

THE PHILISTINES AND
OTHER “SEA PEOPLES” IN
TEXT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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edited by

Ann E. Killebrew and Gunnar Lehmann

Society of Biblical Literature
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INTRODUCTION:
THE WORLD OF THE PHILISTINES
AND OTHER “SEA PEOPLES”

Ann E. Killebrew and Gunnar Lehmann

This volume developed out of a 2001 workshop devoted to the Philistines and other “Sea Peoples,” which was co-organized by Ann E. Killebrew, Gunnar Lehmann, Michal Artzy, and Rachel Hachlili, and cosponsored by the University of Haifa and the Ben Gurion University of the Negev. Both the workshop and this updated publication resulted from a sense of frustration with the unidirectional and overly simplistic interpretations of the Philistine phenomenon that has dominated scholarship during the twentieth century (see, e.g., T. Dothan 1982; T. Dothan and M. Dothan 1992; Yasur-Landau 2010). In an attempt to redress what we consider to be a blinkered approach to the topic, this edited tome assembles a collection of papers that examines the Philistine and the broader “Sea Peoples” phenomenon from a variety of viewpoints and disciplines. First coined in 1881 by the French Egyptologist G. Maspero (1896), the somewhat misleading term “Sea Peoples” encompasses the ethnonyms Lukka, Sherden, Shekelesh, Teresh, Eqwesh, Denyen, Sikil/Tjekker, Weshesh, and Peleset (Philistines).¹ Often considered

1. The modern term “Sea Peoples” refers to peoples that appear in several New Kingdom Egyptian texts as originating from “islands” (tables 1–2; Adams and Cohen, this volume; see, e.g., Drews 1993, 57 for a summary). The use of quotation marks in association with the term “Sea Peoples” in our title is intended to draw attention to the problematic nature of this commonly used term. It is noteworthy that the designation “of the sea” appears only in relation to the Sherden, Shekelesh, and Eqwesh. Subsequently, this term was applied somewhat indiscriminately to several additional ethnonyms, including the Philistines, who are portrayed in their earliest appearance as invaders from the north during the reigns of Merenptah and Ramesses III (see, e.g., Sandars 1978; Redford 1992, 243, n. 14; for a recent review of the primary and secondary literature, see Woudhuizen 2006). Henceforth the term Sea Peoples will appear without quotation marks.