Ancient Piracy

**F.1.** Figures with feathered headdresses from an ivory box and a conical seal, both from Enkomi.

**F.2.** Philistine sherd with bird emblem.

**F.3.** Map of the Mediterranean.

**F.4.** Sea Battle illustration on LH IIIC Middle sherd from Pyrgos Livanaton.
Outline: What does it mean to be a pirate in the ancient time? Our ideas about piracy as shaped in the mass media do not present an accurate picture of ancient or of early modern piracy, but like all stereotypes, they do contain some truths. Research shows that pirates were able to create culturally mixed tribal entities and identities by incorporating new followers from different cultures into their social structure. The “Sea Peoples” is one of the earliest pirate bands formed at the end of the Bronze Age, who were composed of non-elites, including sailors, disenfranchised warriors, mercenaries, workers, craft workers and peasants from the Mediterranean social network. Studies on them identify patterns in pirate culture including demography, social organization, geography, symbolism, identity, gender, and etc., and suggest that piracy was a mechanism for limited migration and transmission of foreign cultural traits. While current research on the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman piracy tends to be more historical- rather than archaeological-focused, and mostly contributes to our understanding of piracy in terms of its rhetorical, political, and propagandistic functions.

Sea Peoples: with various names in different sources including Lukka, Meshwesh, Danuna, Sherden, Shekelesh, Peleset or Pulesati, Aqaiwasha, Tjekeru.

Bibliography


