raids:

- a. the Hittite empire and other kingdoms and city states fell;**
- b. New peoples emerged and combined with the Canaanite populations;**
- c. Egypt survived, but faced increasing Libyan attacks and incursions under Ramesses III-XI, later forging Libyan-derived chiefdoms/polities in the 3IP delta (Iron IB).**

11.

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