

Winter Quarter 2018

ANTH 201

Social Evolutionary Dynamics and the Levantine Chalcolithic Period

Professor Thomas E. Levy

Syllabus

Overview: The Chalcolithic period is one of the most formative in the prehistory of the southern Levant. The transition to regional polities occurred, often called chiefdoms. How did this happen and why? This seminar will explore these issues. Students are expected to write a 25 page research paper.

Week 1 – Foundations

A review of the discovery of the Chalcolithic period in the late 1920s, the hallmark site of Tuleilat Ghassul northeast of the Dead Sea, the nearby mortuary complex and the contribution of the early research in the northern Negev desert

Readings:

(Albright 1932, Mallon 1932, Mallon, Koepfel et al. 1934, Stekelis 1935, Perrot 1954)

Week 2 – Overviews of the Chalcolithic Period

The shifting paradigms of interpretations of the Chalcolithic period are presented from the first scientific synthesis by Jean Perrot in 198, to the first anthropological archaeology overview by Thomas Levy in 1986, to a reactionary position by Isaac Gilead two years later, to post-20th century views by Yorke Rowan and Jonathan Golden in 2009 up to the most recent summary by Mikki Sebbane et al for an exhibition at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University in 2014.

Readings:

(Perrot 1968, Levy 1986, Gilead 1988, Rowan and Golden 2009, Sebbane, Osnat et al. 2014)

Week 3 – Jordan Valley ‘Ghassulian’ Chalcolithic Culture

As we learned early in the course, the ‘type’ site for the Chalcolithic period is Tuleilat Ghassul, extending over 20 hectares. Accordingly in this weeks readings we become acquainted with the more recent long-term excavations led by Stephen Bourke of the University of Sydney. Further up the Jordan valley, the French archaeologist Claudine Dollfus and Jordanian archaeologist Zaidan Kafafi carried out excavations at Tel Abu Hamid. It is important to become familiar with the regional cultures of the Chalcolithic in the southern Levant.

Readings:

(Elliott 1978, Dollfus and Kafafi 1987, Bourke, Lawson et al. 2001, Bourke 2002, Bourke, Zoppi et al. 2004)

Week 4

Week 5 – The Beersheva Valley Chalcolithic Culture

By the early 1950s, the Israeli Kibbutznik and pioneer settler in the northern Negev desert, David Alon, carried out un-systematic surveys in the region and discovered the first Chalcolithic sites, among them – Abu Matar, Bir es-Safadi, and Horvat Beter. As we saw in the Week 1 reading about Abu Matar, the French prehistorian Jean Perrot carried out the first large scale excavations at these sites. This was followed by Moshe Dothan at Horvat Beter. By 1979, Levy and Alon carried out the first excavations at Shiqmim re-opening scholarly interest in the Beersheva valley Chalcolithic period. Since then, many emergency and salvage excavations have taken place at sites such as Tel Sheva. These readings given overviews of the main Beersheva valley excavations.

Readings:

(Dothan 1959, Alon and Levy 1980, Levy 1987, Commenge-Pellerin 1990, Levy, Grigson et al. 1991, Rosen and Eldar 1993, Levy 2001, Levy 2001)

Week 6 – Beginnings of Metallurgy

The southern Levant was one of the hearth areas for the development of metallurgy in the Old World. These papers focus on the contribution of the Beersheva valley to this process. This region is highlighted as it is the only area where extensive evidence of smelting has been found. Why did this happen? How did the system work? These are some of the issues we will cover based on the readings.

Readings:

(Levy and Shalev 1989, Shalev, Goren et al. 1992, Golden, Levy et al. 2001, Goren 2008, Golden 2009, Golden 2009, Shugar and Gohm 2011)

Week 7 – Mortuary Behavior during the Chalcolithic Period

As part of the development of regional polities during the 5th millennium BCE in the southern Levant, a wide range of mortuary sites emerged. In this weeks readings we discuss the nature of these cemeteries and the range of theories used by researchers to explain their function and meaning.

Readings

(Perrot and Ladiray 1980, Levy and Alon 1982, Goren and Fabian 2002, Smith, Zagerson et al. 2006, Ilan and Rowan 2015)

Week 8 – Modeling Chalcolithic Society

The question of what the social organization of Chalcolithic societies was like has been a hotly debated topic. Levy was the first researcher to apply a chiefdom model to explain the changes observed in settlement patterns and material culture for this period. Those ideas were contested by Gilead. This week's readings focus on different interpretive models concerning the nature of Chalcolithic social organization.

Readings:

(Gilead 1988, Levy 1993, Rowan and Golden 2009, Rowan and Ilan 2013, Sebbane, Misch-Brandl et al. 2014)

Week 9 – Secondary Products Revolution

Andrew Sherratt's model of a secondary products revolution involved a widespread and broadly contemporaneous set of innovations in Old World farming. The use of domestic animals for primary carcass products (meat) was broadened from the 5th-3rd millennia BCE to include exploitation for renewable 'secondary' products: milk, wool, traction (the use of animals to drag ploughs in agriculture), riding and pack transport.^[1]

The SPR model incorporates two key elements:

1. the discovery and diffusion of secondary products innovations
2. their systematic application, leading to a transformation of Eurasian economy and society

Levy used Sherratt's model to explain the emergence of specialized pastoralism, a system that goes beyond village-based transhumance to explain the emergence of a central part of the Levantine subsistence economy that continues to today.

Readings

(Sherratt 1981, Levy 1983, Sherratt 1983, Khazanov 1994)

Note: For Khazanov, read Introduction to the second edition pp. xxiv – lix; Chapter 1; Chapter 2; and Chapter 5 pp.263 -290.

Week 10 – Review of Shiqmim MS Chapter 2 hosted on DropBox

References

Albright, W. F. (1932). "The Chalcolithic Age in Palestine." Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research **48**: 10-13.

Alon, D. and T. E. Levy (1980). "Preliminary note on the distribution of Chalcolithic sites on the Wadi Beersheva and Lower Wadi Besor drainage system." Israel Exploration Journal **30**: 140-147.

Bourke, S. (2002). "The origins of social complexity in the southern Jordan Valley: new evidence from Teleilat Ghassul, Jordan." Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly **134**: 2-27.

Bourke, S., et al. (2001). "The chronology of the Ghassulian Chalcolithic period in the southern Levant: New C-14 determinations from Teleilat Ghassul, Jordan." Radiocarbon **V43(N3)**: 1217-1222.

Bourke, S., et al. (2004). "The End of the Chalcolithic Period in the south Jordan Valley: New 14C Determinations from Teleilat Ghassul, Jordan." Radiocarbon **46(1)**: 315-323.

Commenge-Pellerin, C. (1990). La Potterie de Safadi (Beersheva) au IVe millenaire avant l'ere chretienne. Paris, Association Paleorient.

Dollfus, G. and Z. Kafafi (1987). Tell Abu Hamid. Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan III. A. Hadidi. Amman, London and New York, Department of Antiquities, Amman, and Routledge and Kegan Paul: 231-235.

Dothan, M. (1959). "Excavations at Horvat Beter (Beersheba)." Atiqot II: 1-42.

Elliott, C. (1978). "The Ghassulian Culture in Palestine: Origins, Influences and Abandonment." Levant 10: 37-54.

Gilead, I. (1988). "The Chalcolithic Period in the Levant." Journal of World Prehistory 2: 397-443.

Golden, J. (2009). Dawn of the Metal Age. London, Equinox.

Golden, J. (2009). "New Light on the Development of Chalcolithic Metal Technology in the Southern Levant." Journal of World Prehistory 22(3): 283-300.

Abstract Several decades after the discovery of the spectacular Nahal Mishmar Hoard (a collection of cast metal goods, some quite ornate, found in a cave high in the cliffs of the Judean Desert) many important questions about Chalcolithic metallurgy in the southern Levant remain unanswered. What is the origin of the materials used? Where were the final goods produced and what were the dynamics of production? In fact, new questions have also arisen as recent discoveries force us to reconsider previous interpretations of Chalcolithic metallurgy and the societies within which it evolved. Such will be the focus of this paper.

Golden, J., et al. (2001). "Recent Discoveries Concerning Chalcolithic Metallurgy at Shiqmim, Israel." Journal of Archaeological Science 28: 1 - 13.

Goren, Y. (2008). "The Location of Specialized Copper Production by the Lost Wax Technique in the Chalcolithic Southern Levant." Geoarchaeology 23(3): 374-397.

Goren, Y. and P. Fabian (2002). Kissufim Road, a Chalcolithic Mortuary Site. Jerusalem, Israel Antiquities Authority.

Ilan, D. and Y. Rowan (2015). "The Judean Desert as a Chalcolithic Necropolis." Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology 28(2): 171-194.

Khazanov, A. M. (1994). Nomads and the Outside World (2nd Ed). Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press.

Levy, T. E. (1983). "The Emergence of Specialized Pastoralism in the Southern Levant." World Archaeology 15: 15-36.

Levy, T. E. (1986). "Archaeological Sources for the Study of Palestine: The Chalcolithic Period." The Biblical Archaeologist **49**(2): 82-108.

During the late fifth and fourth millennia B.C. significant technological and social changes occurred among societies living in Palestine. This paper, the first of a new series in BA, surveys the archaeological research that illuminates these changes.

Levy, T. E., Ed. (1987). Shiqmim I: Studies Concerning Chalcolithic Societies in the Northern Negev Desert, Israel (1982-1984). Oxford, BAR International Series 356.

Levy, T. E. (1993). Production, Space and Social Change in Prehistoric Palestine. Spatial Boundaries and Social Dynamics. A. Holl and T.E.Levy. Ann Arbor, Monograph Series of the Journal of Anthropological Archaeology: 63-81.

Levy, T. E. (2001). Exploring the Negev Chalcolithic with David Alon (1976-1999): A Personal Appreciation. Settlement, Civilization and Culture - Proceedings of the Conference in Memory of David Alon. A. M. Maeir and E. Baruch. Ramat Gan, Bar-Ilan University: 1-30.

Levy, T. E. (2001). "In Memoriam: David Alon, 1926 - 2000 - A Personal Appreciation." Journal of the Israel Prehistoric Society **31**: 5 - 7.

Levy, T. E. and D. Alon (1982). "The Chalcolithic Mortuary Site Near Mevad Aluf, Northern Negev Desert: A Preliminary Study." Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research **248**: 37-59.

Levy, T. E., et al. (1991). "Protohistoric Investigations at the Shiqmim Chalcolithic Village and Cemetery: Interim Report on the 1987 Season." Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Supplementary Studies(27): 29-46.

The 1987 excavations in the Shiqmim Chalcolithic settlement and cemetery marked the beginning of the Phase II investigations at that site. This project focuses on elucidating the evolution of early agricultural settlement in the Beersheva valley of Israel's Negev desert. The report presents the results of a deep trench excavation and illustrates the complex stratigraphic development of this single-period site. In addition, contextual data is discussed concerning the discovery of a copper foundation deposit consisting of a mace head and scepter. An interim quantitative study of flint tool and animal bone distributions is also discussed.

Levy, T. E. and S. Shalev (1989). "Prehistoric Metalworking in the Southern Levant: Archaeometallurgy and Social Perspectives." World Archaeology **20**: 353-372.

Mallon, A. (1932). Les Fouilles de Teleilat Ghassul. Syria. Paris, Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geunthner. **13**: 334-344.

Mallon, A., et al. (1934). Teleilat Ghassul I, 1929-32. Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Perrot, J. (1954). "Tell Abu Matar (Near Beersheba)." Israel Exploration Journal **4**: 125-126.

Perrot, J. (1968). La Prehistoire Palestiniene. Supplement au Dictionnaire de la Bible. Paris, Letouzey and Ane. **8**: 286-446.

Perrot, J. and D. Ladiray (1980). Tombes A Ossuaires de la Region Cotiere Palestiniene, Au IVe Millenaire Avant L'eve Chretienne. Paris, Association Paleorient.

Rosen, S. A. and I. Eldar (1993). "Horvat Beter Revisited: The 1982 Salvage Excavations." 'Atiqot **22**: 13-27.

Rowan, Y. and J. Golden (2009). "The Chalcolithic Period of the Southern Levant: A Synthetic Review." Journal of World Prehistory **22**(1): 1-92.

Rowan, Y. M. and J. Golden (2009). "The Chalcolithic Period in the Southern Levant: A Synthetic Review." Journal of World Prehistory.

Rowan, Y. M. and D. Ilan (2013). The Subterranean Landscape of the Southern Levant during the Chalcolithic Period. Sacred Darkness: A Global Perspective on the Ritual Use of Caves. H. Moyes. Boulder, Colorado University Press: 87-107.

Sebbane, M., et al. (2014). Masters of fire : Copper Age art from Israel.

Focuses on the people of the southern Levant who harnessed the power of metallurgy during the fourth millennium BCE. Artisans produced extraordinary copper objects while other craftsmen molded pottery and stone into complex anthropomorphic burial containers, statuettes, and ritual objects. Taken together, these artifacts reveal the first stratified culture known in the ancient Near East. Highlights of the exhibition include a selection of material from the Na'al Mishmar hoard, an unprecedented collection of copper prestige and ritual objects, organic materials from the Cave of the Warrior, and an exceptional group of ritual figurines.

Sebbane, M., et al. (2014). Masters of fire : Copper Age art from Israel.

Shalev, S., et al. (1992). "A Chalcolithic Mace Head from the Negev: Technological Aspects and Cultural Implications." Archaeometry **34**: 63-71.

Sherratt, A. G. (1981). Plough and Pastoralism: Aspects of the Secondary Products Revolution. Patterns of the Past: Studies in Honour of David Clarke. I. Hodder, G. Isaac and N. Hammond. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 261 - 305.

Sherratt, A. G. (1983). "The Secondary Exploitation of Animals in the Old World." World Archaeology **15**: 90 - 104.

Shugar, A. N. and C. J. Gohm (2011). Developmental Trends in Chalcolithic Copper Metallurgy: A Radiometric Perspective. Culture, Chronology and the Chalcolithic - Theory and Transition. Y. M. Rowan and J. L. Lovell. Oxford, Oxbow: 133-148.

Smith, P., et al. (2006). Death and the Sanctuary: The Human Remains from Gilat. Archaeology, Anthropology and Cult - The Sanctuary at Gilat, Israel. T. E. Levy. London, Equinox Publishing Ltd: 327-366.

Stekelis, M. (1935). Les monuments mégalithiques de Palestine, Memoire 15. Paris, Masson et Cie.