

**Review of: Fischer, P. M. & Bürge, T. (2017). "Sea Peoples" Up-to-Date. New Research on Transformations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 13<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Centuries BCE (Denkschriften der Gesamtkademie LXXXI. Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean XXXV). Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. 412 pages, 92 figures, € 149.00. ISBN 978-3-7001-7963-4.**

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Some 160 years after the term *Sea Peoples* (*Peuples de la mer*) was coined by the French Egyptologist Emmanuel de Rougé and popularised by Gaston Maspero, the European Science Foundation workshop "Sea Peoples" Up-to-Date. New Research on Transformations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 13<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Centuries BCE took place in November 2014 at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. Numerous specialists on Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age met there to discuss the so called "crisis years" at the end of the Bronze Age. The volume reviewed here is the result of this meeting and came out 3 years after it, which is a reasonable time considering the task the editors had before themselves. They organised the volume in five main parts:

1. Overviews: From Italy to the Levant
2. Climate and Radiocarbon
3. Theoretical Approaches on Destruction, Migration and Transformation of Culture
4. Case Studies: Cyprus, Cilicia and the Levant,
5. Material Studies.

Each part presents several contributions to different subtopics. The book comes in soft-cover, numbers 412 pages with 92 figures (line-drawings and photos) and is judging by its price more suited to institutions than to private individuals.

The editors, Fischer and Bürge, open the volume with their reflections on the workshop in Vienna in 2014. They state that the Sea Peoples phenomenon is often viewed as synonymous to the so called "crisis years" around 1200 BC. The volume covers different regions argued to have been affected by this crisis, except the Balkans, which is slightly touched in the papers of Jung and Wiener, and Mehofer and Jung. However, one crucial region not covered by the volume is Egypt and there is a noticeable lack of Egyptological (philological, art historical and archaeological) perspectives on the problem. The consequence is that Egyptian sources are often used by various authors in the volume less critically than they actually should.

The first part of the volume "Overviews: From Italy to the Levant" consists of papers by REINHARD JUNG, MALCOLM H. WIENER and HELENE WHITTAKER. Jung

dealt with possibilities and limitations of giving historical background to the sources on Sea Peoples at hand. His statement that material culture of the Libyans during the Late Bronze Age is unknown to modern research (pp. 34) must be taken with caution because the last two decades especially increased our knowledge of the Libyans in the western desert in Egypt (Marsa Matruh and Zawiyet Umm el-Rakham). Wiener argues that – although there is evidence for a shift to cooler and drier conditions in various areas at the end of the Bronze Age – it is not possible to relate the collapse to this change. The gravity of impact must have been dependent on other factors, such as resilience of a society. He mentions malnourishment among children buried in the south tombs cemetery at Amarna as evidence for climatic changes (pp. 45), but this can also be related to the status of this population. Whittaker deals with the collapse of Mycenaean palaces and its relation to the Sea Peoples phenomenon. She asks if it is possible that there were earlier raids of the Sea Peoples than those we know from the times of Merenptah and Ramesses III (pp. 79). The answer to this question is found in Egyptian sources. We know of their raids in the Delta from the Tanis stela of Ramesses II which mentions Shereden warriors who came on ships. The generally accepted interpretation of depictions of carts with women and children on Medinet Habu reliefs as families of Sea Peoples and their possessions, being evidence for their migratory nature (pp. 79), is also accepted by Whittaker and Zwickel in the fourth part of the volume. However, already Robert Drews (2000, 190) pointed to numerous problems with this assumption. An excellent question Whitaker however poses is: If the Sea Peoples originally destroyed Mycenaean palaces, why didn't they settle there?

The second part of the volume "Climate and Radiocarbon" has only two papers, one by DAVID KANIEWSKI and ELISE VAN CAMPO and one by STURT W. MANNING, CATHERINE KEARNS and BRITTA LORENTZEN. Kaniewski and Van Campo discuss the period of extreme aridity known as 3.2 kyr calBP and its impact on Late Bronze Age societies, and argue for a century-scale episode of dry conditions and that this is the main factor behind the huge population migrations (pp. 90). The problem is however that they take huge population migrations as a given fact. Manning, Kearns and Lorentzen deal with the highly problematic dating of LC IIC to IIIA and argue that destructions and crisis events are not to be seen as consequence of a single event, which can be attributed to Sea Peoples or Aegean migrations, but rather to a process which lasted from several decades to an entire century.

The third part of the volume *“Theoretical Approaches on Destruction, Migration and Transformation of Culture”* brings together papers by JESSE MICHAEL MILLEK, ASSAF YASUR-LANDAU, AREN M. MAEIR and LOUISE A. HITCHCOCK and LORENZ RAHMSTORF. Millek discusses the evidence for Sea Peoples destructions on the Levant. This paper is an excellent example of equifinality and the problems it can cause when not taken seriously. The destructions of these sites or their parts occurred in a period of 50 years (also Manning, Kearns and Lorentzen in this volume) and therefore one cannot explain this nor the loss of Egyptian control over the Levant with the Sea Peoples argument. Millek argues that quite often the words used to describe destruction exaggerate and misrepresent the archaeological record. Yasur-Landau discusses recent theoretical advances in studies of the Philistines. He closes his discussion with the quote of two textual sources. The first is the Ugarit tablet RS 11.857 mentioning Alashiyan households, hard to identify archaeologically, and the second is the sacking of Avaris described in the Second stela of Kamose, Egyptian king of the 17<sup>th</sup> dynasty. A more critical reading of the sources is lacking and Yasur-Landau does not consider that there is good reason to doubt that Kamose ever reached Avaris (RYHOLT, 1997, 173; Немировский и Сафронов, 2014, 11–15) and that Kamose does not refer to the ruler of Avaris as an Asiatic because all rulers of Avaris were of foreign origin, but because he and his scribes want to represent them as such (ROBERTS, 2013). Maeir and Hitchcock argue that non-local features in Philistia cannot be traced to a single origin and that there are varying degrees of entanglement with local Canaanite traditions. They view groups of Sea Peoples as *“heterogeneous tribal groups, similar to pirates of the historical era”* who used material culture of different origins as their emblematic symbols. They warn against taking etic and emic identifications of various groups in the texts for granted. Local origins (city or a smaller territorial unit) could have played a larger role for this people and some boundaries may have archaeologically invisible characteristics. Rahmstorf compares Anglo-Saxon migration from continental Europe to Britain in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century AD with supposed Sea Peoples migration from the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. He points to the benefits of DNA and isotope analysis which are yet to be conducted on a larger scale for Eastern Mediterranean Late Bronze Age and Iron Age. The problem is, for example, that there are almost no known burials from the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Philistia. A further problem is that it is not possible to make a straightforward match between the material cul-

ture of any specific region or the potential home of the migrants with the material culture associated to Sea Peoples in areas where they most likely settled. The main problem however is that he does not discuss the scale of the migrations in question and just assumes that a large scale population movement occurred in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The fourth part of the volume *“Case Studies: Cyprus, Cilicia and the Levant”* is the one with the largest number of contributions, among which are those by PETER M. FISCHER, ARTEMIS GEORGIU, GUNNAR LEHMANN, DIEDERIK J. W. MEIJER, FRANCISCO J. NÚÑEZ, AYELET GILBOA and ILAN SHARON, TERESA BÜRGE and WOLFGANG ZWICKEL. Fischer discusses the possible reasons for the destructions of Hala Sultan Tekke on Cyprus between the last quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> and soon after 1200 BC. The problem is in his suggestion that because Sea Peoples were troubling Egypt in greater extent from Year 5 of Merenptah (before 1209 BC) to Year 8 of Ramesses III (around 1186 BC) and this fits well with crisis years on Cyprus, this means that there is a possibility that groups of attackers came from Cyprus. According to this scenario the survivors of destruction in stratum 1 at Hala Sultan Tekke would have either taken their ships or built new ones and joined the attack on Egypt. Yet, in the conclusion he relates the stratum 2 destructions with the Egyptian sources and stratum 1 destructions with migrations to the Levant. Georgiou discusses the lack of uniformity of collapse on Cyprus by concentrating on the Paphos region. During the crisis years in other regions on the island around 1200 BC the Paphos polity built the megalithic Sanctuary I within the town’s urban centre and furnished their chamber (collective burials) and shaft tombs (single burials that Georgiou relates to migrants) elaborately with luxury goods. At the same time, new sites were established from scratch, such is the case of Maa-Paleokastro on a narrow peninsula and Pyla-Kokinkremos. All of this indicates that various Cypriot polities had various destinies in the Late Bronze Age. Lehman discusses the Late Bronze Age-Iron Age transition in Cilicia on the basis of the site Kinet Höyük, where the Cilician LB III is the period following the collapse of the Hittite empire. Stratum period 13.2 at Kinet Höyük was destroyed either by an earthquake or in a violent attack (see also Millek’s discussion in the same volume). Meijer discusses the archaeological implications of J. David Hawkins’s reading of a recently discovered inscription in the temple of the Storm God in Aleppo in Syria. Hawkins reconstructed two rulers in a Luwian text, both with names Taita, with ethnicons Palistin and Walistin. Meijer warns that this should be approached carefully from several reasons:

1. the identification with Egyptian Peleshet and Biblical Philistines is not final;
2. that there are two kings named Taita, does not mean that there is a long dynasty of Palistin rulers as they could rather be new players evoking distant memories (see also Maeir and Hitchcock in this volume);
3. that the monument in question is found in Aleppo does not mean that these two men ruled over Aleppo, nor does it mean that Aleppo was part of Palistin.

Núñez warns against arguing for Sea Peoples presence or cause for destruction. When LHIIIC/hand-made burnished ware (also Bürge in this volume) or Trojan/grey ware are present because sometimes they are found in layers preceding the destruction of sites. An additional problem is that layers from different sites are often synchronised because of the presence of imported pottery and not because they were independently safely dated, which creates a false image. Núñez argues that the encounter in Amurru between Ramesses III and the Sea Peoples explains why the central Levant did not suffer from destructions. Ayelet Gilboa and Ilan Sharon argue that Tjekker/Skl is not designating an ethnic group but a territory in the Syro-Phoenician sphere centred at Dor. The commercial relations between Dor and Cyprus are explained as being a consequence of integrating migrant Cypriots. This would also explain the singularity of intensive circulation of goods between Iron Age southern Lebanon and the Carmel Coast with Cyprus especially. This changed drastically and suddenly in mid-9th century BC when the site changed in its layout from a densely populated commercial town to a town with large public buildings. Previous imported material is not present any more from this point onwards. The authors explain this as a consequence of falling under the domain of the northern Israelite kingdom. Bürge discusses the site Tell Abu al-Kharaz, a site in the Central Jordan Valley with a high degree of continuity from Late Bronze Age to Iron Age. Particularly interesting is a compound, 46m long and 8m wide, built against the city wall and numbering 21 rooms. Its destruction occurred between 1193 and 1049 BC. Her main argument for the presence of foreigners are Canaanite cooking pots and Aegean/Philistine type cooking jugs which appear as 25% of all cooking vessels, a significantly large number when compared to other sites in Jordan, where this number is 10%. Next to the vessels themselves, Bürge points to the presence of grass pea (*lathyrus sativus*) and pork as evidence for a migrant presence. However, she does not interpret these foreigners as Philistines or Sea Peoples, but suggests that they

could have been their offspring. Zwickel argues that considering that Egyptian hieratic inscriptions from Gaza are in some cases later than the settlement of Philistines there, it must be considered that Philistines were settled there by the Egyptians and that Egypt had either presence in or control over the region at least until Ramesses V. After the Philistines took over the control over the region, they attempted to establish control also in regions south and east from their territory. The presence of Philistine pottery does not necessarily mean presence of the Philistines, as the author points to the fact that this pottery class was regarded to be of high quality in the region (see also Stockhammer's paper in the same volume). Zwickel argues that Jaffa had to survive at least as late as the reigns of Ramesses III or IV as otherwise Egyptian dominion in Gaza would not survive, being that Jaffa was a military base and Gaza was controlled via temple administration. The Egyptians lost control in the area north of Ekron around 1150 BC when new settlers arrived, some of them originating from the Hittite cultural realm, as based on cremation burials. The author interprets this region as belonging to the Danites, who consisted of settlers who were integrated in their cultural surrounding to the extent that they were not considered to be foreigners by the Israelites, at least according to the Biblical narrative. In connection to cremation burials in Danite territory and the heavy influence of Hittite customs on Cilicia, the author revives the idea that the Danites are related to the Dananu from Egyptian sources (Amarna letters and later).

The fifth part of the volume, "*Material Studies*", closes the volume with papers from PENELOPE A. MOUNTJOY, PHILIPP W. STOCKHAMMER, MATHIAS MEHOFER and REINHARD JUNG, and GERT JAN VAN WIJNGAARDEN.

Mountjoy attempts to trace the origins of some Sea Peoples by comparing Philistine pottery to East Aegean-West Anatolian pottery. She argues for a south-west Anatolian origin of some groups of the Sea Peoples at least. She further stresses close connections between Enkomi (Cyprus) and Ekron pottery workshops, but also that this might be so, because Enkomi is the best excavated LHIIIC site on Cyprus. Some connections with Crete were mediated through Cyprus and there are only slight direct connections with the Greek Mainland. The NAA analysis showed close connection between Kition/Hala Sultan Tekke and the Levant and the wide distribution of pottery from Kouklia. The author stresses that the results of these analysis could also reflect trade routes and not solely population movements. Stockhammer argues that different actors used Aegean type pottery for different purposes in

the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. The finds of Aegean type pottery outside Philistine territory (Carmel coast, Jezreel Valley, Jordan Valley) either challenges the dominant narrative of Aegean pottery being one of the key distinguishing elements in defining Philistine identity or indicates that Philistine territory has to be considered to be larger. He points to the lack of Simple Style stirrup jars in Philistia, which is strange considering strong relations in material culture between Cyprus and Philistia and the connection of Simple Style stirrup jars with Cyprus. He suggests that either this class of vessels was used only for export, so the Cypriots used it neither at home nor abroad, or the Philistines choose not to use these vessels, or that Philistine settlement started later than the use of these vessels, or even that Philistine pottery repertoire should not be interpreted as typical Aegean style repertoire. He points to the use of Aegean pottery for practices not originally intended by Aegean potters. Being that key Aegean vessel shapes are missing in Philistine settlements, he suggests that Canaanite practices were conducted using Aegean type pottery. Mehofer and Jung analysed the representations of swords of the Sea Peoples in Egyptian iconography, compared these to swords of the Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean and conducted trace element and lead isotope analyses which showed that the Urnfield bronze swords (Naue II) can be traced back to Italy (their copper comes from south Alps) rather than the Balkans, but the local smiths in Greece nevertheless attempted to produce these types of swords locally. The authors suggest that this did not meet satisfaction and that is why swords produced from Alpine copper were continued to be imported. Nevertheless, objects from the eastern Mediterranean show characteristics of Cypriot copper. Wijngaarden starts with the hypothesis that in cases of migration, the migrants stay in contact with people who stayed in the area of their origin with effects emerging in both areas as a consequence of information and goods flow. He then vaguely uses this hypothesis in his discussion of luxurious goods in 13<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, especially in discussion of the change from importing finished luxury ivories to producing luxuries locally from imported ivory. The volume "Sea Peoples" Up-to-Date comes in right time, as it demonstrates in detail all the problems in attempt to identify movements of peoples and goods in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age of the Eastern Mediterranean together with all the problems in synchronising different archaeological contexts and giving them historical background based on limited textual and iconographic sources.

The authors independently identify key issues and suggest possible ways of resolving them in the future. One noticeable lack is a more nuanced discussion on the assumed migration in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC and a more critical reception and usage of New Kingdom Egyptian textual and iconographic sources. Indeed, although some Egyptologists were present at the workshop in Vienna, no contributions to the problem from an Egyptological perspective appeared in the volume. Whether Egyptology can contribute to the discussion is a redundant question, especially if one bears in mind the new publication of primary sources such as the hieratic stela MAA 1939.552 from Amara West (Sudan), where a conflict with Peleshet is attested in the 3<sup>rd</sup> regnal year of Ramesses III (Popko, 2016). One should not forget that the umbrella term *Sea Peoples* was coined in a specific historical context and that it neither reflects the Egyptian view of their enemies nor the Late Bronze Age reality. By using it uncritically one rather masks than illuminates the complexity of life, identity and movement of peoples living on and around the wine-dark sea.

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