

CHAPTER IX

CANAAN IN THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

by B. Mazar

A. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

THE 24TH CENTURY B.C.E. witnesses far-reaching changes in Canaan and the neighboring countries, resulting in the decline of the rich and highly developed civilization of the Early Bronze Period. Archeological excavations reveal a deterioration and destruction of the fortified urban centers and a concurrent decline in material culture. Destruction of the Early Bronze culture brought in its wake an economic collapse, which was not to be remedied for many generations. This seems to have been accompanied by a lengthy process involving the destruction of the settled population over extensive areas and by decisive changes in the ethnic and social composition of the country's inhabitants. Egyptian sources tell of military campaigns by the Sixth Dynasty kings to Canaan for the purpose of suppressing the 'šmw. From this period onwards this is the name by which the Egyptians call all the tribes who left their mark on the population of Canaan.¹ Weni, the military commander of Pepi I (second half of the 24th century) mentions in his inscription that he participated in five land and sea campaigns against the 'šmw and even tells of his active participation in the destruction of fortified towns and the slaughter of their inhabitants, in the uprooting of orchards and vineyards and in the taking of many prisoners and much booty to Egypt.² A relief discovered in the tomb of Anta at Deshasheh provides remarkable evidence for this period,³ portraying as it does the siege and conquest of a fortress. From the defective inscription accompanying the relief it is possible to discern the name of at least one city, apparently the Semitic name "Nd'l." It is not inconceivable that there could have existed some connection between Egyptian and contemporaneous events in the west of the Fertile Crescent, which constituted a very real threat to Egypt. Already Lugalzaggisi, King of Uruk, who succeeded in uniting the city-states in Sumer (second half of the 24th century), boasts of imposing his dominion on all the countries as far as the "Upper Sea" viz. the Mediterranean. Sargon, Lugalzaggisi's conqueror and the founder of the great Semitic kingdom in Mesopotamia, the kingdom of Akkad (end of the 24th and beginning

of the 23rd centuries B.C.E.), also reached the shores of the Mediterranean in the course of his far-ranging campaigns, and one of his successors, Naram-Sin, was to follow in his footsteps. These expeditions undoubtedly caused considerable agitation in all parts of Syria and Canaan.⁴ Thus in the 24th century Syria and Canaan entered the political orbit of the large empires in the land of the Nile and in the countries of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and they suffered seriously from the predatory raids and destruction perpetrated by the armies of Egypt and Akkad. This state of affairs was followed by other events which definitely had considerable influence on the fate of Canaan during that period. They are already alluded to in documents from the end of Sargon of Akkad's dynasty.

B. AMURRŪ EXPANSION

This period witnessed the beginning of the enormous expansion of the Amurrū, tribes from the land of Amurru (the Sumerian equivalent is Mar-tu), that is to say from the provinces west of the Euphrates. Sharkalisharri, one of the last kings of the Akkadian dynasty (ca 2200 B.C.) was forced to engage them in a fierce battle near Basar in the central Euphrates region.⁵ The Sumerian and Akkadian sources portray the Amurrū as outsiders and foreigners "who do not know any crops" and do not live in houses.⁶

There seems to be some causal link between the first invasions of the Amurrū tribes into the border territory of the Akkadian empire on the one hand, and the weakening of the political regime in the Land of the Nile at the end of the Old Kingdom (end of the 23rd century) on the other, and between events in Syria and Canaan in the later centuries of the third millennium. The results of archeological research in Canaan indicate that in this period the nomads and semi-nomads determined the character of the population and its material culture, and that their transition to a life of permanent settlement was a very slow and complicated process. The special character of the remains from the 23rd century to 2000 B.C.E. found in Canaan (Middle Bronze Period I⁷) point to a primitive population as regards material culture and standard of living. This is clearly demonstrated by the poor and unwallled settlements, the makeshift building and inferior pottery technique. Further light is shed on the Amurrū settlement by the many shaft graves and tumuli, mostly of individuals, more and more of which are coming to light in various regions and which are at times quite unconnected with permanent dwelling places. Various pottery types such as the caliciform or goblet-shaped jars which were found mainly in the context of graves, weapons made of copper, witnessing

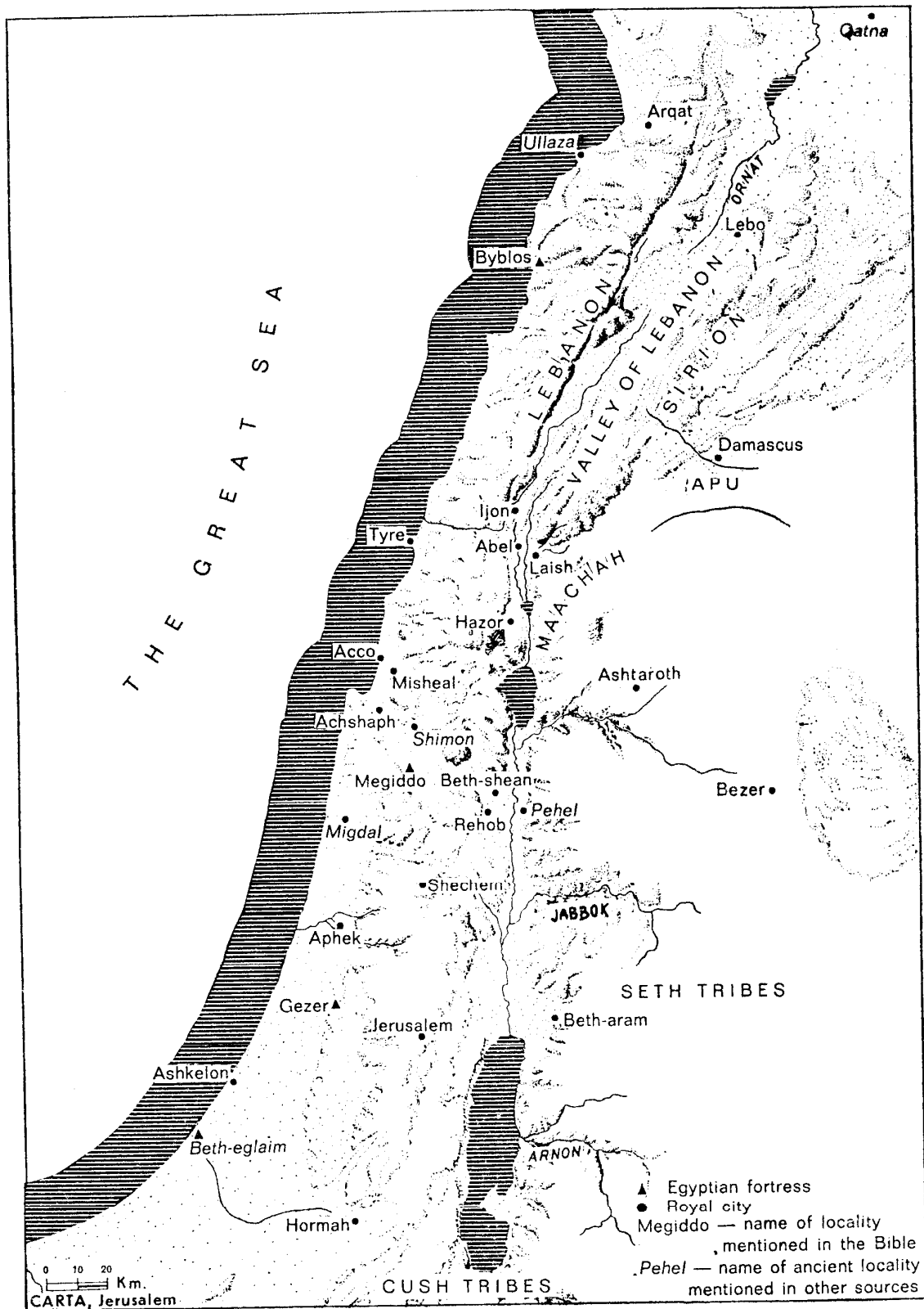
a highly developed metal industry and other miscellaneous objects, indicate north-western Mesopotamia and northern Syria as the main cultural source which influenced and inspired the Amurrū.⁸ Yet these indications serve more to explain the source of the culture which had nourished the newcomers in their countries of origin before their migration to Canaan than to point to active cultural connections.

Archeological research does, however, throw light on the process of the Amurrū establishment and expansion during the Middle Bronze I in those parts of the country which had been but sparsely or not at all inhabited, including large areas of Transjordan and the Negev as far as the desert fringe. This wave of settlement and the establishment of unwalled settlements was, doubtlessly, encouraged by the continuous movement of nomads and semi-nomads and the land hunger of the surplus population in the purely agricultural and pastoral areas. It is remarkable that the later stages of this period, that is, in the 22nd–21st centuries, a close network of settlements was established in the Negev and in the surrounding areas as proved by the hundreds of archeological sites, remains of settlements and burial grounds.⁹ As far as we know the inhabitants of these areas employed themselves in temporary farming, grazing and various other kinds of work. A striking illustration of this development was found in the only settlement so far excavated, the site of Har Jeruḥam: where the two strata of occupation from the Middle Bronze I discovered display different characters. While the early settlement, which was surrounded by a stone fence against which leaned the dwellings and workshops, was a permanent settlement of farmers and shepherds, the later one belonged to semi-nomads, shepherds and coppersmiths who dwelt in tents and used sheep pens.¹⁰

The poor settlements of Transjordan and the Negev were destroyed at the end of the Middle Bronze I. The ensuing gap in permanent occupation and the conversion of these areas to a domain of nomadic tribes was caused by a fresh wave of newcomers which left its mark on other parts of the country also. Canaan entered a new phase of her history, Middle Bronze II, which continued until the 16th century B.C.E. The chronologically parallel periods in Egypt are the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period respectively.

C. EFFECTS OF AMURRŪ EXPANSION

From the cuneiform archives we know of the tremendous movement of West Semitic tribes at the end of the third and the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E. Akkadian sources call these tribes by the traditional



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inclusive name "Amurrū." The pressure on the western border of Sumer and Akkad grew increasingly strong towards the end of the Third Dynasty of Ur. Shu-Sin was actually forced to build a defensive wall in the region north of Sumer to prevent their invading his kingdom, and his son Ibbi-Sin, the last of the kings of Ur, engaged in fierce battles with them.¹¹ The tremendous assault of the Amurrū from the west on the Euphrates and Tigris Valleys played a decisive role in the destruction of the kingdom of Sumer and Akkad. Mesopotamia was flooded by a multitude of newcomers who spoke various West Semitic dialects. The way of life and the cultural and spiritual traditions which they brought with them differed radically from the concept of monarchy and the accomplished civilizations of Sumer and Akkad. Yet in the course of the time many of these wandering tribes settled in the countries of the Euphrates and the Tigris, lived among the Sumerian-Akkadian population, acquired the achievements of its culture and adopted Akkadian as the spoken and written language. They founded a number of strong kingdoms, one of which, the Early Babylonian Kingdom, reached its zenith at the time of its great King Hammurabi. A great deal of information concerning the West Semites in Mesopotamia and in the area west of the Euphrates, both those who had already managed to settle down and strike roots in the Akkadian culture, though still linked to their origin and genealogy, as well as those who continued to live a nomadic or semi-nomadic life, is to be found in the cuneiform written sources from the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur.

D. TESTIMONIES ABOUT AMURRŪ CULTURE IN CANAAN

The large quantity of Akkadian documents from the royal archives in Mari on the Middle Euphrates, which date from the 18th century B.C.E.¹² is particularly rich in data. This stratum of population can be distinguished in the case of the Mari documents and many other documents from the first third of the second millennium by means of the personal names of members of the ruling class. These names are closely related to the personal names which were common in Syria and Canaan during the same period, as transpires in particular from the Egyptian sources of the Middle Kingdom. They are also related to the names known from the stories about the Patriarchs which are found in abundance in the biblical sources.¹³ The same applies to the names of tribes and various ethnic units (the tribes of Hana, Banu Yamina, etc.); to the names and appellations of their gods (Dagan, Hadad, Baal, Abu, Akhu, Shumu and 'Ammu); various terms, especially those that derive from their patriarchal social

regime, from their nomadic way of life, such as *ummatum* (nation), *gayum* (tribe) or *khibrum* (clan); and to terms which illustrate the form of their settlement, viz. *nawum* (encampment), *khašarum* (enclosed encampment). It is also worth noting that the Mari Letters mention the Valley of Balikh with its concentrations of Haran and the city of Nahor, as one of the important centers of the nomadic and semi-nomadic West Semitic tribes, which brings to mind the Israelite tradition of the early dwelling places of the Patriarchs and their connection with the children of Nahor. Moreover, the genealogical table of the sons of Nahor (Gen. 22:20-24) probably reflects a certain historical reality in that it accounts for the expansion of the nomadic West Semitic tribes from their centers in the areas of Haran, Nahor and the Middle Euphrates as far as southern Syria and northern Transjordan.¹⁴ The Mari Letters and the documents from Alalakh in northern Syria, not only tell us about the strong political and economic connections between the Amorite kingdoms in Mesopotamia and the kingdoms of Syria and especially Yamhad (in northern Syria) and Qaṭanum (in central Syria) but also about a common origin and perhaps even about common traditions from ancient times.¹⁵ We can see from a letter addressed to Zimri-lim King of Mari, by one of his governors, just how many kings bore West Semitic names at that period: "There is no king who is all-powerful on his own. Ten or fifteen kings may march behind Hammurabi; likewise after Rim-Sin of Larsa; similarly after Ibalpiel of Eshnunna; similarly, too, after Amutpiel of Qaṭanum. Perhaps twenty kings march behind Yarim-lim of Yamhad."¹⁶ This document, by the way, reveals something of the politically divided state of Mesopotamia and Syria before Hammurabi, King of Babylon, succeeded in establishing his vast empire which included a large part of Mesopotamia.

Into this historical context can be filled also the evidence of the military expeditions to the Mediterranean coast of the Amorite kings Yahdun-lim of Mari and Shamshi-Adad of Assyria who preceded Zimri-lim. The purpose of those expeditions was to impose their suzerainty on these politically and economically important areas, but it would seem that these campaigns did not lead to proper conquests.¹⁷

These connections doubtlessly greatly furthered the spread of the Akkadian language and culture in the western Fertile Crescent, and not without cause did cuneiform-written Akkadian become the lingua franca of trade and diplomacy in the ancient world. The West Semitic tribes also controlled the main trade routes from Mesopotamia to Syria, to the Mediterranean coast and to Canaan; it was they who took an active part in the caravan trade and who used the donkey as a beast of burden. They

controlled the main routes which led from large centers such as Babylon, Sippar, Mari and Haran to Aleppo and to Qaṭanum in Syria,¹⁸ and from there different routes branched off to the coast and to Canaan, while the desert tracks were also of great importance. On the desert routes between the countries of the Euphrates and Canaan (this desert is the *Land of Kedom*, and is mentioned by this name already in the Egyptian Si-nuhe story dating from the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E.) nomadic tribes, tent-dwellers and shepherds, and trade caravans travelled to and from Palmyra, through which caravans passed on their way from the banks of the Euphrates to Qaṭanum or to Damascus (Apum in the Akkadian and Egyptian documents), and was already then an important station on this route which crossed the heart of the desert. From Damascus the route continued along the Transjordanian Heights. This section was known as the "king's highway" (Num. 20:17), from which various routes branched off, the most important of them turning to the Arabah and the Negev and continued via Kadesh-barnea to Egypt. Like the Akkadian documents, Egyptian documents and inscriptions from the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty (20th century, B.C.E.) such as those found at Serābit al-Khādim in Sinai, mention donkey caravans, which were led by Asiatics and which moved between Egypt and the countries further east.¹⁹ Of striking interest is a fresco from ca. 1900 B.C.E., discovered in the tomb of Khnum-hotep at Benī Ḥasan, which shows a group of people leading donkeys. They are travelling down to Egypt with their merchandise and their tools which include copper articles and even a lyre for entertainment purposes. The inscription which accompanies the portrayal of the caravan explains that these are Asiatics bringing a kind of antimony from the land of Shutu. Their leader is Abshar who is given the title "Ruler of a Foreign Country." The Upper and Lower lands of Shutu are also mentioned in the Execration Texts (see below); the Shutu are known from Akkadian sources as a large group of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes living on the edge of the Fertile Crescent and in the Syrian desert; and the parallel of Moab – "the sons of Seti" in Balaam's prophecy (Num. 24:17) may hint that their main place of settlement was in those areas which were later seized by the Moabites, including the plains of Moab and southern Gilead – a region which was famous for its perfumes and cosmetics (Gen. 37:25; Jer. 8:22).²⁰ Egyptian sources from the time of the Middle Kingdom also mention the national and territorial unit "Kushu" in the border districts of the country. Most probably these were groups of shepherd tribes in the Negev and in the neighboring border districts who preceded the Midianites in these areas; an allusion to them might be found in the parallel of the

tents of Cushan – “The curtains of the land of Midian” – in an early biblical source (Hab. 3:7). In addition to Kushu and Shutu we know of the Shusu – the name for desert nomads which became accepted particularly during the New Kingdom; it is not inconceivable that its origin lies in the Egyptian word for “nomad”, later borrowed by Canaanite and Hebrew (*shosé*) in the sense of a brigand.²¹

E. EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE IN WESTERN ASIA

A great deal is to be learnt about Canaan from Twelfth Dynasty sources in Egypt (1990–1778).²² A realistic picture of conditions in the country during this dynasty, in the middle of the 20th century, unfolds in the scroll of Si-nuhe — which relates the deeds of an Egyptian official who fled his country, made his way to Byblos and to the *Land of Kedem* arriving finally in Upper Retenu, viz. Canaan, where he settled down. In the course of time Si-nuhe became the protégé and son-in-law of Ammienshi, a very influential ruler in Retenu, who administered various territorial and political units as well as settled and nomadic populations. Si-nuhe succeeded in becoming the head of a tribe in one of the border provinces which was rich in field crops, fruit trees and cattle; when the need arose he went off to combat nomadic tribes and even to fight a duel with a Retenu hero. But in his old age Si-nuhe returned to Egypt so as to die in his native land.²³

From the Si-nuhe story and from other documents it becomes clear that there were conflicts in political and social spheres as well as a certain amount of cultural exchange between the patriarchal, tribal regime of the nomads and semi-nomads and the urban political regime which began to crystallize at the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty and had developed considerably during the 19th and 18th centuries. In the 19th century mercantile and political intercourse between Egypt and the Syrian coast increased greatly. This fact emerges from the Egyptian documents and is supported also by the results of archeological research which attest sustained political and trade connections between the two countries. This is clearly demonstrated by the important harbor town of Byblos whose kings ruled under the protection of the Egyptian rulers and enjoyed a wide range of barter trade on the coastal road to Egypt.²⁴ No less remarkable are the sphinxes and statuettes of the Egyptian kings and their officials which were found on the coastal roads and in important Syrian and Canaanite centers, such as Ugarit, Byblos, Beirut, Qatna, Megiddo and Gezer. During this period many Egyptians came to the courts of

Retenu's rulers on political and economic business, while many inhabitants of the latter country settled in Egypt as traders or craftsmen and particularly as slaves.²⁵ Quite obviously the Egyptian kings made repeated attempts to subjugate Retenu, particularly those areas which were of vital strategic and economic importance to them. The inscription of Sebek-Khu gives an account of one such campaign against the Asiatics in Upper Retenu, and describes the conquest of the province of Shechem at the time of Sen-Usert III (middle of the 19th century).²⁶

The two groups of Egyptian Execration Texts are of tantamount importance for understanding the political and ethnographic background of the country and its neighbors in this period. These inscriptions contain long lists of foreign governors of cities and countries, whom the Egyptians considered hostile to Pharaoh's rule; many of them were rulers in Retenu, particularly in densely inhabited areas, including some fortified cities. The first group of Execration Texts, written on pottery which was purposely broken immediately after completion, may date from the time of Amen-hotep III or IV; while the second group of similar, though much more detailed texts written on clay figurines, seems to date from the middle of the 18th century.²⁷ The first group mentions the rulers of political centers like Ashkelon, Jerusalem, Rehob, etc., as well as larger political units and provinces which were ruled by heads of various tribal confederacies. The number of rulers in each one of the political and tribal units was not fixed. It sometimes rose to three or even four people who were probably the heads of the most distinguished families. The second group mentions only one ruler for each of the political centers or the various provinces, or of the "countries." These documents give some indication of the process of large-scale urbanization, which is confirmed by archeological evidence also. In the later Execration Texts the first place in the list of urban centers is occupied by the important harbor towns on the eastern Mediterranean seaboard, which at that time achieved great prosperity and cultivated maritime trade with Egypt; they also acted as middlemen in the trade between Cyprus and the Aegean Islands and between Canaan and Egypt. There were also a great many principal cities in the country's lowlands, in southern Syria, in the Jordan Valley and in the Land of Bashan. Mention is also made of two political centers in the heart of the hill-country of western Canaan. These are Shechem and Jerusalem which according to archeological evidence also were fortified towns at that time.²⁸

From these documents we know that Egypt's influence in Asia, at least towards the end of the Twelfth Dynasty, extended along the Mediterranean

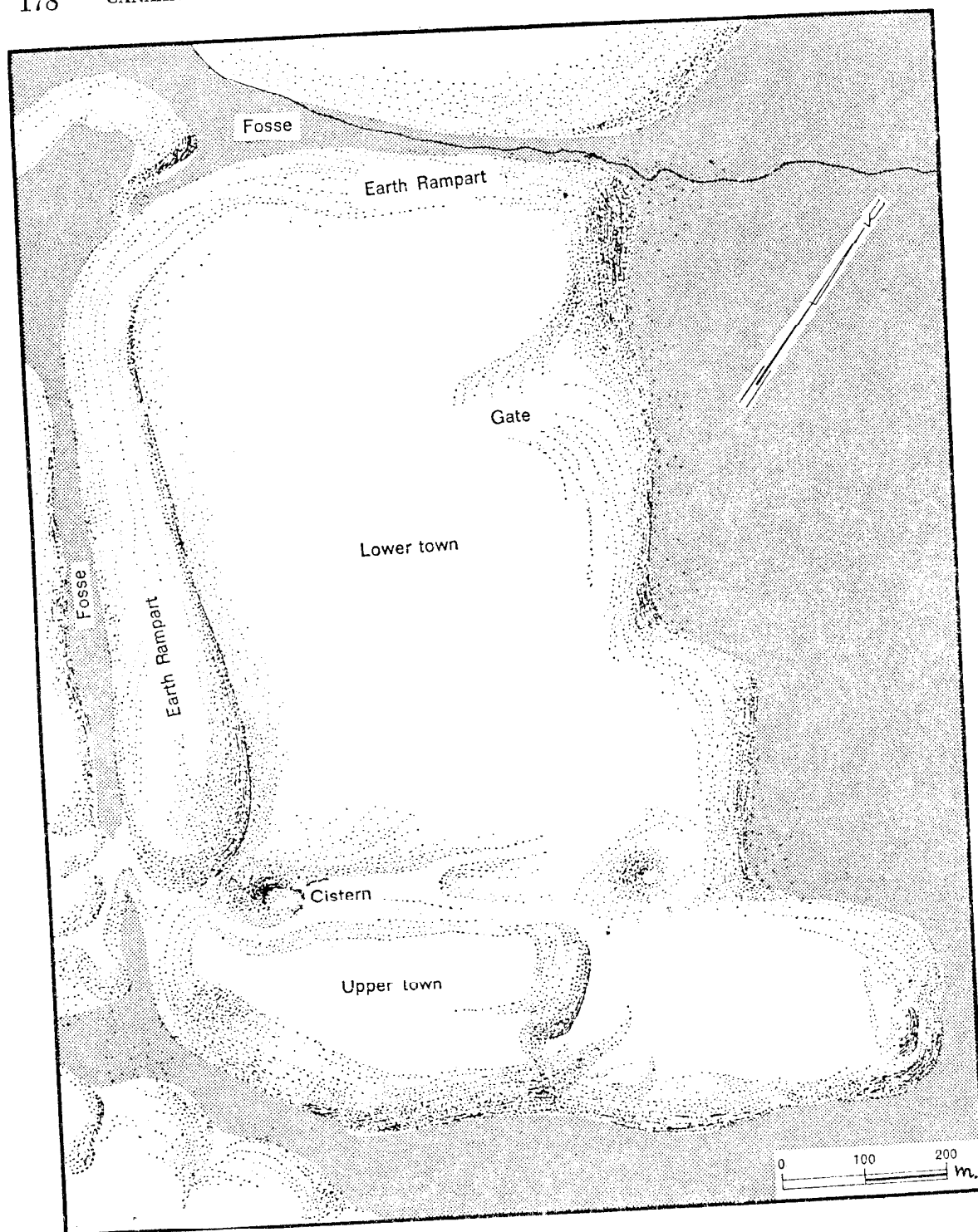


Fig. 25.
Hazor, relief plan of the city mound.
Drawing by Carta, Jerusalem.

seaboard and inland reached as far as the borders of the kingdom of Qatanum, which comprised a considerable part of central Syria. The archeological remains of this period discovered in the important harbor town of Byblos and in various other tells bear irrefutable witness to the intensive development which is apparent in all spheres of material culture. Megiddo, which may well have been an Egyptian stronghold in this period, provides a striking example with the remains of its reinforced, mighty wall, its indirect access gate, and its tombs rich in finds which include articles imported from Egypt as well as from the Mediterranean seaboard. As regards the country's inhabitants, their personal names, and also the names of geographical and ethnic elements, it seems that they were for most part speakers of West Semitic dialects, and their close ethnic and linguistic relationship to the Amurrū in Mesopotamia in this period seems certain.

When the Thirteenth Dynasty succeeded the powerful Twelfth Dynasty (1778) Egypt's prestige seems to have been definitely on the decline in the countries of Asia though her contact with the cities of southern Canaan and especially her strong connections with the coastal cities, notably Byblos, did not cease. Yantin the governor of Byblos is known as Pharaoh's vassal even in the reign of Nefer-hotep I (ca. 1750). There has been an attempt to identify this Yantin with the Yantin-hammu of Byblos, a contemporary of Zimri-lim King of Mari, mentioned in one of the Mari Letters.²⁹ In contrast with the waning of Egyptian influence, this era marks the political and economic strengthening of ties between the Amorite kingdoms in Mesopotamia and those in Syria and Canaan as transpires from the Mari Letters. Apart from Yamhad and Qatanum an important place in documents dealing with diplomatic and trade relations is also occupied by the land of Amurru, a region in Syria, south of Qatanum, which is described in one of the Mari Letters as the country from which horses were imported, and which became famous in a later period.³⁰ Apu (Damascus and its neighborhood) Ugarit and Byblos on the coast are also mentioned, and of special interest is Hazor in Upper Galilee which is mentioned in the Execration Texts among the rest of the important political centers. The active diplomatic relations between Hammurabi King of Babylon, Zimri-lim King of Mari and the King of Hazor, which were accompanied by barter trade, lead to the conclusion that Hazor had attained the status of an independent royal city, on the pattern of Qatanum in central Syria, and occupied an important place in international relations.³¹ This is also supported by archeological finds in Hazor.³² From the excavations at that site it is apparent that from the 18th century onwards Hazor developed and prospered. The excavated site reveals the

plan of an urban center extending over a large area (ca. 185-325 acres) containing an upper town, the king's citadel on the tell proper and a large lower town. The lower town was built in the shape of a rectangle, adjacent to the king's citadel, and protected by large ramparts of beaten earth which served as a foundation for brick walls. As in the case of the fortifications in Qatanum and Carchemish, there was a massive gatehouse. There existed no doubt, a connection between the erection of such mighty fortifications and the introduction of the perfected battering-ram in warfare, since we possess equally detailed information about the one and the other from the Mari Letters. Needless to say the lower town contained a large population which, doubtlessly, included merchants, craftsmen and the common people. Maybe that is also where the horses and chariots were kept. Their military function even at this early date is attested in documents from Mari and Alalakh.³³

F. THE "HYKSOS" PERIOD

Already at the end of the 18th century the political situation in the Near East was shaken following the downfall of the Middle Kingdom of Egypt and the developments and changes which were growing apparent in Western Asia. Egyptian traditions concerning the new era, the Second Intermediate or "Hyksos" period, are related by the Egyptian-Hellenistic priest Manetho in the form of an historical account, fragments of which are preserved in the writings of Josephus.³⁴ According to him the "Hyksos" were an unknown people who invaded Egypt from the east, subjugated the country and set up a king, Salitis, who ruled in Memphis. This entire

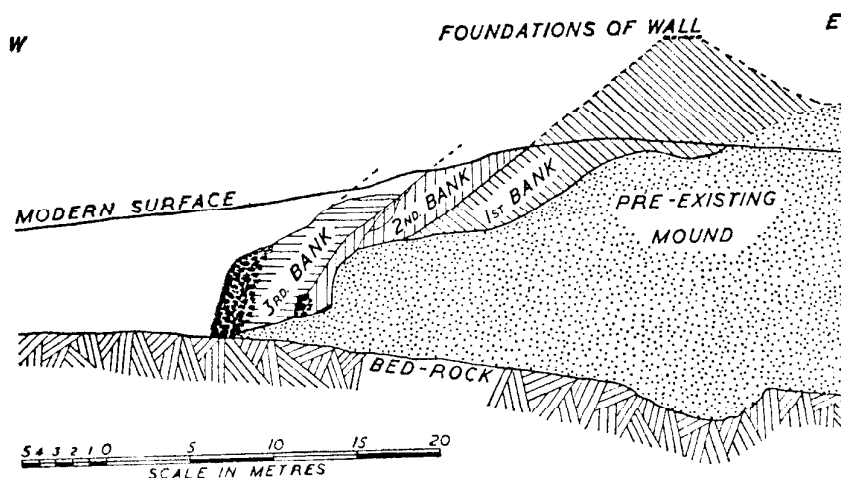
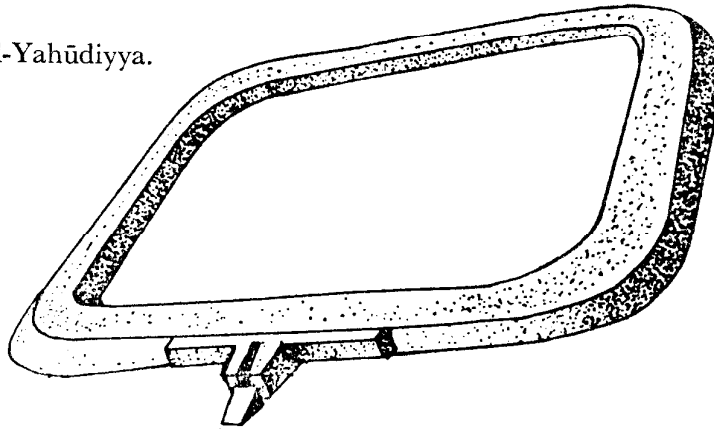


Fig. 26.
Jericho, reconstructed section of the Middle Bronze II Period mound.
Prof. K. M. Kenyon, London.

"nation" was called "Hyksos" viz. Shepherd Kings, "and some say that these people were Arabs." Manetho attributes the founding of the city of Avaris, viz. Egyptian Tanis and its becoming a Hyksos fortress, to Salitis; he even enumerates the names of five kings who reigned after him, including two Jannas (or Aunas) and Apophis, whom the Egyptian sources also consider to have been strong rulers (Khyan and Apopi). Finally, Manetho describes the uprising of the native kings of Thebes who succeeded in capturing Avaris and in expelling the Hyksos from Egypt.

The term "Hyksos", to which Manetho tried to give a popular explanation has a clear parallel from the time of the Middle Kingdom, namely, the ḥqꜣwḥꜣswt, "rulers of foreign countries", the Egyptian term which was currently used for the rulers of Asian countries and which is

Fig. 27.
Model of the "camp" at Tell al-Yahūdiyya.
Drawing by "Carta", Jerusalem.



also the accepted title of foreign rulers in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period. This period, which extended from the end of the 18th century B.C.E. to the establishment of the New Kingdom (ca. 1760 B.C.E.), is one of the haziest in Egyptian history.³⁵ The following generations considered it a period of weakness and oppression under foreign rule. Queen Hat-shepsut (beginning of the 15th century) boasts that she was responsible for the restoration of the sanctuaries which had been destroyed when the strangers dwelt in Avaris, while a folk tale of later date names Apophis as the ruler of Avaris, maintaining that the whole country was subject to him and that it was he who elevated Seth the chief god of the Hyksos above all the gods of Egypt.³⁶ Another important document enables us to give an even more exact date for the establishment of Tanis as the Hyksos center. This is the "Stele of the Year 400," put up by Ramses II, which contains a representation of Seth in Eastern garb and an inscription which mentions an event that had taken place at the end of Hor-em-heb's rule (ca. 1320). This is the arrival in Tanis of Seti, father

of Ramses II, when he was a vizier of Hor-em-heb, for the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the founding of the cult of Seth, a date which is undoubtedly identical with the establishment of Hyksos rule in Tanis, viz. Avaris. It is not inconceivable that the year when Tanis was founded is alluded to also in the Bible: "Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan [Tanis] in Egypt" (Num. 13:22).³⁷

The beginning of the Hyksos period in Egypt was marked by the disintegration of centralised rule following the decline of the Middle Kingdom, and the penetration of a large number of West Semitic tribes who wandered

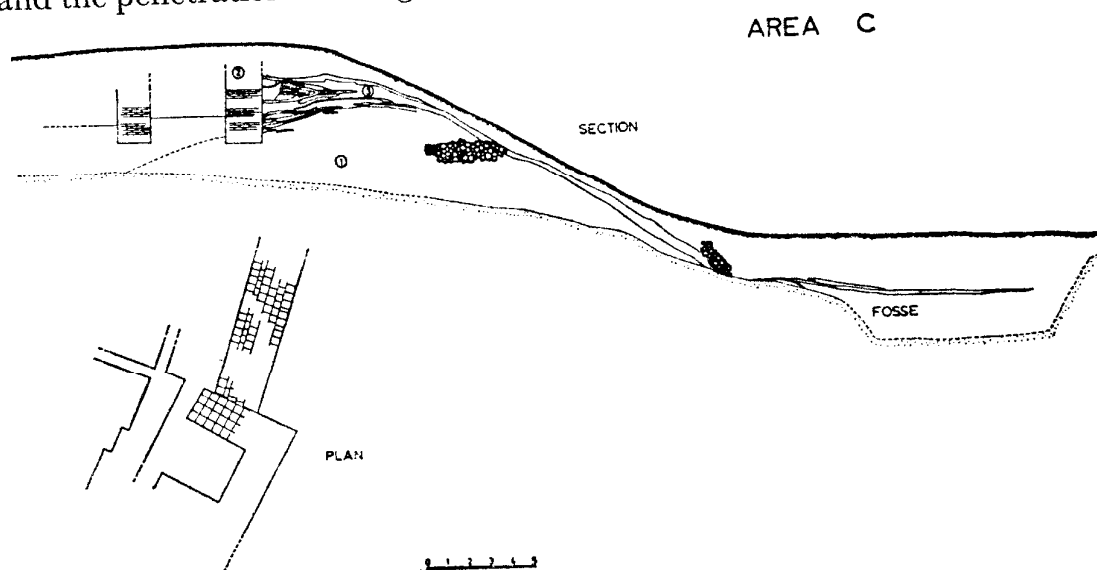


Fig. 28.
Tell Nagila, plan and section of wall and glacis, Middle Bronze II Period.
Mrs. Ruth Amiram, Jerusalem.

from Canaan and adjacent areas to the interior of the Delta region. In the course of time the Hyksos succeeded in establishing themselves in Lower Egypt and extending their authority over large areas. The few contemporary sources mention several rulers who were called "rulers of foreign lands" and generally had West Semitic names, such as 'nthr, Smqn, Bbnm, Y'qbhr. It would seem that even then Tanis was one of the fortresses of the foreign rulers. It is to this period that one must apparently attribute the large camp, fortified by huge sand and beaten earth ramparts, which was discovered at Tell al-Yahūdiyya. These ramparts are similar to the type of fortification which characterizes Canaan during the period under discussion; a similar one was also found at Heliopolis.³⁸

Hyksos rule in Egypt was most strongly established during the period which the Egyptian historiographers have named the Fifteenth Dynasty and which lasted ca. 108 years (ca. 1675-1565). The West Semitic tribes,

masses of which settled in various parts of Lower Egypt, particularly in the neighborhood of Tanis (viz. the biblical Land of Goshen) were no doubt firm supporters of the Hyksos rule. It seems logical that these newcomers cultivated close relations with the West Semitic population of Canaan and its border areas, who were closely related to them by origin and country, and that they encouraged them to participate in the economic exploitation of Egypt. A stream of Egyptian goods reached Canaan not only by way of trade, but also as a result of raids and plunder, a development which doubtlessly expedited the impoverishment of Egypt and the economic reinforcement of the Canaanite cities. As for the ruling Hyksos class, it struck roots in Egypt's cultural life and adapted to the country's regime. An important contribution to the power of their rule was brought by the introduction of warfare systems and weapons from the East, which had so far been unknown in Egypt. These included the chariot drawn by a team of horses and the composite bow.³⁹ In the middle of the Fifteenth Dynasty the Hyksos rulers managed to extend their political and economic influence southwards as far as Nubia, and northwards as far as the northern reaches of the Eastern Mediterranean. Vast international connections are attested by ornamental articles bearing the name of the great Hyksos King Khyan, which were found in places as far from Egypt as Knossos in Crete, Hattusa the Hittite capital in Anatolia, or Babylon.⁴⁰

G. URBANIZATION AND FORTIFICATIONS IN CANAAN

As has been noted, so far only meager and fragmentary information has come to light from Egyptian sources concerning historical and cultural development in the Second Intermediate Period. On the other hand, archeological excavations in Palestine have yielded a wealth of evidence dealing with every aspect of life in the Hyksos period. It first of all demonstrates the large scale development in the building of towns and fortresses, from the first half of the 18th century onwards. Settlements fortified with ramparts made of beaten earth or sandwiched layers of crushed and pressed stone and brick topped by a brick wall, sometimes surrounded by a moat, were discovered all over the country. However the greatest concentration was found on the coast and the coastal plain — as far south as settlement extended. Fortifications of this type were erected in already existing places of settlement, and in new ones too. It transpires that in this period the process of urbanization had reached its zenith. The great progress in defensive technique resulted also in a modification of the city gate structure throughout the western Fertile Crescent. The

angular narrow entrance protected by a tower which was typical of the preceding period was replaced by the composite gatehouse with a straight entrance, wide enough for a chariot to pass, and to which were attached three artistically executed passages which could be barred by wooden doors; occasionally the gate was fortified by towers.⁴¹ It stands to reason that by then horses and chariots already played an important role in the armies and were kept inside the fortified towns.

Alongside the innovations in fortification technique, there was considerable development in the building of houses for rulers and nobles, in the equipment of their graves, which were rich in funerary objects, and in the manufacture of improved pottery and artistic work. All this points to a high cultural level and to reciprocal contact with the Eastern Mediterranean countries. However, the imports from Egypt were particularly numerous. They included thousands of scarabs, ornaments of gold and other precious metals, vessels and other articles of alabaster. An interesting example of a large city, protected by a mighty glacis and an artificial moat, with palaces and graves rich in locally produced articles and objects imported from Egypt, is Beth Eglaim (Tell al-'Ajjūl) south of Gaza, which was no doubt an important center on the main route to Egypt. The same applies to Sharuhēn (Tell al-Far'ah) on the brook of Besor. This city was an important Hyksos stronghold until the campaign to Canaan of Ah-mose, founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, after the routing of the Hyksos from Tanis. Here too, the huge glacis topped by a brick wall and the broad fosse, indicate an important stronghold on the border of the western Negev, which is the biblical Land of Gerar.⁴²

H. RISE OF INDO-ARIAN POWER IN WESTERN ASIA

In the middle of the 17th century when the Hyksos empire of the Fifteenth Dynasty had reached its zenith, the West Semitic empires in Western Asia were still prosperous, particularly the "great" kingdom of Aleppo (Yamhad) in northern Syria and the Babylonian empire, which continued to be ruled by Hammurabi's descendants. At this time their political position, however, began to weaken and the pressure of the non-Semitic peoples on the countries of the Fertile Crescent continued to grow. There was a particularly sharp increase in the pressure of the Hurrians, who, as early as the Mari period, constituted an important ethnic element in northern Mesopotamia and who moved as far as the regions of the Middle Euphrates and the area north of the kingdom of Aleppo. The same applies to Kassite pressure which threatened the Babylonian empire from

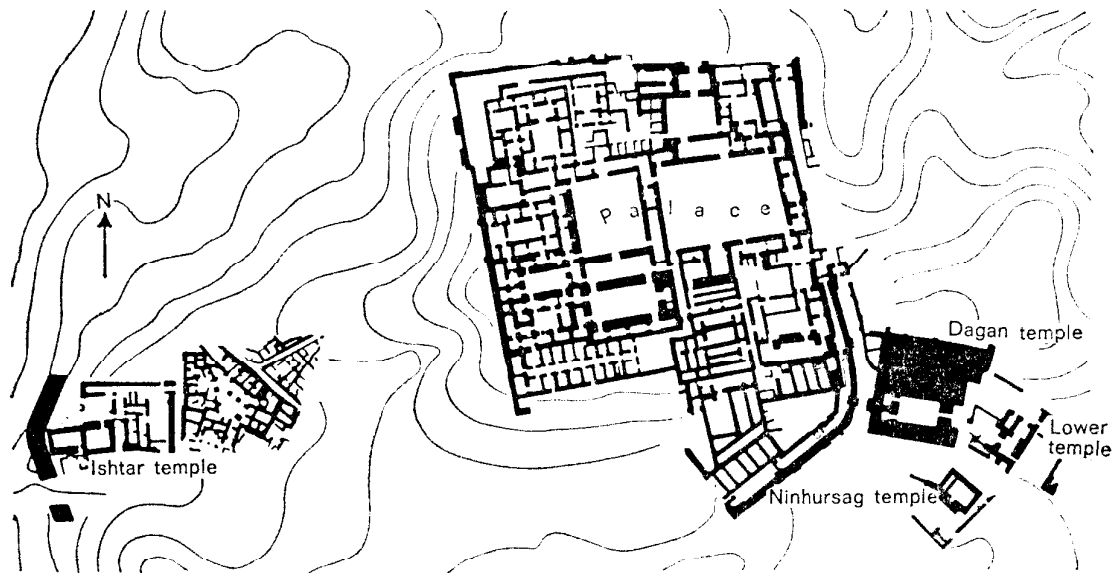


Fig. 29.
Mari, plan of excavated palace and temples.
Encyclopaedia Biblica IV, figs. 561-562.
Drawing by Carta, Jerusalem.

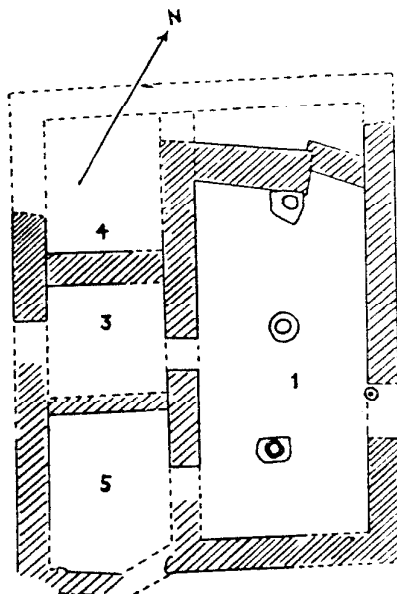


Fig. 30.
Tell Beit Mirsim, plan of a
commoner's house, in the Mid-
dle Bronze II Period.
Prof. W. F. Albright, Chicago.

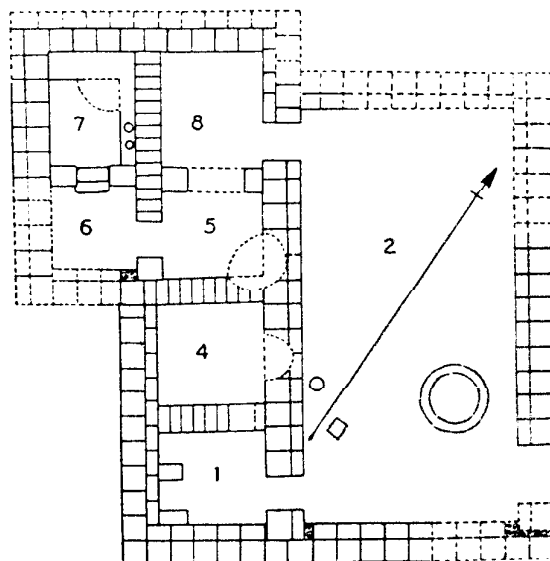


Fig. 31.
Tell Beit Mirsim, plan of patrician
house in the Middle Bronze II
Period.
Prof. W. F. Albright, Chicago.

the east and grew continually in the days of Hammurabi's successors.⁴³ An additional important factor was the Hittite empire in Anatolia which had consolidated to such a degree by the middle of the 17th century, that Hattusilis I was able to attack the kingdom of Aleppo and to destroy Alalakh. His successor Mursilis I conquered Aleppo in his great campaign to northern Syria and utterly destroyed the kingdom of Yamhad (ca. 1620).⁴⁴ The collapse of this great West Semitic kingdom brought about changes in the ethnic and political geography of the Near East, a process which ended with the conquest and sacking of Babylon by Mursilis I (ca. 1595). Following the destruction of the capital of the Babylonian empire and the end of Hammurabi's dynasty, the Kassites gained control of the entire land of Babylon and founded their empire which endured for a long time. At that time the Indo-Iranian invaders' pressure on northern Mesopotamia had reached its peak; they controlled vast areas of predominantly Hurrian population. These invaders, who appear to be none other than the Ummān-Manda of the Akkadian sources, are first mentioned at the time of Ammizaduqa King of Babylon (middle of the 17th century). It would seem that they were the cause of the mass immigration of Hurrians including Indo-Iranian elements to Syria and Canaan — there existing at that time no power in the political arena to stem the tide. It transpires that the weakening and reduction of the Hyksos empire in Egypt upon the decline of the Fifteenth Dynasty, which was under heavy pressure from the national rulers in Thebes, were the direct result of events in Syria and Canaan. Moreover, already in the second third of the 16th century an Indo-Iranian-Hurrian empire, the kingdom of Mitanni, was established in northern Mesopotamia. This empire was to play an important part in subsequent historical developments and to become a political factor in the western part of the Fertile Crescent also.

As a result of these changes Syria and Canaan became an area of settlement for peoples differing in origin, language and cultural traditions. The Hurrians and the Indo-Iranian element which had joined then, with the addition of emigrants from Anatolia, began to outweigh the autochthonous West Semitic inhabitants in most provinces of Syria and Canaan which had a settled population. From this stratum of invaders, who in the course of time intermingled with the country's earlier inhabitants, grew a ruling class with fortified towns, chariots and troops at its command, and a wealth of property and slaves at its disposal. It was the military aristocracy, called Maryannu in the Indo-Iranian sources, which at this time set its mark on the political-military regime and ruled for many generations the subjugated population with its many ethnic and social

divisions, in spite of the political changes which took place in the course of the 16th and 15th centuries B.C.E.

The important events which occurred in the last third of the 17th century B.C.E. left their mark on the cultural life also, and their traces are clearly visible at the various sites that have been excavated in Canaan. The rampart type of fortification, predominant in the preceding period, now disappears (the new period constituting the third phase of Middle Bronze II). The excavations at Shechem, Beth-el, Lachish, and Tell Beit Mirsim revealed strong fortifications from this period. Of particular interest is the massive, battered wall at Shechem. It was erected on an earth-work rampart and was built of large blocks of unhewn stones set in straight courses. The so-called "cyclopic" masonry which characterises this wall, was no doubt introduced by the foreign invaders.⁴⁵ The same applies to the fortified sanctuary discovered in Shechem, which was built at the same time. It is a compact building with very thick walls. It consists of only one hall with the fortified gate facing the courtyard, and which was protected by two towers. A similar sanctuary was discovered at Megiddo, and there too the first phases of its building can be traced back to the end of the 17th or the beginning of the 16th centuries B.C.E. These two buildings underwent a series of repairs until finally destroyed in the 12th century. It is not inconceivable that the structure in Shechem is the House of Baal-berith (Jud. 9).⁴⁶ The sanctuary discovered in the lower town of Hazor also resembles these buildings.

The cultural level as represented by craftsmanship and manufacture would seem to have declined when compared with the preceding period, as a result of the political upheavals of that time and the many changes that took place in the life of the population. It was only when the turmoil of the nations died down that Canaan entered a new phase of cultural development. This is the Late Bronze Period, which began in the middle of the 15th century B.C.E. This new development came in the wake of the decline of the Sixteenth Dynasty Hyksos empire. Around 1565 Ahmose, the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty from Thebes, vanquished the foreign rulers in the Delta region and conquered Tanis-Avaris their capital; he even undertook a military campaign to southern Canaan and conquered the stronghold of Sharuhen. Egypt entered a new phase of her history – the period of the New Kingdom – and became a decisive political factor in the western Fertile Crescent. This same era witnessed the rise to greatness of the Mitannian empire, whose influence extended in the east beyond Assyria, and in the west over Syria as a result of collision and competition with Egypt.