

# Travels Through Time: Imagining Migration in the Early Aegean



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As a student, I had travelled and excavated in other parts of the Middle East (Jordan and Lebanon) before, but had never visited Israel. My three-months as the Glassman Holland Research Fellow was intended to enable me to work on the Iron Age chapter of a new book considering the role of migration in social transformations in the ancient Aegean. The Iron Age period in both the Aegean and wider east Mediterranean has been a particular focus for migration models, which refer both to ancient text accounts and to the radical disruption in social and cultural systems around 1200 BC. I wanted to familiarize myself in detail with the arguments about the Philistines as an ethnic and spatial entity moving into what came to be known as Philistia in this period, especially those positing a specifically Aegean origin or connection for the group. The relevant book chapter will discuss the important regional transformation represented by the Philistine phenomenon in the context of other contemporary movements seen in and around the Aegean. Most of my research time was spent in the Albright library that provided the bibliographic resources needed for my research.

The chance to discuss the issues with Sy Gitin was much appreciated: Sy kindly also made time to show me representative finds from Mique and offered feedback on my

workshop on November 1, entitled “Movement and Social Restructuring: Contextual Approaches to Aegean/east Mediterranean Models.”

Albright staff helpfully directed me as to the best way to visit relevant sites at Miqne, Ashdod, Ashkelon and Safi, including providing up-to-date plans. Site visits were essential to building my understanding of the ‘Philistine’ issues: I have a particular interest in landscape and settlement when examining the effects and impetus of ancient movement. Not all of the sites are in the best position or condition for publication photography, but I made up for this in visits to sites considered elsewhere in the book’s discussion of how developments in the western Levant and Anatolia affected the Aegean, including major Early Bronze centres like Yarmut and Jericho; Megiddo, Jezreel, Beit Shemesh and Beth Shean were also visited, along with the recent excavations at Rehov which Amihai Mazar told us about in the Albright’s lecture series. Unfortunately, illness on my part necessitated cancellation of a trip to the sites of Hazor and Dan which Ross Voss had offered to provide, and this will have to wait for a return trip. Visits to the Israel Museum considerably enhanced my understanding of the entire prehistoric material record of the region.

Talking to the dense and friendly network of Albright associates, including especially Eliot Braun and Sam Wolff, provided me with the beginning of an understanding of how Israel’s state archaeological service operates and its relationship to research. An after-dinner talk by Oded Lipschits touched on the same areas and gave rise to lively debate, of particular interest to me, given my own background in archaeological politics, curation and management and continuing research interest in this field. In addition, fascinating anthropological-ethnographic perspectives on Middle Eastern archaeology were opened up by encounters with Clinton Bailey and Jennie Ebeling as Albright speakers. Greatly enjoyable, too, was the company of other Fellows, including Krystal and George Pierce, Shih-Wei Hsu, Phil Sapirstein, Matt Gasperetti and Lawson Younger who kept me amused and shared their interesting research with me. I had the privilege of hearing my Albright co-resident and one of the Seymour Gitin Distinguished Professors, Lawson Younger, speak on two occasions, including at the Hebrew University under the auspices of the University of the Holy Land, giving me an insight into two further research and teaching establishments in Israel.

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