THE SEA PEOPLES AND ANNALES:
A CONTEXTUAL STUDY OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE.

by

DANIEL JACOBUS KRüGER

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DJ Krüger
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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

1.1   Introduction

"Most of all it is the sea that delineates precisely the layout of the land, creating gulfs, sea basins, traversable narrows and, in the same way, isthmuses, peninsulas and capes, in this the rivers and mountains also play their part."
(Strabo, Geography, 2.5.17)[1]

The events of the Late Bronze Age Early Iron Age (LB/EI) transition in the Near East have for years intrigued historians and archaeologists alike. Seemingly unrelated events have led to the ruin of numerous city-states in Anatolia, Syro-Palestine, Mycenae and Cyprus. To add to this, Egyptian mortuary texts illustrate a dramatic sea and land battle between the Egyptians and foreign invaders. Several authors have described the subsequent era in passionate terms comparing it with 'Dark Ages'. Recently however, several publications have surfaced that maintain a more constructive view towards the Sea Peoples and the changes that occurred with their arrival.

The Annales School is a unique historiographical movement that embodies a methodology that may possibly offer us a means through which to understand the events of the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age. Through their emphasis on a multidisciplinary approach, a 'total' approach towards history and a unique concept of time the Annales movement shares a partnership with archaeology that penetrates deeper that just a their chosen field of research: the past. Archaeology, especially as it is practised in Syro-Palestine has, until very recently, relied primarily on the Bible to define its research matter. Although the Annales has been known as a school, it shies away from using a rigorous paradigm, and could preferably be appreciated as a movement or a paradigm rather than a school.

1.2 Purpose of the paper

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1 In Horden and Purcell, 2000.

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The principle focus of the study is an interpretation of the 12th century BCE (Late Bronze/Early Iron Age) and the socio-political changes in the Eastern Mediterranean. The purpose of the study revolves around the introduction and application of a histiographical movement, the Annales School, in a particular archaeological context and period.

The employment of the Annales movement, in the way described above, demands the identification of key elements in the Annales movement that would facilitate interpretation as well as a familiarity of the particular period in question, the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age or 12th century BCE. This will entail the identification of socio-political entities, an analysis of the transition period and an evaluation of the evidence that includes textual, archaeological and environmental evidence. The aim is to divide to era into comparable units, the recognition of differences and regularities between the units, the construction of models of change that could provide an explanatory tool and interpretation of the findings.

The study therefore revolves around four issues.

- The potential of the Annales movement as an explanatory tool.

- In what way must the Annales principles be employed to achieve the desired results?

- The provision of a proper contextual framework within which the changes of the LB/EI took place.

- Interpretation of the context.

CHAPTER 2

NOUVELLE HISTOIRE – THE 'NEW HISTORY' AND THE ANNALES MOVEMENT

2.1 The Origins of the Annales Movement

The Annales Schools' official origin can be traced to the establishment in 1929, at the University of Strasbourg, of the journal: *Annales d'Histoire Sociale et Economique* (and since 1955[1] *Annales: Economies, Socíetés, Civilisations*[2] (Knapp 1993:7). As with most ground breaking and influential movements, opinions were often as abundant as they were diverse, with assessments ranging from enthusiastic to disapproving[3]. Although the official origins of the movement can be traced to the establishment of the journal mentioned above, their source must be traced to an older generation unhappy with the domination of traditional historiography. French historiography in the 19th century was a discipline that was based on so called Rankeian[4] theory, a theory that focussed on empirical data, primary sources, and political and diplomatic history (Wallerstein 1982:110).

Wallerstein argues that the Annales School must be traced back even further to the origin of the modern social and historical sciences and the triumph of the universalising/sectorialisation thought. This focused on the notion that knowledge begins with the particular and ends with the abstract (universalising thought), and that there are separate parallel paths for the different sectors of knowledge (sectorialisation). Universalising thought relied on two basic concepts, firstly that through the description of reality abstract laws could be formulated, which then would be held as true through all time and space. This belief became the ideology of modern social science. The second belief did not progress further than a mere description of reality, denying the possibility of going beyond description (Wallerstein 1982:108). The notion of knowledge as being sectorialised gave rise

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1 According to Hunt, the journal took its current name in 1946 (Hunt 1986:209).
2 Alternatively, in English '*Annales: Economies, Sociétiés, Civilisations'* (Hunt 1986:209).
3 Cf the following opinions: *"No group of scholars has had a greater impact, or a more fertilising effect, on the study of history in this century than that of the French historians of the Annales School"* and *"is condemned continually to resort to illustration more than to analysis, to exhibits more than to critical interpretation and in sum to ex post facto argument, argument which stands and fall with the soundness of others' research"* (Knapp 1993:8).

to the various disciplines in the social sciences. This separation, not only on an intellectual level but also administratively, divided the social sciences into the five mainstream disciplines: anthropology, economics, geography, political science and sociology (Wallerstein 1982:109).

Turning to state archives in its attempts to study the past, history became an idiographic discipline relying only on facts or events (Knapp 1993:8). While historians therefore restricted their scope to immediate and often static knowledge, social sciences resorted to a nomothetic approach, searching for general, universal laws. In this hyper-specialised state, it became increasingly difficult to perceive the real historical world. The separation in theoretical approaches, paved the way for the formation of a variety of resistance movements. *Staatswissenschaften*[5], Marxism[6] and Annales rose to prominence as a reaction to the universalising/sectorialisational ideologies (Knapp 1993:9). In contrast with the fragmented historical approaches described above, the Annalist approach emphasised a holistic approach where economy and society rather than politics play a role, where long term patterns instead of short term events are considered, quantitive rather than chronological sequence and structural rather than narrative history is stressed (Knapp 1993:9).

This new perspective, around the turn of the 19th century, therefore rejected the German traditional scholarship with their emphasis on great men and the development of a national character (Bintliff 1991:4). Coining the term *'nouvelle histoire'* or new history, Marc Bloch[7] and Lucien Febvre[8] focused on replacing the Sorbonne based political history, predominantly a narrative history, which concentrated mainly on French political events (Bintliff 1991:5). Their aim was the

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4 A reference to Leopold von Ranke (1795 - 1886), a German historian and educator, who tended to emphasise political history while ignoring economic and social forces (Microsoft Encarta: Premium Suite 2004). Ranke's wish was to write history as it really was or '*wie es eigentlich gewesen*' (Last 1995:141).

5 This movement, based in Germany, based their ideology on the principle that social patterns of the different areas were the consequence of their differing histories. This led to different institutional structures that in turn determined the various contemporary social processes (Wallerstein 1982:109).

6 *"…All history is the history of the class struggle…"* Marx asserted that human behaviour was social and not individual, historically rooted and structurally analysable (Wallerstein 1982:111).

7 Born in Lyon, France, Marc Bloch (1886-1944) was principally a medievalist. The son of a great historian, Gustave Bloch, he was a brilliant scholar winning a fellowship for study at the Universities of Berlin and Leipzig (1908-1909). He taught at the University of Strasbourg (1919-1936), where he met Lucien Febvre, and at the Sorbonne (1936-1940) as a professor of economic history. He served in the French Army during World War 1 and 2 and joined the French resistance where he was captured, tortured and executed by the Gestapo in 1944 (Braudel 1973:465 and Microsoft Encarta: Premium Suite 2004).

8 Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) was born in Nancy, France. After teaching briefly at the University of Dijon, he took up a lectureship at the University of Strasbourg (1919-1933), before he was appointed professor at the Collège de France from 1933-1950 (Microsoft Encarta: Premium Suite 2004).

creation of an open forum for interdisciplinary research and the promotion of concrete, collaborative work that would not be tied with the traditional history of the period (Hunt 1986: 209). Bloch and Febvre wanted to enliven history, make it more scientific and broaden its scope. Through consultation with other sciences, they intended to move history out of its isolated position (Wesseling 1981:19-20).

Established in 1929, the Annales journal had an enormous impact on society that was enhanced by the obvious mediocrity of French historiography until 1945. With an impressive list of enemies, the journal aggressively defended itself against the pretentious stubbornness of the French traditionalists. Braudel mused on the contribution of this particular atmosphere to the exceptional quality[9] of Annales during the pre-war years (Braudel 1973:462).

After the war, in 1945, the youth of the universities had begun to turn toward Annales history. At this stage, the Sorbonne had lost its aggressiveness and through this, the Annales movement had lost its need to defend itself, which had until this time played a critical role in the movement's particular quality. By the 1950's, the Annales had transformed from the typical anti-establishment movement of the pre-war years into an alternative establishment in its own right. Initially associated with the Sixth Section of economic and social sciences of the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes,* first under Febvre and then under Braudel, the Annales moved into the new *Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* in 1970. In 1975, the Sixth Section became the independent *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* (Hunt 1986:209).

2.2 What Defines the Annales School?

It is clear that the Annales School do not represent an exclusive group of scholars who restrict themselves to researching similar topics. The Annales movement rather encapsulates a diverse group of scholars using related methodologies, striving toward similar aims, and united by a love of the past. Although most of the scholars in the Annales circle were French and lectured at French Universities,

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9 Lucien Febvre wrote: *"It is against these serious schisms that we intend to rise. Not by means of articles about method, not by means of theoretical disquisitions but by means of examples, by means of achieved results!"* (Braudel 1973:462).

they did not limit themselves by studying only French history. It was this diversity that characterise the school's significance.

The founders of the journal *Annales d'Histoire Sociale et Economique*, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, and their successor as editor, Fernand Braudel, were uneasy with the term 'school', used in terms of a pattern of thought closed in upon itself. They insisted that it would lead to *"complacency, conformism and stagnation"* (Braudel 1973:467, Foster 1978:60). Notwithstanding the opinions of the early editors, the movement consists of members who regularly communicate, share assumptions on subject matter and search for wider exposure to different disciplines. It is not surprising therefore that many refer to it as the 'Annales School' however they may seem to shy away from any rigorous paradigms or models[10]. Rather than backing any single methodology or historical explanation, they insist on an openness regarding new material and approaches (Foster 1978:61). Braudel insists that Annales means nothing more than a passion for the past, a search for all possibilities and the readiness to accept constant change according to the logic of the hour (Braudel 1973:467).

What defining philosophy then, can be ascribed the Annales School? Some consider their disregard of *'histoire événementielle'* (or the mere course of solitary political events), as the *raison d' être* of the movement (Trevor-Roper 1972:469). The Annales School is interested in the role of politics, art and ideas but not isolated from the physical and social environment (Trevor-Roper 1972:469). Others accede to the multidisciplinary approach of the movement towards the study of the past (Last 1995:141).

Although their view on quantification may not seem unusual, their unique approach to the study of the past distinguishes it from its descendants. Therefore what they are able to measure are pursued in a quantifiable manner, but when precision is impossible, they refrain from assuming a rigid stance and leave the conclusion to others. They do, however point tentatively to a possible direction (Trevor-Roper 1972:470).

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10 After the Second World War the journal was associated with the new Sixth Section for Economic and Social Sciences of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. Given the increasingly powerful affiliation between the two

Three elements can be identified that capture the essence of the movement. Firstly an attempt to grasp the totality of any historical period, the impression that external forces are not completely independent of the influence of the history of man and the employment of statistical methods and quantification to reduce its effects of areas of incomprehension (Trevor-Roper 1972:470-471). The basic building blocks of the Annales tradition can be summarised as follows: an emphasis on interdisciplinary research in collaboration with other social sciences and a total approach to historical reconstruction (Knapp 1993:10).

The history of the Annales movement is broken up into four generations for a more structured approach and a better understanding of a very complex group. This approach follows a similar structural style to that of A. Bernard Knapp (Knapp 1992 and 1993).

2.2.1 The Editors: Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre

Even though they were shaped by their rejection of traditional historiography, Marc Bloch en Lucien Febvre, as the proponents of the Annales School, were influenced by numerous thoughts and ideologies.

There are obvious similarities with Jules Michelet (1878-1944) who proposed a total study of history, that a broad range of sources be used in the reconstruction of history and a concern with ordinary people and the basics of daily life (Knapp 1993:9-10). Francois Simiand, a prominent sociologist, represented another key element in the development of the Annalist approach. In an article attacking the Sorbonne, Simiand condemns the study of political history, biography and narrative history. He proposes the reconstruction of the total scope of history using a broad range of sources (Foster 1978:62). He hinted at a new alliance of history with sociology, geography, anthropology, economics and psychology (Knapp 1993:10). Henri Berr[11], a philosopher of history, also exerted fierce

some commentators observed that the journal formed the core of the institution (Hunt 1986:210). The term Annales School is therefore quite appropriate.

11 Born in 1862, Henri Berr was an exceptional scholar and clearly interested in a variety of disciplines, attaining in 1880 to 1881, the Prize of Honour in rhetoric, French composition and philosophy. A philosopher of history, Berr was the founder of *Revue de Synthèse Historique* in 1900. In these series of publications he proposed to unite the various branches into which history has divided it: political, social, economic history, history of science and of art. It was through these publication and the activities that surrounded it that the desire was born to establish a more combative journal, one that was based on concrete research. It was the opinion of Braudel that this gave birth to Annales (Braudel 1973:460).

influence on the Annalist movement. With his 1900 publication of the journal *Revue de Synthèse Historique*, Berr sought to combine all aspects of historical study: political, social, economic, art and philosophy (Knapp 1992:5).

Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, through their denouncement of the importance of the event orientated spectrum, sought to synthesize all material, mental and physical forces to shape present and past human behaviour. The focus thus shifted from the individual to the collective where analysis and interpretation played a more important role than the narrative description (Knapp 1993:10). Bloch and Febvre endorsed the view that the individual must be studied within his particular context. History also included the study of groups, trends and customs in the past their focus shifted from the individual to the collective, the socio-economic and multivariate.

2.2.2 Structural History, the Age of Braudel

The second generation can be solely attributed to Fernand Braudel (Last 1995:142). Braudel's major contribution to Annales, and one that forms one of its hallmarks, is the so-called Braudelian trinity. Through this special notion of time, Braudel focuses on the dialectic between space and time and the relationship between various levels of time (Knapp 1993:10). His monumental work, *Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*[12] is the nearest concept that the Annales School has to a defining philosophy. In his work Braudel compares his three concepts of time: structure, *conjuncture* and events to the sea depths, the tides and the surface waves (Foster 1978:63). The three processes operate contemporaneously but at different wavelengths and the past can only be observed as a result of dialectic between the three processes (Bintliff 1991:6).

Since Braudel and his view of the past play such an important part in the Annales movement, I will focus and extend on this theme in the following chapter.

2.2.3 Serial History, the Third Generation

Annalists[13] of the third generation greatly contributed to the study of "total" history, in the interdisciplinary sense and global history in the geographic sense (Knapp 1992:7). Their focus on interdisciplinary research with demographic, ideological, ethnological, religious and anthropological disciplines enhanced the formidable status of the Annalist School (Knapp 1993:12).

Quantification represented another element that distinguished the third generation from its predecessors. The study of the long-term processes necessitated the use of more accurate data that led to an increased concern with a more precise measurement of the data coupled with increased statistical sophistication. The availability of erratic numerical data for the older research periods meant that quantification was usually applied descriptively rather than analytically (Knapp 1993:12).

The quantification of history, according to Foster, does not mean that history can be reduced to history of mathematical numbers. Rather, the intention is the identification of data that can be ordered into a series through which recurring patterns can be identified. The basis of the Annales quantitive history therefore is Serial History (Foster 1978:69). Annales research focus primarily on placing material or documentary evidence into a series of comparable units through which they could measure fixed intervals of change (Knapp 1992:7).

2.2.4 The Fourth Generation

According to Knapp (1992:7) the most enduring elements still employed by the fourth generation were an emphasis on the multivariate and multidisciplinary nature[14] of the discipline and an ongoing focus on the importance of the social aspect of history. Since every sort of data in the human science domain are currently utilised, the fourth generation consists of the most diverse members. Their interdisciplinary methods encompass a heterogeneous group and they employ techniques and tools from various related fields (geography, anthropology, ecology, sociology, economics, psychology) and use integrated

12 Published in Paris in 1949 and 1966 and translated into English by Sian Reynolds in 1973 (New York 1973), 2 vols.
13 Pierre Chunu, Georges Duby, Francois Furet, Jacques LeGoff, Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, Pierre Nora (Knapp 1993:9).
14 In 1985, the Sixth Section of the *L'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* has elected an anthropologist, and not an historian, as its president. Knapp believes that this gives an indication of the Annales traditions' security and power as well as its commitment toward its multidisciplinary research (Knapp 1992:8).

levels of analysis (temporal, spatial, behavioural, quantitive, narrative) in their attempts to make sense of the past (Knapp 1993:13).

Complementing the Structural History as Braudel created it was the research and also the growing emphasis on *mentalités* or the role of ideology or symbolism in the cultural context. Worldviews, ideologies or collective systems of belief have, since its formative days, played an important role in Annales research[15] but rose to prominence in the fourth generation.

2.3   The Role of the Historian

The reassessment of the historian's status and especially the perspective of the historian towards the past are central to the contribution of the Annales School towards historiography (Gurevich 1995:158). As initiated by Bloch and Febvre, a complete reversal of the relationship between the historian and the past are proclaimed. The study of the past does not begin with the past but with the historian and the context or lens through which he views the past. His perception of the past is 'filtered' by his society's beliefs and attitudes (Knapp 1992:1). It is difficult to relate our own ideas about the past to ideas actually held in the past. History cannot be viewed in isolation from contemporary human action or social concerns. History therefore is only reconstructable from the point of view of the historian (Knapp 1992:2).

Keeping in mind the dangers of conflicting perceptions, Bloch and Febvre initiated the study of *mentalités* or ideologies and worldviews to counter any possible contradictions that might arise from this disparity (Gurevich 1995:158). The newly proposed more active and creative role of the historian are based on the principle that history consists of different levels or time scales. Although it is possible to establish facts through studying the physical remains of the past i.e. archaeological remains, an all-embracing context or a general system of relations exists above this level. This context gives meaning to the established facts. This environment is unique to each epoch and can only be reconstructed through the contemporary view of the historian (Gurevich 1995:159). Examining this unique

15 According to Bintliff (1991:10) a strong interest in intellectual history and psychohistory can be found in the works of Henri Berr in his publication Revue de Synthèse Historique (1900-).

world-view or ideology makes it possible for the historian to view the past from within and in its correct context.

2.4 Evaluation

Since the departure of Braudel from the *Collège de France* the movement has come under increasing criticism, not only from non-French/non-Annales historians but even from within the movement. Condemnation included the movement's weakness of focus and an unwillingness to study periods of upheaval and change. Annales researchers have the tendency to emphasise long-term continuities over medium term fluctuations. Others were of the opinion that the Annales movement no longer constituted a school of thought but rather an authority centred only on influence and reputation (Hunt 1986:213-215).

The study of *mentalités* coupled with a weakening of the Braudelian concept of time constituted another impetus towards the disintegration of the movement. In a general shift towards 'the third level' analyses researchers have become entirely concerned with short-term events that are usually narrative in presentation. Some, describing the study of *mentalités* as a *"Gallic substitute for Marxism and psychoanalysis"*, attributes it to nostalgia for a rooted ness in traditional (French) society. A lack of definition in the field of *mentalités* is dangerous since it leads to an unremitting pursuit of new research topics and, since it is not based on a unified social theory, it is based on a fleeting intuition that yield 'endlessly debated results'. The core of the problem represents the lack of a consistent conception of the field of *mentalités.* It is ironic that the most important work on *mentalités* is being done by non-Annalists, such as Michel Foucault (Hunt 1986:214-215).

CHAPTER 3

FERNAND BRAUDEL AND HIS MEDITERRANEAN – THE *'HISTORY OF EVERYTHING'*

3.1 Introduction

Born on August 24, 1902 in Luméville-en-Ornois, Eastern France, Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) was a member, and can be defined as founding father, of the Annales School (Trevor-Roper 1972:472). Through his research and particularly the publication of his monumental work, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II,* Braudel has illustrated the philosophy of the Annales tradition.

The son of a *professeur* of mathematics, Braudel preferred to think of himself as a typical provincial Frenchman, in this case Lorraine on the border with Germany (Wallerstein 1982:106). For reasons of poor health, Braudel spent his childhood years on the farm of his paternal grandmother before returning to Paris and the suburbs[1]. Finding the Sorbonne not entirely agreeable and intellectually stimulating, Braudel does retain a fond memory of the teachings of a Henri Hauser who instilled a love of unpretentious attitude towards economic and social history. After completing his studies at the Sorbonne in 1923, Braudel, aged 21, received an appointment as a schoolteacher in Constantine, Algeria. He admits being pleased at teaching a superficial history of events:

> *"I strove to be as erudite and honest as they were and to stick as closely as possible to the facts."*[2]

(Braudel 1973: 450).

His stay in Algeria had a significant impact on his perspective of the Mediterranean, or as Braudel describes an upside down view of the

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[1] Through his description of the village that he spent his childhood in, traces of his later love of the unchangeable (or slow changing) rural life can be found. He describes the farmhouse where he was born as being built in the early 19th century and lasted almost unchanged until the 1970s' in a village whose roots go back for centuries and rural life with its unchanging cycles of yearly crop rotations (Braudel 1973:449).

[2] He demonstrated his allegiance to the traditional minded establishment through the paper he wrote for his diploma, "*Bar-le-Duc during the First Three Years of the French Revolution"* and his first article, *'The Spaniards in North Africa"* (Braudel 1973:450).

Mediterranean world. This provided him with a different view of the Mediterranean from that seen from Europe (Wesseling 1981:19).

Interested in the policies of Phillip II between 1559 and 1574, Braudel spend 10 years, until 1938, in various archives in Spain, France and Italy researching this topic. Although Braudel returned to France in 1932 to teach, he received a second overseas appointment in 1935, this time to a new University in São Paolo, Brazil. Although stationed in South America, he would return to Europe each winter to continue his research. It was during his return to France[3], in 1937, that Braudel happened to share the ship in which they travelled, with Lucien Febvre[4], an event that had a profound impact on his life. During the trip Febvre and Braudel forged a strong bond that that also paved the way to his dedicated involvement in the Annales movement (Wesseling 1981:19). More importantly, it was also during this trip that Febvre, on returning from a series of lectures in South America, advised Braudel to shift his emphasis from Phillip II to the Mediterranean (Wallerstein 1982:106).

Captured in 1940 while serving as a French artillery officer, Braudel spend the next 4 years as a prisoner of war in a German camp.[5] His internment proved to be an unexpected advantage[6] since it provided him with enforced time to write his thesis[7]. It also had a profound effect on his thesis. Braudel describes how life in a prisoner of war camp influenced his writing:

> *"I had to outdistance, reject, and deny [events]. Down with occurrences, especially vexing ones. I had to believe that history, destiny, was written at a more profound level"*

(Wallerstein 1982:107).

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3 Braudel was appointed to the IVe Section of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes.
4 In 1924, Febvre and Braudel had corresponded after Braudel read La Terre et l'évolution humaine (translated as A Geographical Introduction to History) written by Febvre. In his first letter to Braudel, Febvre wrote: *"Even more than Phillip II, it would be exiting to know about the Mediterranean and the Barbary states"* (Braudel 1973:452).
5 In 1942 several fellow officers denounced him as a supporter of De Gaulle rather than Pétain. It is for this reason he was sent to a disciplinary camp at Lübeck, a special discipline camp for enemies of Germany (From the introduction by Oswyn Murray). *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II.* (Translated by Sian Reynolds). 2 vols. New York: Harper and Row.
6 "For prison can be a good school. It teaches patience, tolerance." (Braudel 1973:453).
7 The work was written entirely from memory since the camp authorities obviously did not allow any notes whatsoever. It was written in exercise books and was send to Lucien Febvre in France (Wesseling 1981:20).

After the war, in 1947, Braudel received his doctorate, and in 1949 it was published as a book. It was entitled *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'èpoque de Philippe II.*

3.2 La Méditerranée: Braudel's Masterpiece

The dramatic reference in the sub-title to *La Méditerranée* as a masterpiece is completely justifiable given that apart from the exceptional history of the author, the work itself was, and still is, quite profound and insightful.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Braudel became increasingly interested in the foreign policies of Philip II during the later part of the 16th century, especially with reference to the shift of Spanish foreign policy from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. He initially structured his research in the conventional manner, as it was being taught at the Sorbonne. It was supposed to be what the historical establishment approved,[8] it was specialised, well defined and neatly documented (Trevor-Roper 1972:473).

He soon realised that he faced a particular problem in his research. The current conventional, 'Sorbonne' based historiography could not effectively explain the shift of political power from the Mediterranean to an Atlantic sphere. He increasingly began to realise that this shift in foreign policy occurred as a result of long-term processes or, in this case, the Ottoman Empire's expansion into the western Mediterranean. This forced the Christians from the Mediterranean Sea and into the Atlantic Ocean and ended centuries of 'Western' hegemony in the Mediterranean. In what can only be described as a paradigm shift, Braudel changed his view of the Mediterranean, seeing it as a unit with its own past and history. This view required him to look at the sea and human communities enfolding it as a single entity that are bound by the sea and that transcend the political world of the 16th century (Trevor-Roper 1972:474). His treatment of the Mediterranean as a geological entity rather than a political entity marks the first unique element in his approach towards history (Wesseling 1981:21).

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8 *"… Indifferent to the discoveries of geography. Little concerned (as diplomacy often is) with economic and social problems, slightly disdainful towards the achievement of civilisation, religion and also of literature and the arts, the great witness of all worthwhile history."* (Trevor-Roper 1972:473).

Another exceptional element of his work was Braudel's use of time. During the weeks spent at the various archives and libraries in Europe, he collected vast amounts of data, which had to be ordered and structured. Incorporated in this diverse range was data that could firstly not be dated to a specific period (the changing of the seasons, dangers of the sea, etc.), data that covered a longer time-span than the period in question (trade in the Mediterranean) and data that could only be dated to a particular day (data relating to the court officials). This presented an immense problem seeing that the traditional way in which data was organised, diachronically and synchronically, could not be applied to this raw information. Seeing that the first method (diachronic) organises data chronologically and the second (synchronic) according to the diverse aspects of human activity, neither method was adequate to be used to organise and structure the data. Braudel's solution was to structure the data according to their duration i.e. long-, medium- and short-term (Wesseling 1981:21-22). It was therefore perfectly reasonable that the contents of his work were to be separated into three segments.

As Braudel wrote in the preface to his book, the first part describes the slow, almost imperceptible history of man seen against the backdrop of his geological and natural environment (Trevor-Roper 1972:475). Braudel describes the countryside, the mountains, the coastal regions, the islands and the sea (Wesseling 1981:22). A description of the history of social forms and different human groups follows with an illustration of the economic conditions and structures prevalent during the time. The third section illustrates what Braudel[9] describes as the traditional 'event' history. Six chapters portray the political, diplomatic and military events of the era between the years 1550-1598 (Wesseling 1981:22).

3.3 Braudel's Perspective Towards the Past

A major contribution to our view of the past and a key concept of the Annales movement was Braudel's model of time. This tripartite principle focuses on the view that macro phenomena are determinate while micro phenomena are

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9 "…Surface disturbances, crests of foam that the tides of history carry on their strong backs." Described by Braudel as *histoire événementielle* or the history of events, it describes the familiar political history to which traditional historians have given their whole attention (Trevor–Roper 1972:475).

indeterminate. And resulting from this, the view that micro phenomena or historical events can only achieve meaning when it is evaluated in an extensive spatial context (Knapp 1992:6).

Pragmatically, the critical factor in the study of the past is the choice of an appropriate time span. The different systems, whether socio-political, economic or cultural, each has a different and characteristic rhythm. History therefore becomes a composite of different times moving at different speeds. After defining the object of their research, they must then determine the time span most relevant for the study.

In his thesis Braudel sees historical time as dominated by three groups of processes, *La longue durée* or geographic structures, *conjuncture* or medium term socio-economic cycles and short term or episodic events, the *événements* (Knapp 1993:10). These processes operate contemporaneously but at different 'wavelengths' and reality is observed when we reveal how a particular region underwent historical change through the inner logic, dialectic or relationship between these different temporalities (Bintliff 1991:7).

3.3.1 *La Longue Durée*

In the first part of his thesis, Braudel describes the physical geography of the Mediterranean, which he portrays as *la longue durée*, or the dynamic of geological time. Although the weakest link in this tripartite scheme, Braudel attempts to balance the fleeting circumstances, or event, and the persistent, or longer process in a single socio-historical account. In this macro history, physical or material factors that operate over a long period of time act as constraints on human behaviour. The study of the long-term (*la longue durée*) processes therefore covers a geological historical period and includes the environmental framework that enables/constrains social evolution, the history of civilizations and societies, technology and worldviews. Macro history, or what might also be termed human ecology, encapsulates biological, environmental and social interrelationships that span centuries or even millennia. With *la longue durée,* Braudel assumes that there is a range of geophysical structures within whose confines human action takes place (Knapp 1992:6). Braudel describes the

relationship between the individual and the slowly changing environment that encloses him:

> *"Thus confronted by a man, I am always tempted to see him as enclosed in a destiny which he scarcely made, in a landscape which shows before and behind him the infinite perspective of the longue durée"*

(Hexter 1972:505).

3.3.2 *Conjoncture*[10]

Consisting not only of socio-economic but also technological, scientific and cultural cycles or rhythms, *conjoncture* represents a second, shorter division of time. Temporally, this process can be defined in terms of 10 but not more than 50 years or the span of generation (Knapp 1993:11). Examples are demographic, agrarian and other economic cycles or as Lucien Febvre describe it as *"…impersonal, collective forces…"* and Braudel "…*social history, the history of groups and groupings*…" (Bintliff 1991:7, Smith 1992:25). Seen together, the long and the medium term dynamics act as structures and, although beyond the perception of past individuals, form an enabling or constraining framework for the community or the individual. Smith (1992) discerns between two levels: *intermediate-term conjunctures* or wage and price cycles, rates of industrialisation and wars; and *longer term conjunctures* which refer to secular changes like 'long term demographic movements, the changing dimensions of states and empires, the presence or absence of social mobility in a given society and the intensity of industrial growth' (Smith 1992:25).

3.3.3 *Événements*

The short-term processes (or *événements*) represent the traditional realm of the historian and embody the study of narrative political history and acts of individuals. *Événements* only receive significance when it is appraised in a spatially extensive, diachronic context. Change occurring at this level is usually not studied by the archaeologist since the nature of archaeological data lends it

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10 *Conjoncture* cannot be effectively translated into English. Braudel uses the word to describe cyclical, economic transformations or changes in society, sciences and technology (Hexter 1972:503).

more to the study of change evident in longer processes. However, the relevance of individual events is enhanced if these events are able to highlight political history or serve as change breakers. It is clear that Braudel's use of event history, no less brilliant than conventional historians, represent only the topmost layer of a multidimensional study. *Événements* or the record of human actions contains the events of the past as it is analysed according to traditional narrative history. This process is the most easily recognised and observed since they embody *'daily life, our illusions, and our immediate awareness'*.

3.4   Critical Commentary

Although Structural History remains a theory of considerable potential there remains critical commentary on its usage. In Bintliff the following comment:

> *"The book falls short of its author's intention in one major respect: it does not solve the historiographical problem that it poses: how to deal with the perennial historiographic difficulty of linking the durable phenomena of history with those that involve rapid change"*
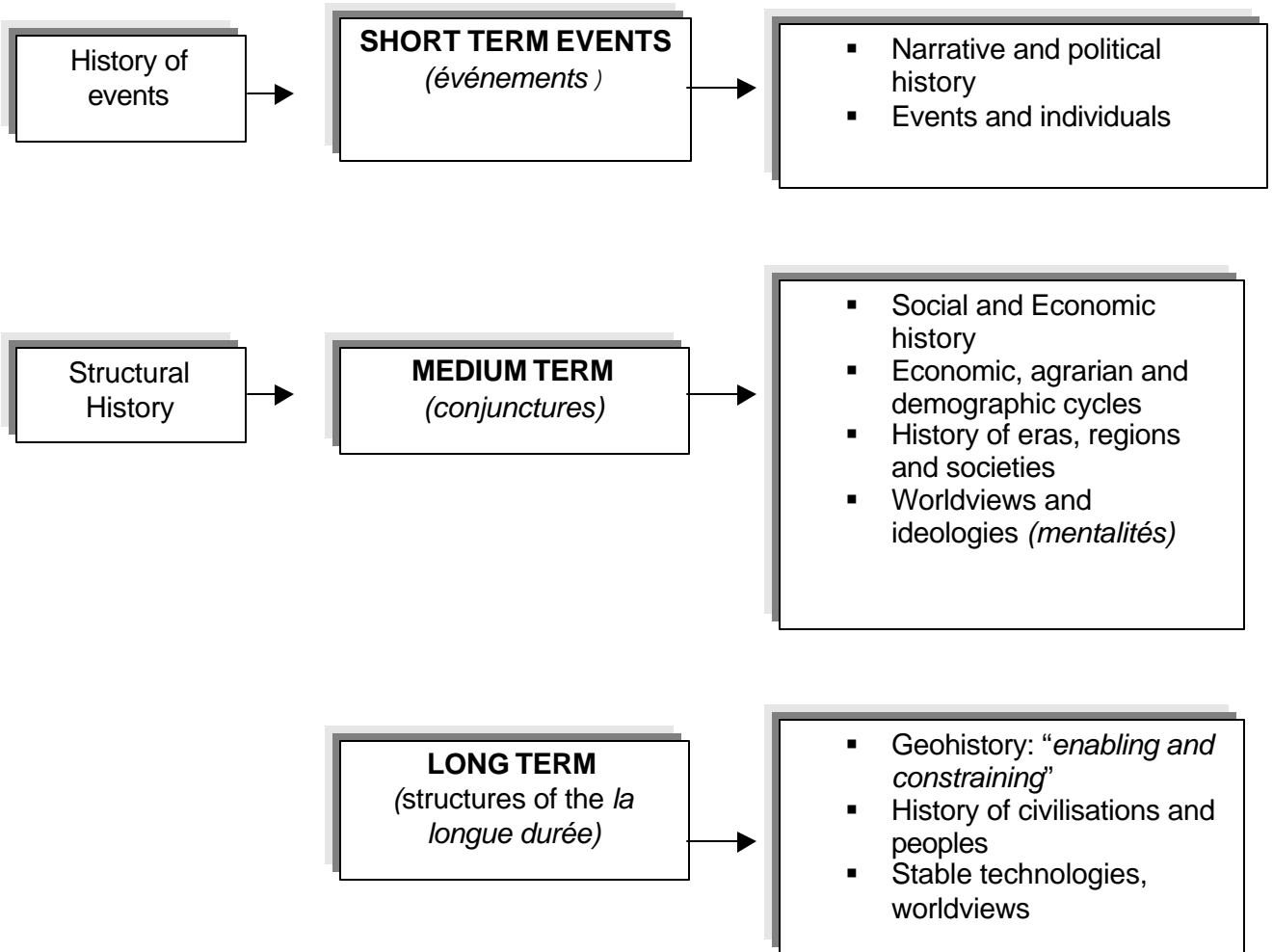
> (Bintliff 1991:7).

Another critical element concerns itself with Braudel's negligence to explore *mentalités* or the world of collective ideologies and the impersonal character of his long/medium term structures (Bintliff 1991:9). Braudel found it difficult to embrace the necessity of micro-history. His inclusion of 'events' is viewed by some as only a concession toward narrative history and is explained only by reference to the medium and long term structures (Bintliff 1991:9 and Knapp 1992:7). Braudel viewed micro-history as momentary and short-lived, or *'dust'*, with no real impact on the pendulous motion of time[11].

Braudel's Model Of Historical Time[12]

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11 In Bintliff, Braudel's fatalistic philosophy is linked to his prolonged imprisonment by the Germans in the Second World War. Condemned by inaction his reflection might have turned toward the more durable features of human presence that extend beyond the short and often violent lives of individuals (Bintliff 1991:9).
12 Bintliff 1991:6

History of events	→	**SHORT TERM EVENTS** *(événements)*	→	▪ Narrative and political history ▪ Events and individuals
Structural History	→	**MEDIUM TERM** *(conjunctures)*	→	▪ Social and Economic history ▪ Economic, agrarian and demographic cycles ▪ History of eras, regions and societies ▪ Worldviews and ideologies *(mentalités)*
		LONG TERM *(structures of the la longue durée)*	→	▪ Geohistory: "*enabling and constraining*" ▪ History of civilisations and peoples ▪ Stable technologies, worldviews

Braudel explains:

> *"Resounding events are often only momentary outbursts, surface manifestations of larger movements and explicable only in terms of them".*

(Bintliff 1991: 9).

This denial of the short term 'event' became a controversial issue within the Annales camp. The current belief is that human actions, in the form of events, are not only simple reactions to structures but must be regarded as an intersection that breaks patterns (or matrix event.) The importance of these events lies in the insight that it provides of change in the past (Knapp 1992:7). Lucien Febvre and Marcel Bloch have consistently shown how contrasted past societies are in terms of thought and behaviour, towards each other and especially towards our own

society[13]. They shared the belief that to understand an epoch from the inside one should approach it through its own particular mental framework[14]. Interaction between what humans think and believe and the historical processes of Structural History is an important concept since it takes the historian beyond the deterministic tendencies of a pure Braudelian view of the past (Bintliff 1991:10-11).

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13 Bloch and Febvre differed in their perspective towards *mentalités*, with Bloch focusing on the mental phenomena linked to the material and social life whereas Febvre sought to explore the intellectual and psychological phenomena of *mentalités* (Knapp 1992:8).

14 In 1928 Lucien Febvre wrote: "Let the historian install himself at the intersection where all influences crisscross and melt into another: in the consciousness of men living in society. There he will grasp the actions, the reactions, and will measure the effects of the material or moral forces that exert themselves over each generation" (Bintliff 1991:11)

CHAPTER 4

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANNALES – A PARTNERSHIP CENTRED ON THE PAST

4.1 Introduction

Bintliff, with several other prominent scholars,[1] claims that a growing dissatisfaction exists with the slow rate of progress of our understanding of the past. (Bintliff 1991:2-3). They feel that the 'New Archaeology' of the 1960/70's has lost momentum in its formulation of new ideas and approaches towards the past. A careful study of sister disciplines, including history and geography, has shown that this frustration is not unique. (The urge to quantify, the emulation of hard sciences and a quest for general laws[2] were identified as trends in the two disciplines mentioned above).

Whereas archaeology rarely shows any interest in history (in particular its theoretical interpretations) and historians generally concentrate more on methodology than on the wider issues of the past, Bintliff proposes that the Annales movement may offer an approach that might augment these shortcomings and fulfill a position against this general trend, explained in the previous paragraph (Bintliff 1991:4).

4.2 Shared Concepts

In a broad sense archaeology has always focused on the relationship between time and material culture. It concerns itself with the identification of the processes that prohibits or encourages change and continuity. In terms of time, space and change, archaeology and history are structurally very similar (Knapp 1992:10). The Annales movement is for that reason especially relevant. It's focus on broader insights or generalisations and abstaining from the study of only particular events makes it especially suitable to archaeological research.

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1 Barrett, Trigger and Hodder (Bintliff 1991:3).

As was illustrated, there exist obvious similarities between the Annales movement and archaeology. Its long tradition of a scientific approach enfolds a concept shared by archaeology especially after the 'new' archaeological revolution of the sixties. According to Bloch the historian must devise well defined research problems, formulate different kinds of hypothesis and use the available data to test the accuracy of the reconstruction (Levy and Holl 1991:2). The following concepts make the paradigm very appealing for archaeological research.

4.2.1 A Multidisciplinary Approach

Cooperation with a wide range of disciplines represents a principle that is central to the Annales policy. A multidisciplinary approach is also remarkably similar to the approach regularly applied by the archaeological fraternity. Adapting concepts and data from a wide variety of disciplines including the social and natural sciences are being utilised to analyse and interpret archaeological data.

4.2.2 The Concept of Time

Braudel's concept of time was and still forms a concept of remarkable importance in the Annales framework. Scholars of the historical and the social disciplines realised that temporal studies (or concepts related to time) form an essential and distinguishable component of human behaviour. Analysis on varied time scales will therefore influence the interpretation of the different environmental, socio-economic or behavioural concepts. Events and processes in the past that are partly influenced by apparent unchanging forces, geology or the climate, and by immaterial forces, ideology and social formations, are best viewed through a temporal range, from the ecological, environment and mental through the socio-economic, and to the political and individual. The move away from the study of the unique, as it is practised in the Annales movement, contributes to the archaeological view of the past as it is rare to recognise individual actions in the material remains recovered in excavations. It is for this reason that it is possible to determine longer term processes in the cultural horizon. It is also a move away from the aim to identify individual people and places found in the Bible. Too often

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2 This critical intellectual movement has been introduced into archaeology under the terms 'post-positivism' or 'post processualism' (Bintliff 1991:4).

Syro-Palestinian archaeologists have worked according to the 'Pompeii premise'[3] or the:

> "…erroneous notion, often implicit in archaeological literature… [...that archaeologists recover]…the remains of a once living community, stopped as it were, at a point in time."

(Levy and Holl 1995:2).

Instead, the material record usually reflects the accumulation of repeated activities with little regard to the individual, therefore a reality that living people will never really experience.

It must be noted that ancient literature could be analysed according to the principle of a short term event or *événements.* The events described in ancient texts are usually narrative, political events but are important, in this context, since it probably could embody a 'matrix event' or an incident that acts as a pattern breaker. Still, the narrative history must be considered in the context of the longer and medium term processes.

4.2.3 Quantification

Quantification forms another important element in the Annales movement and one shared by archaeologists. Studies of long-term processes (especially in history) have required the use of quantification methods. Although it is difficult to quantify historical data (in the sense that it cannot be prepared mathematically), it can be managed in a problem-orientated approach through which it will be possible to recognize regularities and differences. It will also be easier to make a distinction between data that is trivial and random and those that are more significant to the research. Breaking down the data into statistically measurable units makes it easier to recognize the impact of the internal relationships or external forces on the system. Historians, especially ancient historians, have to be satisfied with data that is often erratic and therefore must employ it

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3 The debate between Lewis R Binford and Michael B Schiffer illustrate the difference between ethnographic and archaeological time. Binford views the archaeological record as static, contemporary phenomena operating over a long period of time. The archaeological record therefore relates to a different order of time from that of a living, functioning community. He criticises Schiffer who advocates the application of transformations to reconstruct 'fossilised' assemblages reflecting events on the level of ethnographic time (Smith 1992: 26-27).

descriptively rather than analytically. Historical data might be formulated in a problem-orientated way, where regularities and differences could be easily picked up in order to identify elements that influence past processes. Material evidence, recovered through excavations lends itself perfectly to the statistical analysis. Excavated and documentary data must be categorised, measured, compared and considered probabilistically (Knapp 1992:10).

4.3 Annales and Syro-Palestinian Archaeology

Now that the possibility (and importance) of a relationship between the Annales movement and archaeology has been established, the position of archaeology as it is practised in the Syro-Palestinian realm must also be determined. Until recently there existed a dichotomy between the way that archaeology has been practised in Syro-Palestine[4] and the 'New Archaeology'. Whereas the traditional way in which archaeology was practiced in Palestine centred on the Bible, the new movement focussed on practicing 'scientific' archaeology. This movement has, until very recently, had little impact on the majority of the researchers working in Palestine (Levy and Hall 1995:4). It is in urgent need to assemble a body of their own theoretical concepts that can be applied to their chosen field of study.

Some scholars are very optimistic of the role that the Annales movement could play in the Near East[5]. How the Annales approach will be applied and practised in Syro-Palestine is still unclear. However, the following approach by Birnbaum[6] could be used to facilitate such an approach. Contemporary historical analysis, according to the Annales approach (and Birnbaum), is based on five platforms:

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4 "*Can archaeology prove the Bible true*' used to be the question asked by the scholars working in the Levant. From 1920-1970 the Bible rather than the nature of the archaeological data directed the nature of the proposed research. Characters that defined this era include the German biblical scholar and Semitist, Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), William Albright, Melvin Kyle, the ordained Rabbi Nelson Glueck and Ernest Wright. Challenges to the so-called Albright/Wright paradigm came from within its own ranks and from outside. It included Paul Lapp: *"only a secular historian could produce an objective history of the bible"*, Père Roland de Vaux: *"there should be no conflict between a well-established archaeological fact and a critical examined text"* and William Dever who became a strong advocate of an anthropological approach towards archaeology as it is practised in Palestine (Davis 1993: 54-59).
5 In Levy and Holl the following opinion by Dever: *"Archaeology does not, of course, possess the extensive written documentation that can be sifted through by historians of the Annales school, nor can it perhaps ever write really fine-grained individual history. But archaeology today is ecological and focuses on setting; it turns up masses of obscure artifactual data reflect the daily life of ordinary individuals; it is unique among all disciplines in its sensitivity to cultural change over very long periods of time. Thus, there is good reason to believe that Syro-Palestinian archaeology has scarcely begun too fulfil its potential for writing social and economic history on a much broader scale than formerly thought possible. The tools are at hand, because the very multidisciplinary, ecological, and systematic approaches noted above point promisingly in the right direction"* (Levy and Holl 1991:6).

- Establish distinctive temporal periods.

- Identify major lines of development within each period.

- Identify and measure regularities specific to each development.

- To recognise innovation and the emergence of new structures within and between periods.

- Propose a range of elements that helps to isolate and explain continuity or change within and between periods.

Using Birnbaum's structure as a foundation, Levy and Holl extends and broadens its application. There already exists a strong tradition of identifying major transitions in Syro-Palestinian archaeology with the division of human occupancy into several chronological periods. Recognising patterns and trends (or major lines of development) within these periods are central to Annales method and are related to the medium term structures or *conjonctures* and especially cycles of change. The identification of major innovations (technology, subsistence, trade and industrialisation) is important as it gives an indication of how social groups acquire, maintain and lose power. This may give an indication of the emergence of new structures within and between eras and how socio-political systems evolve. They also identified religion and ideology (or *mentalités*) and the particular social organisation of the era in question as an important element that could isolate continuity and change in the past (Levy and Holl 1995:6).

The Annales contribution towards archaeology (especially in Syro-Palestine) is simply that it advocates an interdisciplinary approach to the past that uses historical, archaeological and ethno historical sources to build a social history. Its aim is to attempt to embrace the totality of the past, which demands the inclusion of historical documentation combined with archaeological data. Finally, the enabling and constraining factors of the *la longue durée* (the Annales concept of

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6 Levy and Holl 1991:6.

time) and the impact of physical geography are the keys to understanding the past (Levy and Holl 1995:6-8).

CHAPTER 5

THE LATE BRONZE AGE: AN OVERVIEW

5.1   Introduction

The Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age transition has often been labelled as a time of 'crises' (Ward and Joukowsky 1992). However theatrical it may sound, it was a defining moment in the history of the Mediterranean. The great powers of the time, Hatti, Mycenae and Egypt were confronted with threats, from internal instability and dangers from abroad. Several of the major political entities disappeared, for example Ugarit, Mycenae and Hatti, while others withdrew from previously occupied territories, Egypt. Normally, archaeologists, identifying these changes only on account of changes in the material record, could only wonder who or what were responsible for these dramatic events. They could only dream of linking these events to ethnic identities. However, included in the material record, archaeologists found several significant ancient texts, as part of libraries or attached to the walls of monuments and buildings. These provided a spectacular account of massive migrations, and great wars, on sea and land. They even identified these exotic people, calling them the Peoples of the Sea (Dothan & Dothan 1992). What should have simplified the issue, resulted into ever increasing investigations and futile confirmation of their ethnic identities, nature and origin. The way in which texts and cultural remains have been employed also resulted in difficulties; the models that were obtained by the archaeologists, through interpretation of the texts, were often adjusted to fit the design presented by the texts. It is possible that this is the result of an inherent flaw in the theoretical constructs employed in the Syro-Palestinian area, the excessive (or uncomplicated) reliance on a simplified interpretation of textual content.

Figure 1.

Archaeological sites: Late Bronze Age[1]

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1 New Bible Atlas 1985. Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, Leicester, England.

As was indicated in the previous chapter, it is possible to apply fundamental but only particular elements of the Annales movement to the study of the Sea Peoples in their Near Eastern Mediterranean environment[2]. Their tradition of a multidisciplinary approach is especially relevant since a wide range of disciplines should be used to interpret the various data that are found in Late Bronze Age contexts. These include environmental, social, anthropological and linguistic data. But apart from this, Braudel's monumental work on the Mediterranean and the way in which he views the past through three forms of movement represents a perspective on the role of the environment that is quite exceptional.

Prior to applying these elements, however, it is necessary to place the Sea Peoples in their correct context. To illustrate the severity of the crises in the Eastern Mediterranean on a local level (and the confusion picture that is demonstrated by the literary texts and material remains), I will attempt an illustration of what occurred through a case study, Ugarit.

But why use Ugarit as case study? Not only does Ras Shamra provide a unique insight into the history of a Near Eastern political entity but, with the addition of abundant complimentary texts and archaeology, it also presents us with an exceptional picture of a state during the tumultuous 12th century. In addition, Ugarit it is not positioned in a vastly diversified region or in a wide cultural context such as Mycenae or Hatti. It therefore has a relatively straightforward structure.

5.2   The Kingdom of Ugarit

The Late Bronze Age kingdom of Ugarit[3] was a powerful regional state. In economic terms, it was strong but it lacked military potency. Its wealth was partly

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2 The area in which the context of this study falls includes Syro-Palestine (Syria, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon), Turkey (Anatolia), Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean.
3 Ras Shamra is located on the northern coast of modern Syria. Discovered in 1929 and excavated by Claude Schaeffer until the 1970's, the excavations are now under the direction of Marguerite Yon and Yves Cabilt (Caubet 2000:35).

based on agricultural activities [4] but mostly on trade[5]. The Kingdom's capital was situated at Ras Shamra close to two active ports, Minet el-Beida and Ras ibn Hani with an urban population at this time of approximately 150,000 people and a rural population that was settled in and around 150 villages. It is clear from several ancient texts that Ugarit was largely dependant on the Hittites for its security and with the peace treaty after the Battle of Qadesh in 1280 formed part of the Hittite dominion. Its military inferiority was already apparent in the 14th century[6]. In spite of this obvious dependence, a Royal Dynasty governed the Kingdom, ruling from the capital of Ras Shamra and could trace its lineage to the 18th and 19th centuries BCE (Yon 1992:113).

During the 12th century Ugarit was clearly facing peril from abroad. Contemporary texts refer to '*enemies from the sea*' and '*enemy boats*'[7]. Ugarit's allies had their own share of problems with Syria and Anatolia being ravaged by bands of semi-nomads from the east and were therefore in no position to provide assistance to Ugarit (Yon 1992:116). The archaeological evidence illustrates a clear portrayal of the last days of Ras Shamra[8]. Within the royal palace at Ras Shamra, there is evidence of collapsed walls with its bricks hardened by fire, burned plaster and heaps of ashes. It is apparent that the rest of the city shared the same fate. There is also proof of violent struggle in the streets with the presence of numerous arrowheads dispersed throughout the city [9] (Yon 1992:117). Stacks of dishes piled in a stone basin are an illustration of the speed of the attack and the haste of the inhabitants to flee the city. It is probable that the attackers had sufficient time to plunder the city given that no objects of value have been found [10].

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4 The region included a rich coastal plain where vines, wheat and olives (described by some as the Mediterranean trilogy) could be cultivated as well as wooded hills and mountains favourable for the raising of livestock and logging (Yon 1992:113).
5 Ugarit's position on the Mediterranean coast permitted trade with Mycenaean Greece, Cyprus, and the coastal ports of Anatolia, Palestine and Egypt. Its position on the inland trade route extended Ugarit's trading potential to include inland Syria, the Euphrates and Mesopotamia (Yon 1992:113 and Caubet 2000:35).
6 In terms of a treaty signed by the King of Ammuru and Ugarit in 1355, Ugarit was obliged to pay 5,000 silver shekels in exchange for the military protection of Ammuru (Yon 1992:114).
7 It is evident from correspondence between Ammurapi (the King of Ugarit) and the king of Alashiya (Cyprus) that *'seven enemy boats came and pillaged'*. Ammurapi asked his fellow king in Cyprus to keep track of the enemy movements (Yon 1992:116).
8 The exchange of letters between the king of Alashiya and Ammurapi describe the tension of the last days of Ugarit: *"…surround your cities with ramparts, bring in your chariots and wait for the enemy on firm footing…"* and *"…enemy boats arrived, the enemy has set fire to cities and wrought havoc. My troops are in Hittite country, my boats in Lycia, and the country has been left to its own devices…"* (Yon 1992:119).
9 These are scattered randomly and not in orderly deposits as if stockpiled. From their presence in the destruction level and found around the residential areas, it is clear that street fighting took place (Yon 1992:117).
10 The port city of Ras Ibn Hani appeared to have been evacuated before a similar fate befell its inhabitants (Yon 1992:118).

It seems that the city's inhabitants permanently deserted the city and, although indications of modifications were found, these were probably the work of plunderers, squatters or shepherds. What is clear, though, is that there are no signs of any permanent, organised and structured reoccupancy after the city's destruction. Excavations at Ras Ibn Hani, on the other hand, have shown that despite the destruction of the Late Bronze Age palaces it was later resettled by people who produced Myc. III C: 1 ware. There is a later, gradual evolution from monochrome to bichrome ware that may indicate assimilation into the local population (Singer 2000:24). It did not mean that the region as a whole was deserted. The rural population probably continued to be active in the centuries that followed.

5.3 The Eastern Mediterranean During the Late Bronze Age

To fully comprehend the events described above, we are obliged to take the long view and acquaint ourselves with the context in which these events took place. Even though it is possible and seemingly accurate to describe the Late Bronze Age (1550 - 1100) as a time of clashes, conflagrations, war, pillage and invasions, it probably did not accurately reflect the reality of the time. It was a time of creative progress with economic, diplomatic and cultural contacts between groups (Knapp 1988:135). Trade and commerce represented the structure that facilitated the contacts and the trade goods, especially metal, formed the common denominator while the establishment of nation states provided the foundation for international trade in the second millennium. The settled governments of the time provided the stable networks through which these traders operated and through which trade goods flowed.

Archaeology and the ancient texts from Ugarit reveal a picture of prosperity during this age. In 14th century Amarna correspondence, the King of Alashiya (Cyprus) writes to the Pharaoh:

> "*Dear brother, do not take it to heart that there is so little copper, since in my country plague has killed all the people and there is nobody left to smelt the copper*".

(Sanders 1985:47-48).

It also refers to trade in elephant's ivory, box wood, timber and perfumed oil while Egypt imports furniture, chariots, horses, linen, ebony, oil, silver, ivory and gold (Sanders 1985: 47-48).

The nation states wrested control of the trade, warfare and diplomacy from the smaller city-states who in turn became increasingly dependant on the central governments for basic resources, armies and a legal system (Knapp 1988:137). They had no choice but to group themselves with larger governments. Since trade flowed through established routes, it most probably formed the basis of a diplomatic network through which contact was made with foreign governments. To grasp the character of the Late Bronze Age, the various nation states and their relationships with each other will therefore have to be considered. It is clear that the trade network was quite complex and that its continued presence rested on the stability and security of the region.

In the decades between 1250 and 1150 B.C.E the system collapsed. In an apparent random series of events cities were destroyed and kingdoms vanished. The Kingdom of the Hatti disappeared; the sophisticated palace complexes of Mycenaean Greece came to an end and succession of confusing destructions that befell the island towns of Cyprus. Although it is clear, from ancient literature and archaeological evidence, that a movement of large numbers of people took place during this era (or the Sea Peoples) and inevitably played an important role in the collapse, it is still not evident whether they were the result of this collapse or were part of the cause. The traditional assumption is that these events are solely attributed to the Sea Peoples.

However, in light of recent archaeological excavations and new ways of looking at old evidence, some are challenging the existing assumptions. A number of scholars even describe this age as a time of

"…*enterprising merchants and traders, exploiting new opportunities, new markets, and new sources of raw material*…"

(Muhly 1992:10).

Assigning a central role only to the Sea Peoples and invasions, or events external to a particular area, and neglecting the internal forces does not provide a complete picture of the events. The crises can only be described in terms of widespread, interlocking socio-economic system that has collapsed.

The collapse of the political system in the Near East can be loosely grouped around five events. These are the destruction of the Mycenaean palace system, changes that occurred in Cyprus, the end of the Hittite kingdom, the movement of large bodies of people and its depiction in Egyptian records, the settlement of new peoples in Canaan and the role of the environment.

5.3.1 The End of the Palace System in Mycenae

In Muhly, the following statement:

"*This system of pompous Mycenaean's with a widespread dentritic trading network continues from about 1400 until 1230 BCE or the end LH IIIB: 1 in Mycenaean terminology. At this point, something happens and the basic structure collapses*"

(Muhly 1992:11).

During and shortly after the 12th century, few societies escaped the consequences of a series of dramatic events at the end of the Late Bronze Age. These are obvious in the material culture either on a macro level with the destruction or abandonment of cities or on a micro level with changing pottery styles or architectural innovation. Not a stranger to disaster, mainland Greece experienced the first of a series of tumultuous events during the second half of the 13th century[11] (or Late Helladic). By this time mainland Greece had evolved and had begun to flourish into a period of unparalleled prosperity. Greek speaking chieftains formed the ruling class and ruled in city states. These rulers acquired immense wealth most of which was the result of trade with its trading partners in Anatolia, Cyprus, Syria and Egypt. By 1400-1200 BCE, the Greek mainland had reached the pinnacle of its power and prosperity with palatial centres at

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11 Shortly before 2000 BCE mainland Greece experienced widespread destruction that resulted in a temporary step backward. It resulted in a poorer rural economy with a less impressive material assemblage. Some believe it to be the result of the first intrusion of the Indo Europeans although is still unverifiable (Knapp 1988:206).

Mycenae[12], Tiryns, Pylos and Thebes (Knapp 1988:206-207). Excavations at Mycenae emphasise these events with grand building projects such as the Lions Gate. Ancient Linear B texts also emphasise this prosperity (Betancourt 2000:299).

Its prosperity during this time was severely challenged by severe damage, caused by an earthquake. However, under the palace economy the damaged city could be rebuilt. Soon after another series of disastrous conflagrations followed, some believe also to have been caused by an earthquake. It is maintained that the damage was not cleared due to the palatial administration having ceased to exist (French 1998:4). An assessment of the architecture of various settlements (Mycenae and Pylos) exhibits an extension and strengthening of the fortification walls that may represent a response to an external threat (Muhly 1992:11).

A variety of suggestions have been offered to explain these events.

- A series of *natural disasters* has often been identified as external agents responsible for these destructions. Earthquakes and drought has been a refuge for historians studying this era (French 1998:4). Some propose that natural catastrophes (earthquakes and droughts) are usually survived without too much loss, basing this on the simple but robust presence of the peoples of the Mediterranean. He is therefore of the opinion that singular reasoning or basing theories on one single event is not proper (Sanders 1985:11).

- Evidence suggesting the presence of *northern invaders* has long been a contentious subject in the study of the prehistory of Greece. Their occurrence has culminated in grand theoretical schemes contributing destructions in mainland Greece to one single cause, the Dorian invasion[13].

12 Located near the modern town of Minaiki, in the plain of Argolis, Greece, Mycenae was founded in the 16th century during the Late Bronze Age. With Troy, Tyrins and Pylos, it was one of the principal cities of the Mycenaean culture. Mycenae was fortified city defended by cyclopean walls or ramparts built with massive blocks of stone. The citadel, approached through the Lions Gate, enclosed a royal palace, various houses, storerooms and some 30 royal graves. Interestingly enough, in the Iliad by Homer it was the Mycenaeans under Agamemnon who was major participant in the Trojan War (Encarta Premium Suite 2003).

13 There is some evidence for the presence of foreigners in Greece especially with the appearance of new bronze weapons and a crude handmade pottery. Although the northern affinities of this handmade burnished ware are relatively clear, it still presents numerous problems. Although a particular pottery style has been found with a northern connection, it is apparent that it was all manufactured locally. Only a particular style of pottery is found in Greece but no imported pottery. Some point out that in both Mycenae and Lefkandi, vases of this particular style

- Contrary to the scholars mentioned above, some historians support the notion that these changes occurred not as a result of external pressure but as a consequence of factors already present in the fabric of the Aegean world. Warren (1989:134-135) is of the opinion that stasis or internal or interstate wars were responsible for these waves of destruction.

- Several authors emphasise the growing inability of the post palatial system to maintain an economic structure burdened by overspecialisation and over-centralisation. Muhly is convinced that these events are in fact a response to what may have happened in the mid 13th century (Muhly 1992:11). What we now accredit as a possible cause of these events, such as the proposed migratory movements of the Sea Peoples, may in fact only be a response to these events.

Despite the variety of contradicting evidence, an element that stands out is the continuity of the Mycenaean culture. Although the nature of the settlements changed and some of the large centres were abandoned or destroyed, the culture was still unequivocally Mycenaean. Although trade with other countries still existed, it was on a much smaller scale. The palace based economic system, previously thought to have disappeared, and appears to have continued in certain areas such as Tiryns and Koukounaries. A series of shrines may be the best indication of this cultural continuity. The temple at Ayia Irini on the island of Keos, which was founded during the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, seems to have continued during the 12th century.

5.3.2 Cyprus

The role of Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age is pivotal to the understanding of the complex changes that took place in the Eastern Mediterranean. Archaeological excavations during the past few years have brought a broader understanding of the interconnected nature of the island with the Levant, Anatolia and Egypt.

appear immediately prior to these destructions as well as after the events Some doubt the viability to relate this particular style to the destructions that ensued in the cities of mainland Greece. The appearance of new bronze

The material evidence of Cyprus presents an indisputable picture of a crisis period of some kind with evidence of abandonment and destruction of several communities. It is, however, a very disorderly picture. While some established communities and cities were destroyed and never inhabited again, others were permanently abandoned (for example, Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, Maroni-Vournes and Pyla-Kokkinokremos). Other settlements continued to be inhabited, but with added buildings[14] (Kition) (Karageorghis 1992:79-80). After a period of destruction, late in the 12th century, several towns were rebuilt while others were irrevocably abandoned. Cyprus clearly did not collapse as a whole and nor did centres suffer the same fate at the same time.

Reasons for these destructions vary. Muhly proposes a reconstruction of the events based on the role of trade and copper on the island (Muhly 1984). He cites Enkomi as the capital of the Kingdom of Alashiya and also the dominant agent in the production of copper. From 1300 BCE, the central authority weakened and the various regional centres soon claimed autonomy. Accordingly, it is also the reason why Cyprus did not experience total economic collapse during the Late Bronze Age era.

Who were responsible for these destructions?

Taking the context of the various changes that were taking place in Syria, Palestine and the very dramatic account of a sea and land battle encountered by the Egyptians into account, is it very easy to associate these changes with the Sea Peoples. Others contend that an Achaean 'colonisation' of Cyprus took place (Karageorghis 1992:82). There may also have been more than one group involved in this 'invasion' since it is known that the Sea Peoples represented an assortment of groups, probably consisting of inhabitants from Cyprus, Anatolia, Mycenae and Sardinia.

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weapons, including a socketed spearhead and a slashing sword may further indicate a northern presence (Muhly 1984:41-42)

14 Several novel developments have to be mentioned. The establishment of settlements for a particular purpose (defence), new architectural features such as ashlar buildings, stepped capitals and stone horns of consecration and the appearance of Cyclopean-type walls at Enkomi, Kition, Sinda and Maa-Palaeokastro. Although Mycenaean III C1: b pottery was already present in Cyprus before the end of LC II (1200 BCE), it became the most widely produced pottery style during LC IIIA (1150 BCE). Bronze fibulae of a Mycenaean type as well as Mycenaean weaponry were also being unearthed (Karageorghis 1992:80-81).

5.3.3 The Hittite Empire

From 1700-1600 BCE, ancient texts record the first attempts[15] to unify the central Anatolian plateau under the Hittite regime. Its strategic position, in terms of mineral wealth and trade, largely dictated how it acted and reacted, economically[16] and militarily. Hittite kings, including Labarna, Hattusili I and Mursili I, clashed continuously with neighbouring states such as the Hurrians, the Syrian state of Yamhad and Babylon (Knapp 1988:192).

The old kingdom came to an end with the death of Telepinu[17] (1500 BCE) and plunged the Hittite kingdom in a state of crisis. As a result of constant pressure from other Anatolian peoples, including the Hurrians, the Hittites found itself in a precipitous decline. Only the military and organisational skill[18] of the King, Suppiluliuma I (1380-1345 BCE), and his successors[19], saved them from a permanent slide into oblivion (Knapp 1988:193).

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15 The Hittites, who spoke an Indo-European language, imposed their language culture and rule over the earlier inhabitants. Their first inhabited town was Nesa, near modern Kayseri, Turkey after which they conquered Hatusha near modern Bogazköy, which would become their capital (Encarta Premium Suite: 2003).

16 The staple crops probably included grain, wine and oil while cattle, pigs, sheep and goats provided protein. The Anatolian mountains are rich in copper, silver and iron deposits and surely influenced the economic policy (Knapp 1988: 195).

17 It was during his reign that the codification of the law took place. After a series of assassinations, Telepinu sought to re-establish law and order by banning the shedding of royal blood and establishing a hereditary succession to the throne (Knapp 1988:192).

18 The state of Mitanni (Hurrians) was finally destroyed. The rising strength of the Assyrians was countered through the establishment of buffer states, Aleppo and Carchemish (Knapp 1988:193).

19 Assur-uballit I (1363-1328) (Knapp 1988:193).

Figure 2.

The Hittite Empire, 13th century[20].

The Hittites were now firmly entrenched around the important trade routes to the Euphrates. Subsequent to renewed interest by the Egyptians in Syria, the Hittites and the Egyptians frequently became involved in border skirmishes while in 1285 BCE, this culminated in the Battle of Qadesh near the Orontes River. In what can only be described as Pyrrhic victory[21], neither force won an outright victory nor was the border firmly established: Syria fell under Hittite control while Palestine remained Egyptian[22] (Knapp 1988:193-194).

Continued pressure from the Assyrians, under Tukulti-Ninurta I, incursions by Northern tribesmen and the movements of Sea Peoples drastically affected the internal machinery of the Hittite kingdom to such an extent that it finally collapsed. The role of the Sea Peoples in the disintegration of the Hittite Empire is difficult to recognise seeing that its ruined capitol, Bogasköy, does not provide any evidence of resulting Sea Peoples settlement.

20 Singer 2000:23.
21 Although the account of the battle is known only from the side of the Egyptians it is clear that the Hittites were left in possession of the field (Sanders 1985:30-32).
22 This was confirmed by a peace treaty signed by Egypt and the Hittites in 1269 (Sanders 1985:32).

Similar to the disruption evidenced in Mycenae, it is probable that an inherent weakness in the political system combined with external factors, drought, and continued harassment from the Assyrians, invasion, revolts and defections of its vassal states and/or invasion from the north caused a general collapse. It is, as a result, improbable that the Sea Peoples played the principal role in the destruction of the Hittite Empire.

5.3.4 The Collapse of the Egyptian Administration in Canaan.

The sequence of the events that led to the settlement of the southern coastal plain in Philistia by the Philistines is central to unravelling of the events of the late 12th century B.C.E. To understand the changes, the southern Levant and its structures, must first be placed in context. In this regard Knapp reviews the geopolitical structure of Syro-Palestine, identifying several changes that took place during the second millennium.

- The era after the collapse of the Early Bronze age (2200-1900 BCE) represented an era characterised by decentralised villages and small scale farming.

- Powerful Canaanite city-states arose with specialised agricultural and industrial production.

- During the following era (1600-1200 BCE), Palestine was dominated by Egypt, which dominated and exploited the semi-dependent Canaanite city states (Knapp 1992:84).

It is generally accepted that the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt[23], and the subsequent incursion into Palestine by the Egyptians[24], ended the prosperous Middle Bronze Age. Tuthmosis III (1479-1425 BCE), probably as a reaction to the

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23 Or *'foreign rulers'*, the Hyksos were a Semitic people; they ruled Lower Egypt in the Fifteenth Dynasty from their established stronghold at Avaris, on the north eastern border of the Nile delta. (Mazar 1990:174-175). The Hyksos left the rule of the area to the north of Memphis to minor princess of the old nobility. These vassals started the popular revolt that under Ahmose I (1570-1546) drove out the foreign rulers (Encarta Premium Suite 2003).
24 The Hyksos, having fled to southern Palestine after their expulsion, were pursued by the Egyptians. A series of military conflicts probably followed and a number of Canaanite cities were destroyed. The collapse of the urban

Hyksos invasion, consolidated Egyptian control over Palestine in a series of encounters with a local confederation of Canaanite kings[25]. Subsequent campaigns under Seti I (1294-1279 BCE), Ramesses II (1279-1213 BCE) and Merneptah[26] (1213-1203 BCE) further established Egyptian dominion in the Levant[27].

The motivation behind the Egyptian occupation of the southern Levant was probably to secure the major trade routes to Lebanon and Syria and the economic exploitation of the occupied country. Control over the Levant also ensured a buffer zone against Western Asiatic incursions into Egypt. They maintained their control from several administrative centres[28] in which they positioned administrative staff and garrison troops. The Egyptians retained the structure of the Canaanite city-states although these were nothing more than vassal entities[29]. Ruled by a local dynasty (or *maryannu*), these city-states were dependant[30] on Egyptian rule and had to pay tribute and taxes.

During the long rule of Ramesses II (1279-1212 BCE) and subsequent rulers (1300-1250 BCE), however, the Egyptians implemented a distinct policy in the southern Levant, Syria and Transjordan. A sharp departure from the one that had been pursued in the past, it promulgated the annexation of large areas under direct Egyptian control. It is reasonable to assume[31] that this was a direct counteraction to the pressure of the various tribal groups in the region (Singer

society followed, however, it did not cause a total break in urban culture since important cities in the north, Hazor and Megiddo, were rebuilt soon afterwards (Mazar 1990: 226-227).

25 A wall relief in the temple of Amun at Karnak shows detailed lists of the Canaanite cities involved (Mazar 1990:233).

26 His campaign is known from a memorial stele, the Israel stele, which mentions the conquests of Ashelon, Gezer and Yenoam. The name Israel also appears for the first and only time in Egyptian sources, as the name of a tribe. It was also Merneptah who first fought the Sea Peoples, then an ally of the Libyans (Mazar 1990: 234).

27 A detailed summary of the situation in Canaan is available due to the presence of the Amarna letters. These literary texts constitute the diplomatic correspondence of Akhenaten (Amenhophis IV, 1352-1336) and his farther Amenhophis III. The archive contains over 360 documents written in Akkadian, on clay tablets. Most of these are letters from Canaanite city states, though there are also letters from important powers outside Egypt, Hittite and Alashiya. These letters contain valuable information regarding the political situation of the day (Mazar 1990:233-234).

28 Including Gaza, Jaffa and Beth Shean (Mazar 1990:236).

29 In southern Levant these included Yurza, Lachish, Gath, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Jerusalem, Gezer, Shechem, Taanach and Megiddo, to name but a few. To the north cities such as Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, Damascus and others had the same status as the others (Mazar 1990: 236).

30 The princes of these petty kingdoms were acquainted with the Egyptian culture and trained to be loyal to its pharaoh (Mazar 1990:236).

31 Apart from biblical sources, and their apparent subjectivity due to pro-Israelite inclinations, almost no independent texts exist. As can be expected the Egyptians did not record their retreat from the colonies – it is only through negative evidence or the disappearance of Egyptian artefacts in Palestine, which we know of the Egyptian's retreat (Singer 1998:283).

1998:284). Archaeological evidence[32] points to the location of Egyptian strongholds and administrative centres[33] chiefly along the *Via Maris* with Ashdod and Aphek being exploited as supply bases for the Egyptian caravans. Following the weakening of the Egyptian position in the southern Levant during the last decade of Ramesses II's reign, his successor Merneptah (1212-1202 BCE) renewed attempts to tighten the hold on the trade routes. Ashkelon and Gezer, the last of the remaining 'independent' city-states, were subsequently subjugated by Merneptah. A temple[34] was erected in Ashkelon to the Egyptian god Ptah while Merneptah, as a result of his conquest of Gezer, conferred on himself the title *'conqueror of Gezer'* (Singer 1998:284-289).

The last days of Egyptian involvement in Canaan occurred during the reign of Ramesses III. The conclusion of Egyptian authority is shrouded in mystery since elements of Egyptian rule still appear until much later, until the reign of Ramesses V[35]. Egyptian influence probably ended gradually and while they possibly did not exercise complete control over the whole of the Levant, they retained some control over individual garrisons. Losing mobility and the subsequent important trade routes resulted in the inevitable end of Egyptian rule in Syro-Palestine (Singer 1998:294).

Archaeological data from the 12th to the 11th centuries also point to disintegration in mercantile contacts between Egypt and its former trading partners in Cyprus and the Aegean. A recent study catalogued only 30 Egyptian objects in Late Minoan or Late Helladic IIIC contexts. Using imports as a benchmark, it is possible to conclude that contacts with Egypt continued into the 12th century, but then deteriorate swiftly during the 11th century. Interestingly enough, a rather different picture emerges from the newly established Philistine pentapolis.

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32 Examples of anthropoid coffins from cemeteries at Deir el-Balah and Beth Shean relates to Egyptian presence in Canaan. Once thought of as a direct link to the presence of the Sea Peoples in Canaan it was most probably used by Egyptian officials and soldiers and inspired by Egyptian prototypes. The lids of these coffins were shaped in the form of a human head and upper torso with hands usually crossing the chest. Those found at Deir el-Balah are rendered in a grotesque style with exaggerated and unnatural facial features. At Beth-Shean, on the other hand, the coffins are presented in a naturalistic way (Mazar 1990:283-284).
33 Archaeological finds include the identification of strongholds and administrative centres along the northern Sinai, the northern Negev, the coastal plain and the Beth Shean valley (Mazar 1990:282).
34 The Egyptian temples in Canaan served as administrative centres for collecting taxes (grain) from the population. Excavations at Tel Sera and Lachish offering bowls with inscriptions were found, noting the amounts of grain that had been raised by taxes (Singer 1998:290).
35 The mines of Timna continued to operate until the time of Ramesses V while those of Ramesses until the reign of Ramesses VI. Then again only minor artefacts of Egyptian origin (except for the pedestal of the statue of Ramesses VI found at Megiddo) have been found in the Levant (Singer 1998:293-294).

Egyptian contacts[36] with the area appear to be stronger than anywhere else in the Mediterranean. Some even speculate on the presence of arranged markets in Philistia through which trade goods and intermediaries flowed through to the rest of Palestine. (Weinstein 1998:188-191). Various explanations exist regarding the above collapse. Although internal disintegration of the Egyptian political, economic and social system[37] added to the end of Egyptian domination, military conflict was the direct cause of the collapse (Weinstein 1992:14). Some suggest that the local government in Canaan were resilient enough to absorb the impact of the Sea Peoples and survived until much later, therefore a gradual process[38] (Singer 1998:294). This group base their argument on the finds from Lachish, Tel Sera,[39] Beth-Shean, Megiddo and Deir el-Balah, accepted Egyptian centres, where artefacts were found dating from the reigns of Ramesses III's successors (Finkelstein 2001:161). While those mentioned above regard the chain of events from a largely Israeli archaeological perspective, others[40] argue from an Egyptian textual point of view. They claim that Egyptian control was lost almost immediately after the battles with the Sea Peoples. They even maintain that the Sea Peoples were to be found in Canaan before the reign of Ramesses III and support a 'two wave' theory[41] (Weinstein 1992:14 & Finkelstein 2001:161). They support their argument on the fact that no Canaanite toponyms (or place names) exist in ancients texts from the days of Ramesses III and his successors and that there are very few post-Ramesses III Egyptian finds in the main Canaanite centres (Finkelstein 2001:161).

It is clear that the end of the Egyptian administration was a sporadic event. In some areas the end was relatively instantaneous while in neighbouring areas the administration lasted until much later, though only in isolated garrisons. From the geographical distribution of the Egyptian sites that were destroyed we may deduce that there was more than one group responsible for these destructions.

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36 Egyptian influence on iconography of Iron Age stamp seals and Egyptianising ceramic forms, though rarer than the preceding 12th and 11th centuries, appear at a large number of sites including Deir al-Balah, Tell Qasile, etc (Weinstein 1998:191).

37 A variety of events exemplify the gradual disintegration including a workmen's strike at Deir el-Medineh, an attempted assassination of Ramesses III in a palace conspiracy, endemic bureaucratic corruption and series of weak kings succeeding Ramesses III (Weinstein 1992:14).

38 Oren, Ussishkin and Singer (Finkelstein 1998:140 and 2001:161).

39 Hieratic inscriptions, a cartouche from Ramesses III and an Egyptian influenced temple indicate a continued Egyptian presence (Finkelstein 2001:161).

40 Weinstein, Bietak and Stager (Finkelstein 1998:141).

41 The Egyptians defeated the initial wave of migrants after destroying a succession of cities along the Levantine coast during the early part of the 12th century B.C.E. The second wave was able to defeat the Egyptian administration in Canaan and settled in Philistia (Finkelstein 1998:140-145).

The Amarna documents reveal a class of people without citizenship, the *Habiru* and the *Shasu*, a nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoral population without any real 'citizenship' who, in times of hardship, became raiders (Mazar 1992:237). It is always possible that these groups, who often surface at times of instability, were responsible for some of the destructions.

Even though the literary and archaeological evidence does not provide a trouble-free illustration, it is clear that a variety of processes played a part in this course of action. What is obvious, however, is that migratory movements and the resulting violence, traditionally attributed to a loose confederation labelled as the Peoples of the Sea, undoubtedly played a role in the Egyptians demise.

5.3.5 The Settlement of the Sea Peoples in the Levant

The Egyptian retreat created a political vacuum in the Levant. This situation was not unique and similar situations have been recognised in Greece, Anatolia and northern Syria. It has been centuries since a situation existed where a strong central authority was present that did not impose its authority on the surrounding landscape.

Although the new and varied socio-economic system that ensued arose gradually it paved the way for the emergence of a variety of population groups (Singer 1998:295). After the eighth year of the reign of Ramesses III a number groups settled on the coast of Philistia. The Sikila settled in the Sharon plains, the Sherdani in the plain of Acco and the Philistines, the largest of the three groups, in Philistia, to the south (Singer 1998:295-309). Falling outside the scope of the study but important enough to mention was the emergence of the tribes of Israel on the fringes of the Levant, the desert and the highlands. Their entrance on the Levantine stage inevitable played a role in the new socio-economic structure that followed the collapse of the Egyptian administration. (Their subsequent clashes with the Philistines during the Early Iron period are a reminder of their impact).

The classification of the three groups relies primarily on the contents of ancients texts. Important in this case was the presence of the Onomasticon of Amenope[42]

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42 An encyclopaedic list compiled at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty (1100 BCE), the Onomasticon of Amenope relates to the identification of three Philistine coastal cities, Ashkelon, Ashdod and Gaza, and specifies the three

and the Wen-Amon tale[43]. Excavations at Tel Dor, Tel Zeror and Tel Aphek have shown evidence of Sea People habitation, however labelling these finds as those of a particular ethnic group (in this case the Sikila), could prove to be very difficult. Textual evidence narrates the apparent settlement of the Sherdani north of the Carmel range. Excavations at Acco have shown the presence of monochrome pottery as well as at Tell Keisan, situated in the south eastern corner of the Acco Plain. Neither the Sherdani nor the Sikila inhabited the area for any length of time and were probably assimilated into the local Canaanite population (Singer 1998:295-298). The most infamous of the three groups, the Philistines, are clearly mentioned by a number of ancient texts and substantiated by several archaeological excavations[44]. The nature of their settlement process is a very contentious issue as the literary sources and the archaeological evidence do not always illustrate a complementary model.

The traditional wisdom of the settlement of the Philistines was shaped by the Albright/Alt paradigm[45], formulated during the time when archaeological evidence was still meagre and relied on the literary interpretations of the Egyptian texts. The inscriptions and reliefs from the Medinet Habu mortuary temple describe Ramesses III's victory over the invaders in a land and sea battle. Papyrus Harris[46], written by his successor, elaborates on the above and describes how Ramesses III settled thousands of prisoners in Egyptian fortresses. Although the texts are not clear in this regard, it is assumed that they were settled in military posts in Canaan (Singer 1985:109). According to these sources, Ramesses III defeated the invaders in two battles, on land and sea, in his eighth regnal year. The location of these battles vary according to opinion and ranges from northern

groups, the Sherdani, the Sikila and the Philistines. Consisting of nine different manuscripts it is scattered in various museums throughout the world and have been dated to the end of Ramesses IX's reign (Dothan 1982: 26).
43 The tale of Wen-Amon relates, in this context to the Sikila settlement at Dor (Singer 1998: 296). A remarkable story, the tale of Wen-Amon recounts the journey of a minor priest to Byblos to obtain wood for a bark. While ignoring the reigning pharaoh, Ramesses XI, it is clear in its portrayal of the Sea Peoples and the Phoenicians as the dominant powers on the Levantine coast (Weinstein 1998: 188). The papyrus, now in the Moscow Museum, was found near el-Hibeh in Middle Egypt and dates to the 11th century or the twenty first dynasty (Dothan 1982:26).
44 These excavations were primarily carried out in the large cities including Ashdod, Ekron and Ashkelon in addition to smaller cities, Ziklag, Timnah and Tell Qasile (Singer 1998:299).
45 The Philistine Settlement Paradigm argued that during the 20th Dynasty the Egyptians were still present in Canaan. After the Sea Peoples were defeated in a land and sea battle (1175 BCE) they were settled by Ramesses III in strongholds in Canaan. After a while the Philistines were able to throw of the Egyptian yoke and took over the Egyptians territory (Finkelstein 1998:140 and 2001:159).
46 Found in 1855 in a hole in the floor in a cliff tomb near Thebes, the Papyrus Harris was purchased by a Mr A.C. Harris of Alexandria, hence the name. The scroll is 133 feet long and consists of 117 columns of hieratic scripts (or a cursive form of Egyptian writing). There is ample evidence that it was written immediately after the death of Ramesses III in 1153 BCE. Primarily devoted to the pharaohs' gifts to the gods, it is only in the seventh section that a recitation is found that details Ramesses victories over his enemies, including the Sea Peoples is found (Wood 1991:49).

Palestine to Egypt's eastern delta. The defeated enemy were settled in Canaan to staff the Egyptian strongholds.

"The foreign countries made a conspiracy in their islands. All at once the lands were removed and scattered in the fray. No land could stand before their arms, from Hatti, Kode, Carchemish, Arzawa and Alashiya on, being cut off at [one time] … Their confederation was the Philistines, Tjekker, Shekelesh, Denye[n], and Weshesh, land united. They laid their hands upon the lands as far as the circuit of the earth, their hearts confiding and trusting: 'Our plans will succeed'"

(Dothan 1982:25)

"Those who came forward together on the sea … 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 … the northern countries quivered in their bodies, the Philistines, Tjekk[er, and …] … They were theher [chariot] warriors on land; another [group] was on the sea. Those who came on [land were overthrown and killed] … Those who entered the river-mouths were like birds ensnared in the net …"

(Dothan 1982:25)

"I [Ramesses III] extended all the frontiers of Egypt and overthrew those who had attacked them from their lands … 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 each year."

(Dothan 1982: 26)

According to several historians, the Philistines were able to defeat the Egyptians and take over the territory. Since there is a marked correspondence between the areas governed by the Egyptians and those settled by the Philistines, it was concluded that the Philistines were settled at their own initiative or, at least, by the consent of the Egyptians. This stance has recently been challenged by several arguments and central to this is the evidence relating to the first appearance of the locally made Mycenaean IIIC: 1b[47] (or monochrome) pottery.

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47 Mycenaean IIIC: 1b or Sea Peoples monochrome pottery is generally accepted as the pottery found during the first stage of Philistine settlement. Decorated wares are usually painted in a single colour, usually black, with simple horizontal bands, spirals streamers, loops, birds and fish. Forms of the decorated pottery are usually kraters, bell-shaped bowls, stirrup jars and jugs with strainer spouts. All of the above originated in Mycenaean Greece. Unlike the important Myc IIIB pottery of the Late Bronze Age, all of the Myc IIIC was locally made. Bichrome pottery, on

The basis of their argument revolves around the following:

- the mention of Peleset (or the Biblical Philistines) in the Medinet Habu inscriptions and the message in Papyrus Harris that mention their settlement in strongholds

- reference in the Bible to the Philistine Pentapolis in the southern coastal plain in Canaan

- The appearance of bichrome pottery after the destruction of the Late Bronze Age cities (Finkelstein 2001:159).

The presence of two sites, Tell el-Far'ah and Megiddo and known Egyptian centres, established an archaeological connection in this regard as Philistine pottery was found in layers dating to the reign of Ramesses III.

The high (and middle) chronology argument[48] accepts the 8th year (1180/1175 BCE)[49] of Ramesses to be a firm date for the initial settlement on the southern coastal plain by the Philistines. They argue that the discovery of monochrome pottery was the result of an early wave of Sea Peoples who settled there after their confrontation with Merneptah after his confrontation with the Libyans. Monochrome ware preceded bichrome pottery, which was a product of a second wave of Sea Peoples that was settled in Philistine after their altercation with Ramesses III (Finkelstein 2001:162-163). It therefore represents a two wave theory. This theory was rejected due to ambiguous stratification at Megiddo, contradictory evidence from other sites (Ras Shamra) and common sense[50].

The middle chronology proposed a (simultaneous and independent) reform of the above theory. They argue that the presence of monochrome pottery relates to the first settlement of the Philistines and should be dated to the reign of Ramesses III. The proponents discard the 'two wave' theory. Bichrome pottery, on the other hand, was a resulting development of monochrome ware and should be dated to the mid-12th century (or approximately 1150 BCE) (Finkelstein 2001:163).

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the other hand represents a regional style that developed after the Philistines had lived in Canaan for at least two generations (Stager 1995:334-335).
48 Advocated by Trude and Moshe Dothan (Finkelstein 1998:141 and 2001:162).
49 Either 1180 according to Krauss, R (1977) or 1175, Gardner, A (1961) in Singer (1987: 109).
50 The high chronology argues that bichrome ware appeared right after the eighth year of Ramesses III which leaves a too short time span for the monochrome phase – too short for the immigration, settlement and a development of a new style from it (Finkelstein 2001:163).

A contentious issue in this regard is that excavations at Lachish and Tel Sera did not produce any monochrome (or Bichrome) pottery during the era of Ramesses III's reign. Their counter-argument centres on the distinctive ethnic phenomena of the Philistine Pentapolis (the five biggest settlements of the Philistines) and that it would not appear in the outlying sites such as Lachish and Tel Sera, which at that time were settled by Egyptians and Canaanites, rather than Philistines (Finkelstein 1998:142-143). Finkelstein challenges this assumption stating that Lachish and Tel Sera were major Egyptian strongholds at the time and, according to the texts, were used by the Egyptians to settle the Philistines[51].

A third argument, the low chronology,[52] builds their argument on the lack of monochrome/bichrome pottery at Lachish during the reign of Ramesses III. On account of the above, they accept that the Philistines made their appearance only during the last third of the 12th century (1130-) or even later. This view attaches a lifespan of several decades to this particular (monochrome) pottery type until at least 1100 BCE while bichrome pottery, due to its eclectic style, should be dated to the 11th century (Finkelstein 1998:141).

5.3.6 The Textual Evidence

The importance of ancient texts is clear, especially with reference to the events of the 12th century. Without the narrative evidence it would have been very improbable to tie an ethnic identity to these groups, neither would it have been possible to place the material evidence in a larger, geopolitical context, the Near Eastern Mediterranean world. On the other hand, the narrative texts do have its drawbacks. It usually related to authenticity and interpretation by those not equipped to do so. Archaeologists and philologists (or those studying the scientific and historical relevance of written records) study different kinds of data and interpreting the material record and the literary texts should be done in collaboration with each other. Often, the material evidence and its relevance

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51 Finkelstein notes an additional site that might shed light on the issue. Cemetery 900 at Tel el-Far'ah, dated to the first half of the 12th century (approx. 1299-1250 BCE), did not produce any monochrome pottery sherds. Scarabs of Ramesses III and Ramesses IV were found. (Finkelstein 1998:142).
52 Presented by Aharoni (Singer 1985:112114) and Ussishkin and supported by Finkelstein (Finkelstein 1998: 141).

depended on the way it was 'modified' to fit the representation created by the texts.

It is important to keep in mind that the literary genre of the Medinet Habu (and other) inscriptions is that of an official document produced by a political authority. Their primary aim was to celebrate the authority and the legitimacy of the pharaoh. The literary style follows a traditional trend characterised by poetic and flowery literature. This occasionally results in far-fetched expressions, metaphors and flowery literature (Cifola 1988:276-277).

The way in which written records could be dealt with in terms of the Annales movement is important. Although literary texts usually describe political events of the day or shed light on the current world view (*mentalités*), it must be viewed in terms of the longer ranging structures and processes. And archaeology presents the perfect platform to represent longer term events. Therefore ancient texts must be interpreted within the context established by archaeology.

It is important to provide a short summary of the relevant literary texts related to the Sea Peoples and their settlement in the Levant. The great temple at Amon-Re at Karnak depicts Merneptah's encounter and subsequent defeat of the Libyans in the 5th year of his reign. The Libyans were supported by several groups including the Luka, the Sherden, Shekelesh, Akawasha and Tursha (the Philistines are not mentioned). The mortuary temple at Medinet Habu was probably completed in the 12th year of Ramesses III's reign. His exploits are usually described in a very propagandistic way with laudatory inscriptions and historical sections.

Although not very objective, this was not the purpose of these monuments. It has also been found that pharaohs recut the bands of texts found on previous kings to include in their own monuments. Although it does not reflect any hostility towards their predecessors and probably represented a cost saving device, it does complicate matters. Ramesses III, for example raided the temples of his ancestors, including the Ramessium of Ramesses II, to build sections of his temple at Medinet Habu. A number of Ramesses III's adventures, such as a Nubian war and a Hittite and a Syrian campaign have been found to be highly questionable. What remains are descriptions of three dated conflicts, generally

thought to be accurate: the first Libyan war of year 5, the great land and sea battles of the 8th year and a second Libyan war in the year 11. The reasons the above are believed to be accurate are that they are substantionated by texts found in Papyrus Harris I (Lesko 1992:151-153).

5.3.7 Conclusion

It is clear that textual interpretation played an integral role in illuminating the settlement process of the Levant. The traditional explanation (or the Albright/Alt paradigm) of the events associated with the settlement of the Sea Peoples in the Levant relied heavily on how they translated or interpreted the Papyrus Harris text. Several authors have assumed that the Egyptians posted the foreigners in strongholds in Canaan. This was then used to (re)interpret the archaeological finds in the Levant.

The texts, however, cannot be taken at face value and should be interpreted in the context of Egyptian narrative styles. The following text has reference:

> *"I extended all the frontiers of Egypt and overthrew those who attacked them from their lands. I slew the Denyan in their islands, while the Tjeker and Philistines were made ashes, the Sherden and Weshesh were made non-existent, captured all together and brought* in captivity to Egypt *like the sands of the shore. I settled them in strongholds 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".*

(Wood 1991:46)

Figure 3.

The naval battle, Medinet Habu [53].

Wood mentions previous texts that describe the treatment of captives. Ramesses' victory over the Libyans is described in the following manner:

> *"I carried of the ones who my knife spared as numerous captives, their women and their children like hundreds of thousands, their herds in the number of tens of thousands, I established their leaders in strongholds in my name…"*

(Wood 1991:48)

as well as the treatment of Bedouin captives from Edom,

> *"I destroyed the people of Seir [Edom] 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…"*

(Wood 1991:48).

It is clear that Sea People prisoners were captured, branded and settled as slaves. It is for this and other reasons that I believe that the Egyptians did not 'transplant' or settle the Sea Peoples in their garrisons in Canaan simply because it does not make strategic sense. The cities occupied by the Philistines were situated on the most important trade routes, on land and sea, to Syria and Western Asia and included prime agricultural land. Settling the administrative centres and outposts responsible for guarding Egypt's borders with groups of migrants and invaders, who were defeated in battle, would have been very dangerous and would surely have compromised security. Archaeological evidence, furthermore, demonstrates a pattern of destructions and continuity which might illustrate a situation where the Egyptian presence continued until much later in some areas while adjoining areas were destroyed by the migrants and consequently settled. It would have been possible, keeping in mind Egypt's inner instability at the time that the new inhabitants and the Egyptians coexisted for a period. Nevertheless, as the Philistine presence grew, Egyptian dominion eventually disappeared.

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53 Wachsmann 2000:106.

CHAPTER 6

THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE SEA PEOPLES: THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

6.1 Introduction

An important contribution of Fernand Braudel to the Annales movement and history and espoused in countless historical works are the use of a diachronic perspective towards past. Braudel, in his work on the Mediterranean[1], illustrated to a subsequent generation of historians that history may be viewed according to three forms of movement:

- geographical time,

- social time and

- individual time.

The *longue durée*, or geographical time, is Braudel's most significant innovation in temporal categorisation. It can be described as a history of man's relationship with his environment or

> *"…a history in which all change is slow, a history of constant repetition, ever recurring cycles."*

(Horden and Purcell 2000:36).

La longue durée forms an almost unchanging, centuries-long backdrop that furnishes constraints (limitations) and opportunities for the dynamic operation of change at the levels of *conjuncture* and event (Smith 1992:25).

An important aim of archaeologists has always been the recognition and explanation of change in the past (Knapp 1992:9-10). The appeal of the Annales movement lies in its adaptive nature, its ability to conform to the demands of constantly changing method and theory. The wide ranging appeal of Braudel's *The Mediterranean* was encapsulated by the following review.

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1 The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II.

"…it is the very anti-definitiveness of the master-text that outlines its authority"

(Knapp 1992:16).

He concedes that his division of time is a heuristic[2] device or an *"arbitrary way of dealing with a complex and indivisible subject"* (Horden & Peregrine: 2001:38). It is therefore possible and necessary to alter and expand the original to fit the archaeological construct.

The employment by Braudel of *la longue durée* as a structural rather than a dynamic factor represents a problem to many archaeologists seeing that they deal with many examples of change on time scales equivalent to or much longer than *la longue durée* (Smith 1992:25). Whereas Braudel saw the Mediterranean as a permanent, unchanging milieu, archaeologists perceive change, although very slowly. Smith (1992:25) is of the opinion that archaeology needs a construct that can accommodate 200-400 year intervals in a dynamic framework and that it needs additional temporal 'structures' of even longer duration. Such issues are dealt with by Karl Butzer (1982)[3] who applies concepts from ecology and systems theory to the evidence for cultural change in the archaeological record. He defines three *'dynamic modes of adaptive systems'* including adaptive adjustments[4], adaptive modifications[5] and adaptive transformations[6] which could represent an extension and possibly an improvement on Braudel's original temporal conception through the provision of a longer perspective and the modification of the static view of the environment, as advocated by Braudel.

As was mentioned previously, a longer perspective is often required in archaeological studies seeing that it highlights a dynamic, and not a static, framework. The dynamic view of the environment is enhanced through the emphasis on environmental change and the dynamic nature of the man's relationship with his environment (Smith 1992:25).

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2 '*Involving learning by investigation*' (Collins Compact Dictionary and Thesaurus. HarperCollins Publishers, 2001)
3 Butzer, KW (1982). Archaeology as Human Ecology: Method and Theory for a contextual approach. New York: Cambridge University Press.
4 Short-term readjustments within a dominant adaptive strategy which resolve around social and economic crises. Geophysical disasters, epidemics, famines, destructive wars and dynastic changes are included on this level and correspond to Braudel's events and shorter term *conjunctures* (Smith 1992:25).
5 A substantial revision of adaptive strategies within the context of a viable and persistent adaptive system. It includes cases of agricultural intensification, demographic expansion, and cycles of growth, florescence and decline of civilizations. It corresponds to Braudel's longer conjuncture and the *longue durée* (Smith 1992:25).
6 It involves the development of radically different adaptive modes such as agricultural diversifications, the origins of agriculture and the industrial revolution. This level is not treated in Braudel's scheme (Smith 1992:25).

Moreover, it is important to remember that structural history should not be employed in an unqualified way. The desire to consider *histoire totale* or global history is exemplified in several historical contributions by the Annales movement. This ambition revolved around an emphasis to combine history with the social sciences – including sociology, anthropology, demography, biology, etc, and resulted in monumental works (Braudel's thesis was 1160 pages in length). But it came with an inherent flaw - a weakness of focus (Hunt 1986:213). As a method the Annales paradigm could be applied to any place and time but usually constituted an end in itself[7] or writing history for the sake of history. Consequently, applying the Annales method *without* a well defined research focus - *histoire problème* – would be "*unfeasible, unrewarding and unpublishable.*" (Horden & Peregrine 2000:44-45). Total history, or history on a Braudelian scale, would, as a result, be unpractical. It is important to address specific questions and to gather evidence selectively from a limited range of periods and places. It is, for this reason, important then that a well defined research focus must be stated.

The main focus, in terms of the geographical context therefore, is whether it is possible to identify constants in the environment and the impact on the LB/EI transition.

6.2 Periodisation

It has been made clear that there exists a difference in archaeological and ethnographic time[8]. It is for this reason, the difficulty in dealing with instantaneous occurrences, that any consideration of change must be preceded by periodisation or a division of time into units. What can be termed as a quantitive approach (fundamental in the Annales movement), the units identified could be managed in a problem-orientated approach through which it will be possible to recognize regularities and differences. This view is also supported by Birnbaum's approach[9].

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7 According to Hunt it fosters an unending pursuit of new research topics that yield *"endlessly debatable results"* since it is not grounded in social theory (Hunt 1986:216).
8 The archaeologist recovers artefacts and patterns produced over long periods and therefore representing a different order of reality while the ethnographer, observing contemporary events and episodes operates in 'quick time' (Smith 1992:26-27).
9 See page 27.

The events of the late 12th/11th BCE must be correlated to distinctive temporal periods that extend beyond the traditional Late Bronze/Early Iron Age division. Patterns and waves should be identified that are more closely related to the particular problem at hand, the events preceding and after the 12th century B.C.E. It is important to consider the way in which periods are discerned, in this case utilising ceramics variation, contemporary literary texts and the identification of relevant structures as a foundation for demarcating the various sub-phases. Accordingly, a modification of the traditional division is provided and the transition period therefore is divided into comparable units.

- The initial prosperous period relates to the phase after the Battle of Kadesh, which resulted in the peace treaty between Hatti and Egypt. This era is characterised by a centralised political system (the palace-based Mycenaean structure, the city states on the island of Cyprus and Egyptian expansion into the southern Levant and Transjordan), stable, structured and flourishing trade network and a large urban population.

- The era following the above relates to the decline of the central political powers, Mycenae, Hatti and Egypt, takes place due to a variety of internal and external disruptions. The close association of the various powers, either through trade or diplomatic relationships, exacerbates the systematic disintegration of the central powers. The collapse influences the trade which, in the end, leads to the total collapse of the system.

- What follows is a breakdown of the central power's influence and a vacuum is created[10]. This, in turn, resulted in the displacement of several groups that creates massive population movements, either internal (within states) or external (between states), migrations. Seeing that several settlements in the Eastern Mediterranean basin existed in close proximity to the sea, several groups adopt a sea route along the eastern sea board that inevitably resulted in violent interactions with communities along this route.

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10 A terminus post quem is provided for the destruction of Ugarit by a letter sent to Ammurapi by Beya, "*Chief of the troops of the Great King, the King of Egypt*". Beya must be identical to the "*Great Chancellor*" Bay, a dominant figure in late nineteenth century Egypt. He operated well into the reign of Siptah (1197 - 1192) (Singer 2000:24).

- After some time, the new settlements were stabilised and were either assimilated almost immediately into the existing populace (the Sikila) or continued to expand their original settlements (the Philistines). New ethnic groups settle and assert themselves and new nation states emerge. It is only at this stage that the Iron Age really commences.

It is now possible to establish important structures or issues that operated in or facilitated systems 'change' in the Near Eastern Mediterranean context. A centralised state, a structured trade network and a large urban population were the key structures that constituted the Late Bronze Age. It is possible to impart that what caused the system to collapse were the overburdening of the economy (increasing population growth), the exhaustion of natural resources, the cessation of international trade and the movement of 'new' ethnic groups. The transition period therefore comprised of a largely rural populace, the movement of several new ethnic groups, and the struggle of the ethnic groups with existing communities for control and localised trade. The Bronze Age, I believe, did not end suddenly but in a series of subtle events. But how did change take place?

6.3 Change in the Mediterranean: Models of Change.

Archaeology is ideally suited to observe change. Change, imperceptible to its immediate observer, only becomes clear in the material remains of past. The fact that change during the LB/EI transition took place, is not challenged, evidence substantiating this fact is abundant. However, the interpretation of the context within which the change took place, is the challenging issue. To understand how change took place and to enhance the construction of an environmental framework, we need to assemble explanatory models.

Several explanations have for centuries attempted to explain the LB/EI transition. Hallo (1992:2) lists several hypotheses, from Marinatos (1939) who related the collapse of the island of Thera (although now dated to the end of the 13th century) as the reason for the events of the LB/EI, Schaeffer (1948) alleged that seismic events were responsible and several others including Klengel (1974) (linked the end of the Hittite empire to famine) and Neumann/Parpola (in 1987) and argued that climatic change could be held responsible. This is not a comprehensive list

and numerous others exist, still, these follow the same tendency as others, introducing external, single-cause factors, without introducing the significance of the importance of internal stability within a centralised government system.

The way through which the change took place during the LB/EI transition could be explained through a model by Betancourt (2001:300).

Disruption	→	Systems collapse	→	Warfare
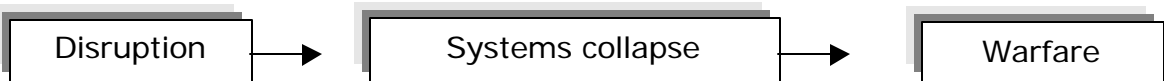
This model suggests that regional disruptions would affect the fundamental basis of a society's economy. The disruption would lead to the collapse of the economy, followed by migrations, wars, and a lessening of the central authority.

Linear B texts and archaeological evidence illustrates the apparent prosperity of the Mycenaean economy. The architectural projects, whose goals were more symbolic than practical, demonstrate the ability of the Mycenaean society to support a large workforce. It is suggested that this ability is supported by agriculture and trade that revolves around the presence of a simple principle, the creation of a surplus (Betancourt 2001:299). Although agriculture provided sustenance for the populace it also provided excess that could be traded for other goods. Trade, therefore, provided the system with a support mechanism in the event disruptions took place. Success depended on solid central authority which resulted in stabile system that, in turn, resulted in widespread trade.

The economic success of Greece can be measured by the increase of the population. A survey of Messinia has presented a population of between 50 000 and a 100 000 people. It is possible that the increase of the population exceeded the ability of the land to support it. Linear B texts attest to great lengths of the central authorities to control the imbalance[11] but, no matter how stringent control was maintained, if the population was too great for the system to maintain its prosperity, the system could not react to regional disruptions. It would not have

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11 Rations for slaves were computed to the individual while the Mycenaean palace at Knossos, which owned 10 000 sheep tried to keep track of every animal (in flocks of a 100 per shepherd). Individual cattle were recorded by name (Betancourt 2001:299)

had the ability to produce excess in times of drought, for example, which, in turn, would lead to famine.

For Mycenae to undergo such monumental changes, as those evidenced in the material record, the disruptions would have to affect several regions simultaneously. Internal instability would lead to violent conflict and the subsequent movements of large amounts of people. The partial recoveries may possibly attest for those towns and centres not destroyed. Betancourt (2001:300-301) ties the agricultural collapse to a series of weather problems[12]. Even if evidence for a severe drought, lasting two or more years, cannot be found, a disrupted planting season, for example, in an existing strained economy, could well produce the same effect.

Dever (1992:107-108) views change in the Levant through the perspective of General Systems Theory where subsystems lose 'equilibrium'.

- Subsistence, through agriculture, is upset by the downturn of trade in the Mediterranean.

- An 'outworn' or un-dynamic technology is unable to react to these changes.

- The social is further upset by increasing conflict between new ethnic groups and existing communities.

- A 'corrupt', centralised bureaucracy exacerbates the problem through mismanagement.

- Systems collapse follows.

- Singer introduces religion and its failure to sustain the cultural system.

Although Dever employs this particular theory on a regional level it may as well have been used to describe change in the universal context of the Eastern Mediterranean. What is also made clear is that the gradual decline, due to certain

'pathologies' or instabilities in the previous Late Bronze era, set in motion a downward spiral that fed upon itself,

> *"… increasing in momentum until the disintegration of the Bronze Age culture in Syria-Palestine was inevitable."*

(Dever 1992:107)

Total collapse was the inevitable result. However, from the old system, a new system arose from the decentralised, surviving populace. New settlement types and patterns gradually arose with more flexible socio-economic structures. Dever challenges the traditional description of what followed the 12th century transition as a 'dark age'. He advocates that it must preferably be contextually described as one cycle in the never-ending cycle of 'advance and abatement' in the long history of Syro-Palestine (Dever 1992:106-107).

The discovery of several new tablets and fragments at Ras Shamra and Hatti has refined our outlook on the last days of the region. A central theme in the correspondence from Hatti concerns a devastating famine and the frantic attempts to alleviate the affects.

> *"The gates of the house are sealed. Since there is famine in your house, we will starve to death. If you do not hasten to come we will starve to death. A living soul of your country you will no longer see."*

(Singer 2000:24).

Documents found at Meskene/Emar, a Kingdom on the south-eastern frontier of the Hittite empire, provides an additional illustration on the drastic increase in the yearly tribute paid to the Hittite's, from 700 to 2000 shekel of gold. It was also during this impoverished times, to which effect the documents illustrate, that the staggering grain prices increases dramatically *"the year of hardship when 3* qa *of grain cost one silver shekel…"* (Singer 2000:24) to a price where one silver shekel could only buy 1 *qa* of grain. The discovery of a legal document dated to the second year of Melišipak (1185 BCE) provides a date of the destruction of Emar (Singer 2000:24).

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12 Irish oaks have poor growing seasons in the decades at the middle of the 12th century, abnormal fluctuations shows up in the Gordion tree ring sequences from the same time and latest ice core data volcanic activity in 1192

Although the evidence obtained from texts is, at best, fragmented it is possible to assume that the Hittite empire experienced severe pressure politically, militarily and economically. Internal discontent, due to the rule of two competing branches of the Hittite family (Singer 2000:26), combined with military pressure from Assyria and costly campaigns against *"the enemies of Alašia"* probably destabilised an already weakened state. The added pressure from a severely weakened economy due to drought, and the increasing pressure of displaced people, possibly resulted in the final unravelling of Hittite control. Singer (2000:27-28) believes that a failed last-ditch attempt to halt a Sea Peoples invasion was the primary cause of the collapse of the Hittite empire. It is clear, I believe, that opinions vary concerning primary causes of decline but that a stable political structure could have weathered the threats. However, the Hittite was only a shadow of its former self and several threats, on a broad front caused the Hittite system to collapse under the relentless pressure.

The role of the Sea Peoples threats a thin but discernable line through the changes during this time. What role did they play?

6.4 Who were the Peoples of the Sea?

Although most contributions towards the study of the events of the 12th century use the term 'Sea Peoples' or 'Peoples of the Sea', it may be misleading. The term was coined by Gaston Maspero, an Egyptologist, in the 19th century to describe the various migrations and invasions of the Late Bronze Age. As a matter of fact, the Egyptians never classified or identified them as Sea Peoples seeing that the sources refer to several specific groups coming from beyond the '*Great Green*' or from the *"…northern countries in their islands…"* (Dothan 1989:59). To infer that the Sea Peoples were only composed of sea faring peoples would not justify the severity and extensive nature of the transition period. It may be possible to conclude that the general migrations were made up of several communities representing various trades and communities.

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and 1190 BCE (Betancourt 2001:300).

Tubb (2000:181-193) argues for the presence of foreign elements in the Jordan Valley, preceding and during the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age transition. His argument focuses on the presence of double-pithos burials[13] in Sa'idiyeh. Although alien to the Canaanite culture the origins of the burial type can be found in Hittite Anatolia, where the double-pithos burial method is ubiquitous. Tubb maintains that the presence of the above constitutes the presence of a large contingent of 'Sea Peoples' or rather foreigners in the area (Tubb 2000:186). The fact that several infant burials are also found might indicate the presence of family groups that could, he believes, represent a more permanent settlement. In addition, Egyptian sources mention the presence of foreign elements, particularly the *Shardina* or *Sherden,* previously during the Amarna period, and predominantly as mercenary forces. (Dothan 1989:63).

Figure 4

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13 These burials consist of two large store jars with their necks removed, joined shoulder to shoulder to form, in effect, a pottery coffin, which was then set in a pit. The body, predominantly an individual and extended on its back, was placed inside and grave goods were either placed with the body, or were arranged the outside the coffin. The remains of infants were also buried in this way but in a single store jar (Tubb 2000:180).

Taking all the above into account, 'Sea Peoples' or rather foreigners have been present in the Levant and probably also Cyprus long before the LB/EI[15] transition period. Settlers from Anatolia were probably also present in Transjordan. They were, therefore, not strangers to the areas that were eventually settled. It is possible that the migrations probably did not originate only from Greece but from Anatolia as well.

Still, the question remains why the various settlements, even those consisting of a large foreign populace, were violently destroyed. A settlements reaction probably, and this might constitute a valuable future study, relied on the severity of their economic hardship and how they perceived their system might accommodate foreigners. Or simply the extent of control over a particular city-state during the Egyptian administration and how the weakening of control affected the efficiency of the town. (The study of *mentalités* or the particular world-view of the people of the Near East could possibly indicate their perception of foreigners).

6.5 Mediterranean Constants

The need to make sense of the past by means of the geographic context *".. from the lie of the land, why history took certain lines"* (Sanders 1985:17) are central to several works on the history of the Eastern Mediterranean. Whereas a geographic introduction was more often used as a preamble to historical works, it has only recently formed the *motive* of the work. However, capturing the elusive nature or essence of the Mediterranean as a dynamic force in history is an elusive quest and is often related to the perception of the sea through the ages (Horden & Purcell 2000:298-300).

The instability of the Mediterranean landscape is the product of several factors, of which the most important is the geological structure. Major tectonic faults or plates cause some areas to gently rise and others fall. The presence of volcanoes and wide belts of earthquake prone areas have, no doubt, lead to several

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14 (Tubb 2000:189)
15 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.

catastrophic events[16]. Despite their obvious awesome power however, the effect was mostly regional. Earthquakes, it seems, has had the same subdued result.

> *"… modern writers have attempted to use earthquakes to account for gaps in the sequence of civilizations and for the movements of peoples, hypothesis for which I can find absolutely no historical justification."*

(Horden and Purcell 2000:306)

The uneven distribution of Mediterranean precipitation is significant, not only due to its seasonal variations in terms of regional fluctuations but also in its violent outbreaks, cause avalanches and landslips whose disastrous impact is naturally reinforced by the high relief of the Mediterranean environment. Impacting on this is the human factor, intensifying the already unstable environment. Erosion of the land, the expansion of human settlement and agriculture and deforestation all combine to exacerbate the volatility of the environment. It is this landscape instability that creates an essential feature of the environment: that it is not a fixed entity but constantly changes. The Mediterranean and its environment is therefore a dynamic entity, a landscape that constantly challenges those existing upon it to transform their existence. *Change* is the only constant feature of the Mediterranean.

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16 No major historical consequences for the economy and society of the immediate landscape can be definitely shown to have followed the eruption of Pompeii in AD 79. They do comment that the area was, at the time, a complex and managed landscape (Horden & Purcell 2000:305).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The principle focus of the study centres on the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age period and the socio-political context within which the transitions took place. The study revolves around two issues, firstly, the evaluation of the potential of a historiographical discipline, the Annales movement, as an explanatory tool and secondly, how the Annales principles could be employed to achieve the desired results? The desired results include the construction of a contextual framework through the periodisation of the LB/EI into analytical units, the creation of an explanatory model of change especially with relation to the role of the environment.

It has been made clear that the Annales School (or movement) do not represent an exclusive group of scholars and do not restrict themselves to rigid methodologies. It is their diversity and the ability to transform themselves that encapsulates the value of the movement. There are however a few fundamental principles that distinguish the movement from others. It includes a desire for quantification, a disregard of *histoire événementielle'* or solitary events, total history and interdisciplinary research. However, since it is intended to be employed in a different (archaeological) context, only comparable to history, one element stands out and that is Braudel's temporal view of the past.

Fernand Braudel's temporal perspective still forms a basic concept of the Annales movement and is still remarkable in its abundant use by historians. Through this idea the past is viewed according to three forms of movement:
- geographical time (*la longue durée*),
- social time (*conjonctures*)
- and individual time (*événements*).

A brilliant concept, it originated primarily from Braudel's substantive work on Mediterranean history during the age of Phillip II, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'èpoque de Philippe II,* which became a blueprint for subsequent generations of historians. However *histoire totale* or global history, as it is reflected in his thesis, is a grand ambition to describe everything and resulted in a

weakness of focus. Writing history became an end in itself, history for the sake of historical writing. Structural history, or the temporal view of the past, should therefore not be employed without definition but should be employed inside a well defined research focus. It is for this reason that specific questions are asked and evidence from selected periods and places are used.

Another very important consideration is the constant, almost static view of the environment that the *la longue durée* describes. Archaeology, on the other hand, deals with a temporal perspective that is much longer than history. It is necessary to adapt the unchanging perspective of the environment within which man operates. Some are of the opinion that the view may be expanded to accommodate longer intervals of change. The nature of the environment should accordingly be shifted to emphasise environmental change and the dynamic quality of mans relationship with nature.

Applying the temporal framework demands a division of the period in question into comparable and analysable units. This eases the recognition of regularities and differences within and between the various periods. The way in which periods are divided relies on various types of evidence that includes ceramic types, literary texts, settlement patterns etc. Structures prevalent during the preceding period, the Late Bronze Age, consisted largely of centralised city-states or political entities, a regulated and structured trade network and a largely urban settlement type. The system prevalent during the Early Iron Age, on the other hand, were predominantly composed of smaller, regional political entities with a smaller population base, trade that was probably more localised while rural settlement pattern dominated the area.

Employing models of change could possibly explain the changes that were responsible for the LB/EI transition. The use of models of change, regional disruption, Betancourt, and subsystem 'imbalance', the General Systems Theory used by Dever, imply that change is articulated by several factors rather than single cause, as was advocated in the past. The models suggest that change occurred not as a result of external factors but rather through the inability of the system to maintain a socio-economic balance. This resulted in the collapse of the system. External factors, including the movement of ethnic groups, violent

confrontations and the cessation of trade, were the result of the steady collapse of the system. It also increased the pace of the collapse.

Evidence that suggest a prosperous Late Bronze Age period abound. Mycenae could afford to undertake expensive public enterprises while supporting a huge urban population. According to Betancourt, an unstable socio-economic system would be severely affected by a regional disruption/s which would lead to the collapse of the economy. Since the Eastern Mediterranean area is in effect a global system and the political systems only subsystems (through trade, commerce and diplomacy) this would inevitably affect the larger area.

Literary texts from Ugarit, Emar and Hatti evoke a picture of a region under pressure. Although the precise meaning of the texts is not always clear, it suggests an economic and social pressure from within and a military burden from outside its borders. However, it is possible that literary texts that reveal the escalating grain price, suggest an already unstable system. Several of the countless threats faced by the Hittites could account for the regional 'disturbance' as espoused by Betancourt.

And the role of the Sea Peoples? As a representation of a large ethnic movement in the Eastern Mediterranean, they were probably the result of the general systems collapse and not the cause of it. And who else to fuel the change from a stagnated, collapsing political structure to a new decentralised and flexible system

To evaluate the relationship of the environment and the inhabitants of the area is an elusive topic. However the Mediterranean, its geological history, its fluctuating precipitation and deforestation projects, to name but a few, is a dynamic, ever-changing environment that assigns tremendous pressure on its inhabitants. It is for this reason that constant change is necessary for a dynamic settlement on the Mediterranean.

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