EARLY IRON AGE DOMESTIC MATERIAL CULTURE IN PHILISTIA AND AN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN KOINE

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Introduction

The debate concerning the Sea Peoples and the transformations that occurred in the eastern Mediterranean during the late thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE has attracted the attention of researchers for several decades, and several seminal works and numerous articles focusing on this subject have appeared (see Barako 2000; Yasur-Landau 2003a, 2003b; Ben-Shlomo 2006a; Uziel 2007, for references and discussion). The past decades have also yielded an increasing amount of archaeological evidence from the twelfth century BCE in the eastern Mediterranean (Fig. 1) where Aegean, Aegeanizing or “Western-style” elements appear in various localities. This material probably represents various movements of peoples and/or ideas from the Aegean region to the southern Levant and to other regions as well. While a number of sites in the southern Levant, Syria, Cyprus, southern Italy, and other areas have yielded various components of the archaeological record that indicate a new and foreign material culture, the most notable case of this phenomenon is probably the Iron Age I material culture on the southern coast of Israel (Philistia). It is still commonly believed that this phenomenon represents an emigration event of some sort, a movement of peoples from the west (Barako 2000); yet the more

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2 The term “Aegeanizing,” as used here, relates to material culture elements that are not identical to Aegean elements, but rather show distinct similarities to them.
Figure 1. Map of the eastern Mediterranean with main regions and sites mentioned in the text.