

# Volume 2

## Chapter 5

### Geshur:

#### LBA-Iron Age Egyptian and Assyrian Written Sources

##### 5.1 Egyptian Written Sources

Egypt's historical sources aid in understanding the history of the Levant during the Late Bronze and Iron Age periods due to its interest in Canaan at this time. There are a few written sources from pharaonic Egypt that illuminate the relationship between Egypt and the Levant. The combination of documentary and epigraphical research synthesized with the archaeological record is especially insightful. While minimal, there are Egyptian textual records that may aid in understanding the relationship, if one, between Egypt and Geshur. Concerning our knowledge of the interactions of Egypt and Canaan, Redford states that:

Our knowledge of Egyptian relations with Western Asia, when not derived from archaeological excavations of Levantine sites, comes in the main from four major epigraphic sources. They are, in reverse order of importance, 1) incidental references in administrative or private texts (business documents, tax lists, letters, stories, etc.), 2) biographical texts and epithets, 3) royal stelae and the like, 4) toponym lists.<sup>476</sup>

This study follows the approach of K.A. Kitchen as a guide to developing and chronicling the Egyptian presence in the area of Geshur.<sup>477</sup>

##### 5.1.1 Execration Texts

The so-called Execration Texts, three series of texts dating to Egypt's Middle Kingdom, consisted of formal curses of persons or places that were deemed undesirable and outside of Egyptian control. These curses took the form of writing a name either on

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<sup>476</sup>See Redford, D.B. 1982a. "Contact Between Egypt and Jordan in the New Kingdom: Some Comments on Sources." *SHAJ* 1: 115-119, here p. 115.

<sup>477</sup>See Kitchen, K.A. 1992.

a figurine of a prisoner or on a bowl followed by a ritual breaking of the figurine or bowl to execrate the named person or place. Redford states, "These reflect an act of magical annihilation of persons and things inimical to Pharaoh and Egypt."<sup>478</sup> While the practice became wide-spread in all periods and parts of Egypt there exist three series of texts that deal specifically with Western Asia.

From these texts Kitchen outlined three areas mentioned in Transjordan: 1) Shutu, 2) Kushu, and 3) Northern locations.<sup>479</sup> Shutu can be divided into Upper and Lower Shutu, with Upper Shutu located south of the Yarmuk river. In the list of rulers of Shutu appears Ayyabum, whose name, most-likely common, is similar to one Ayyab who ruled in Ashtaroth (EA 256:6,13; 354:2), located in the same area as Shutu. Regarding the rulers in this region Kitchen stated, "These rulers should be compared with 'Amni-inshi (or -nasi), ruler of 'Upper Retenu' in south Syria (north-west Jordan) in the story of Sinuhe, ruling agricultural boundaries with other polities."<sup>480</sup> Mazar claimed that Sinuhe's enclave with his area *I33* or *A-ra-ru* coincided with the *Araru* of EA 256 in *mat Ga-ru*.<sup>481</sup> The Sinuhe story records this region's ideal environment:

He let me choose for myself of his country, of the choicest of that which was with him on his frontier with another country. It was a good land, named *Araru*. Figs were in it, and grapes. It had more wine than water. Plentiful was its honey, abundant in olives. Every (kind of) fruit was on its trees. Barely was there and emmer. There was no limit to any (kind of) cattle.<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>478</sup>Redford 1992: 87.

<sup>479</sup>Kitchen 1992:21.

<sup>480</sup>Ibid.

<sup>481</sup>See Mazar, B. 1954. "Canaan on the Threshold of the Age of the Patriarchs." *EI* III (n.22), as cited in Mazar 1961, and followed by Aharoni 1979: 143. See also Rainey, A.F. 1972. "The World of Sinuhe." *IOS* 2:369-408, esp. 376, n. 38.

<sup>482</sup>As cited in Aharoni 1979: 143; Cf. *COS* 1, 77-82.

The Execration Texts also reflect on the political situation of areas north and east of the Huleh basin. The Brussels series, which Redford identifies as “itinerary lists”<sup>483</sup>, contains the toponym *M’ky* (E 37, 62) which may be the Maacah often joined with Geshur (Josh 12:5, 13:13).<sup>484</sup> E 25 is the toponym Ashtaroth ruled by Ya[...]il on the north-south Transjordanian travel route (Cf. EA 256: 6, 13; 354: 2). To the east was Busruna, likely Bostra in modern Jordan, ruled by Yamru (E 27, cf. EA 197, 199) and Sur ruled by Yansim/b-Hadad (E 19). To the south of these locations is *Rmt* (Brussels F3), perhaps Tell er-Rumeith, east of modern Irbid. Then in the Jordan valley the ruler of Pahil, Pella (E 8, cf. EA 256), ‘Apiru-‘anu, was named.<sup>485</sup>

From these Execration Texts and the story of Sinuhe it seems that at the beginning of the second millennium B.C. Egypt had an interest in territories from the Huleh valley, with a question about Maacah, southwards to Araru, Busruna, and Ashtaroth, in Transjordan. This region may have been problematic for Egypt and its greater goals, and probably on the periphery of Pharaoh’s direct jurisdiction.<sup>486</sup> Since these areas were on strategic trade routes, it seems Egyptian interest was based on regional control of areas that may have impeded its greater economic prosperity. This is reinforced by New Kingdom literary sources as many of these places appear here, as Redford points out:

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<sup>483</sup>Redford 1992: 92.

<sup>484</sup>The identification of *M’ky* in E 37 and 62 remains problematic, Kitchen 1992 states that it “may rather doubtfully be foreshadowed” in one paragraph, but in his summary states “Maacah is shadowy.” See also Lipinski 2000:335 and Ahituv 1984:132. At the present, since it seems that Egypt had contacts with territories around Lake Huleh and east of the Jordan at this time, there is no reason to reject Maacah as the toponym in E 37 and 62, but a firm conclusion is unattainable.

<sup>485</sup>Kitchen 1992: 21-23; *COS* 1, 50-52.

<sup>486</sup>Redford 1992: 87-93; Routledge 2004: 60-63.

“We are dealing with the same sphere of general interest on Egypt’s part that appears in the New Kingdom, and was fought over and legalized by treaty over a long period of two centuries.”<sup>487</sup> Since Geshur was west of the Transjordanian route, it comes as no surprise that even in a small sample of toponyms it is not named, though, most likely, the region around Geshur was important to Egypt.

## 5.1.2 New Kingdom Egyptian Topographical Lists

### 5.1.2.1 Tuthmosis III

During Tuthmosis III’s reign the genre of “toponym lists” achieved its greatest form.<sup>488</sup> For the modern historian the ancient practice of recording rulers’ military expeditions is useful in reconstructing the historical record.<sup>489</sup> Leaving aside the difficulty in interpreting Tuthmosis III’s toponym list, the following will highlight the relevant grouping of sites in the northern Levant.

The topographical list of Tuthmosis contains 119 names where the pharaoh found opposition in the campaigns of his 22nd/23rd year (1457), which culminated in the siege of Megiddo and areas to the north. Toponyms nos. 3-9 are from the land of Amq between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges. The next identifiable places are nos. 13-14, Damascus and (H)adaru<sup>490</sup>, followed by a list of obscure places (nos. 15-21), then nos. 22-29/30 which are located in the Bashan and around Ashtaroth. Nos. 31-

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<sup>487</sup>Redford 1992: 91.

<sup>488</sup>Redford 1982:a115-119.

<sup>489</sup>On the toponym lists, see Simons, J. 1937. *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists Relating to Western Asia*. Leiden: Brill. Also note Redford’s caution concerning the degree of historical worth scholars can derive from these texts, Redford. D.B. 1982b. “A Bronze Age Itinerary in Transjordan (Nos. 89-101 of Tuthmosis III’s List of Asiatic Toponyms).” *JSSEA* 12/2: 55-74.

<sup>490</sup>Identified as Edre‘i, see *inter alia* Lipinski 2000:64, 366, with discussion.

34 are located in the upper Jordan valley, after which, the toponym list begins to distribute sites in the Galilee, in no apparent order. The randomness of the list is highlighted when one contrasts nos. 55-56, in the Beqa' valley, with nos. 57-59, in the Negev.<sup>491</sup> Kitchen understands all the locations as Egyptian provincial Canaan, from the Negev to Galilee, or to the regions immediately north/north-east of it, i.e. Bashan, Damascus, and the Beqa'.<sup>492</sup> Besides the obscure places there is the problematic identification of the fifteen names, nos. 89-103, for which two main theories about their identification follow: 1) they are sites around the Galilee<sup>493</sup> or 2) they represent a topographical unit that runs from north to south, from Damascus to Kerak through Transjordan.<sup>494</sup> While Aharoni's Galilean identifications were widely held, recently Kitchen noted, "that there is not one 'safe' unambiguous identification in Galilee in this entire group of names."<sup>495</sup> Redford after a careful literary, topographical, and archaeological study has proposed a different reading and states that:

two considerations may well decide the issue. The first is the postulate of formal itineraries, as argued above, as the immediate source of the toponym lists: if this be accepted, specific sections of the lists must show an orderly progression. The second is the correct understanding of the term *'U-ba-r/l*, which occurs three times in the section under discussion (nos. 90, 92, 99). This means quite simply, as the variant in the Onomasticon of Amenemope proves, 'water-course', and refers to a major stream over which one must cross. Now it is significant fact that in most itineraries which have come down to us from antiquity, streams and rivers are given an importance equal to that of cities, and are found interspersed

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<sup>491</sup>While it is possible that the lists do not report an itinerary, but simply names of places the Egyptian forces visited or received submission from, I note the possibility of a "geographical merism" whereby the totality of the campaign is highlighted by the juxtaposition of the most northern and southern parts.

<sup>492</sup>Kitchen 1992: 25.

<sup>493</sup>Aharoni 1979: 162-163.

<sup>494</sup>Redford 1982b; Kitchen 1992:25.

<sup>495</sup>Kitchen 1992: 25.

at the appropriate points among the sequence of town-names ...Once this understanding of 'U-ba-l is accepted, it seems to me that nos. 89-100 cannot help but fall into a Jordanian locale; for the three occurrences of the term correspond to the passage (from north to south) over the Yarmuq, the Zerqa, and the Wady Mujib.<sup>496</sup>

Redford's hypothesis is strengthened by Kitchen's proposal to translate *Tmwnw*, in a Moabite context in a relief of Ramesses II, as *tpn* = Dibon in Transjordan.<sup>497</sup> This identification, combined with Redford's explanation of *U-ba-l*, supports the hypothesis of a Transjordanian route lying behind Nos. 89-101, from southern Syria to the edges of Edom (ca.1450 B.C.).

Furthermore, if Redford is correct, it is evident from the toponym lists that the Egyptian scribes were familiar with areas east of Geshur, and controlling this area was, apparently, a goal of the Egyptian military campaigns in southern Syria and northern Palestine. However, currently there is no direct toponymical identification for Geshur, though the weight of the evidence is that many of the 119 places are in the area around the land of Geshur. Again, as seen with the Execration Texts, it seems that the Egyptians recorded places that were either on the main Transjordanian routes or places that rebelled against them, and Geshur was not named as it did not meet either qualification.

### 5.1.2.2 Lists of Amenophis III

Amenophis III benefitted from the peace treaties of his predecessors and gained control over a powerful Egypt. It was a period of peace and prosperity where ties with Mitanni were strengthened by marriage and taxes and goods poured into Egypt.<sup>498</sup> Thus,

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<sup>496</sup>Redford 1982a: 119.

<sup>497</sup>See Kitchen, K.A. 1964. "Some New Light on the Asiatic Wars of Ramesses II." *JEA* 50: 47-70, here p. 55; *ibid.* 1976. "Two Notes on Ramesside History" *OA* 15: 313 - 14.

<sup>498</sup>See Redford 1992: 169.

Amenophis III was able to embark on several grand building projects, e.g. the temples of Luxor and Soleb. Kitchen underscores that in the four individual lists at the sites of Söleb, Aksha and Amara West one can distinguish six stable groups of geographic names. For this research Kitchen's lists B and F are pertinent here, as list B records Pahil (=Pella) and list F records six "shasu-lands".<sup>499</sup>

Amenophis III's topographic lists reveals that areas to the east of the Sea of Galilee were an interest to him.<sup>500</sup> Na'aman states, "In a topographical list from the days of Amenhotep III published by Edel (1966: 11-13; Helck 1971:260), the following toponyms appear: Tahshi, Yeno 'am, Damaskus, Edrei, Busruna, Qanu, a group belonging entirely to Syria."<sup>501</sup> These areas are in the vicinity of Geshur on the main trade routes. Again, the records of Amenophis III do not directly name Geshur; however, when one compares these records with the other Egyptian records surveyed above, it is evident that Egypt's concern was, indeed, the direct areas that were on the Transjordanian trade route.

### 5.1.3 The Amarna Letters (c. 1336-1327)

#### 5.1.3.1 Introduction

In 1887 an Egyptian peasant woman discovered a large collection of clay tablets written in Babylonian cuneiform at Tell el-Amarna where Akhetaten, the capital of Egypt was located in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty during the reign of Amenophis IV. Some 350 tablets were recovered, many were from the archives of Amenophis IV and his predecessor,

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<sup>499</sup>Kitchen 1992: 25-26.

<sup>500</sup>See Gal, Z. 1988. "The Late Bronze Age in Galilee." *BASOR* 272: 80.

<sup>501</sup>Na'aman, N. 1977. "Yeno'am." *TA* 4: 168-177, here 169. See also Astour, M. 1979. "Yahweh in Egyptian Topographic Lists." Pp. 17-34 in *Festschrift Elmer Edel 12 März 1979*, eds. M. Görg and E. Pusch. Bamberg, as cited in Kitchen 1992: 26.



Amenophis III. Subsequent finds and excavations have brought the total number of tablets to 382. Most of the tablets were written in the *lingua franca* of the day, Akkadian; though two are in Hittite and one each in Hurrian and Assyrian. They are in large-part governmental correspondence, with forty-three tablets between Egypt and other great powers of Western Asia, and the majority, c. 307, letters between Egypt and vassal city-states in Syria and Palestine. Concerning letters from Levantine rulers, Moran notes “that the scribes had a very poor command of Accadian...the result was that they often substituted their native Canaanite for the none too familiar Accadian.”<sup>502</sup>

The following section will study EA 256, and the nature of Garu, which Mazar identified as biblical Geshur.<sup>503</sup> After the study on EA 256, the greater geopolitical world in northern Canaan will be examined with information derived from: EA 194-197; EA 198-200; 201-206; and EA 227-228, 148, 364; to discern if Garu was, indeed, biblical Geshur.

### 5.1.3.2 EA 256

Say to Yanhamu, my lord:  
 Message of Mut-Bahlu, your servant. I fall at the feet of my lord. (4-10)  
 How can it have been said in your presence, “Mut-Bahlu has fled. He has hidden Ayyab”? How can the king of Pihilu flee from the commissioner: *sú-ki-ni* of the king, his lord? (10-19) As the king, my lord lives, as the king my lord lives, I swear Ayyab is not in Pihilu. In fact, he h[as been in the fie]ld for two months. Just ask Ben-Elima. Just ask Tadau. (19-28)  
 Just ask Yišuya whether, after he [ro]bbed Šulum-Marduk, I went to the aid of Aštartu, when all the cities of Garu had become hostile: Uduma, Adura, Araru, Mešta, Magdalu, Heni-anabi, Sarqu. (Hayyuna, along with Yabiluma, has been captured) (29-35) Moreover, seeing that, after you sent me a tablet, I wrote to him, before you arrive from your journey, he will surely have arrived in Pihilu. And I do obey [your] orders.<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>502</sup>Moran, W. 2003. *Amarna Studies: Collected Writings*. (Edited by J. Huehnergard and S. Izre’el), Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, p. 5.

<sup>503</sup>See Mazar 1961: 16-28.

<sup>504</sup>Moran, W. 1992. *The Amarna Letters*. Baltimore: JHUP, p. 309.

Mut-Bahlu (WS:“man of Ba‘lu”; EA 255:3), the ruler<sup>505</sup> of Pihilu, writes to Yanhamu, the Canaanite commissioner in charge of Egyptian affairs,<sup>506</sup> refuting any speculation that he was avoiding Yanhamu and sheltering Ayyab at Pihilu. An unknown source brought charges against Mut-Bahlu, so Mut-Bahlu responded in this letter to Yanhamu, using a rhetorical style to communicate clearly that he was innocent of any charges. Mut-Bahlu denied that Ayyab, the mayor of Ashtaroth (EA 364:2), was being hidden under his control and swore an oath on the life of the king. However, the text indicates that Mut-Bahlu had knowledge of Ayyab’s whereabouts, since Mut-Bahlu stated that Ayyab “[has been in the fie]ld for two months”; then continued to name two witnesses: Ben-Elima and Tadau, who would verify his statement.<sup>507</sup> It appears that this type of communication network, i.e. letter writing, worked well in Canaan, as the letter revealed different events that have happened and were part of the communication channel between Egypt and Canaan, e.g. that Ayyab has “been in the field” for two months and that Mut-Bahlu came to the aid of Ashtaroth after a crisis there. Moran and Na’aman believe that after Ayyab

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<sup>505</sup>There is a problem translating *šarru*. When one local Canaanite ruler addressed another it would seem acceptable to refer to each other as “king.” Yet, the relationship between Egypt and one of the local Canaanite rulers would require a lesser title, and for this reason *šarru* is translated “mayor.” Interestingly, Moran (1996:309, 383) translated *šarru* as king in this text, but in the personal names index Moran refers to him as “mayor.” On a discussion of “king” in the Amarna corpus, see Meier, S. 2000. “Diplomacy and International Marriages.” Pp. 165-173 in Cohen and Westbrook 2000.

<sup>506</sup>Yanhamu is attested in letters: 83, 85, 86, 98, 102, 105, 106, 109, 116, 117, 118, 127, 131, 132, 171, 215, 256, 270, 271, 283, 284, 285, 286, 289, 296, 366. On the role of the *sākinu* see van Soldt, W. 2002. “Studies on the *sākinu*-Official.” *UF* 34: 805-828.

<sup>507</sup>This is the only occurrence of these names in the Amarna texts. Of note is that the names are of different linguistic origins: Ben-Elima is West Semitic and Tadau is Hurrian, as indicated in the *tad* element. Tadau is attested at Alalakh (Level 4), spelled *ta-du-wa* (see Hess, R. 1993. *Amarna Personal Names*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, here pp. 151-52; also Moran 1992: 381, 384).

robbed a Babylonian caravan of Shulum-Marduk, Mut-Bahlu left Pihilu to aid Ashtaroth in the conflict with Ga-ru, a political entity outside of the Egyptian sphere.<sup>508</sup> While not clear, this would force EA 256:20 into a rhetorical statement that would expect a negative response. In other words, Yanhamu is free to ask a third witness, Yishuya, if Mut-Bahlu had any part in robbing/kidnaping of Shulum-Marduk's caravan. The answer to the question would be negative, and Mut-Bahlu's allegiance is shown in that he aided Ashtaroth, a fellow Canaanite neighbor when it was threatened by Garu. However, the text could be read without forcing a rhetorical nature to lines 19-28 simply by affirming that Mut-Bahlu was certain concerning his allegiance to Ashtaroth when Garu attacked it. A "normal reading" of EA 256 indicates that if it were not for Mut-Bahlu's noble actions in supporting a neighbor, also under the Egyptian sphere, that Egypt would have lost more territory than just the two enclaves of Hayyunu and Yabiluma. This point reinforces Mut-Bahlu's commitment to Egypt's interests in the region. Thus, it is not the whereabouts of Ayyab that Mut-Bahlu thinks Egypt should know, but that Garu is capable of seizing land from Egyptian vassals. Mut-Bahlu is showing his allegiance to the overall scope of Egyptian interests – the vassal showed loyalty by protecting the cities under the king's rule. Allowing a third-party that was not part of the Egyptian sphere to take a city (or two) would be a serious offense.<sup>509</sup> Not only was Mut-Bahlu loyal and

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<sup>508</sup>Moran (1992: 310) favors the translation of *gan-ba* (line 20) as kidnaping rather than robbing based on the biblical Hebrew root, *ganab*, cf. EA 8:34ff. Though, the root seems to have its lexical meaning "to steal a person, i.e., to kidnap" (see *DCH* 2: 366-67). See Na'aman 1988b: 181-82.

<sup>509</sup>This is illustrated by Ayyab's letter to the king where he states his fidelity in guarding the cities of the king: "I have heard what the king, my lord, wrote to me through Atahmaya. Truly, I have guarded very carefully [the cities] of the king, my lord. Moreover, note that it is the ruler of Hasura who has taken 3 cities from me. From the time I heard and verified this, there has been waging of war against him. Truly may the king, my lord, take cognizance, and may the king, my lord, give

sought Egypt's best interests, but he continued his "apologetic rhetoric" and stated that he sent Ayyab a message, and confirmed that while he has not hidden Ayyab, that Ayyab would arrive in Pihilu before the commissioner arrived from his journey, and the matter be clarified (EA 256:29-35). Whatever the consequences for the alleged deeds against Ayyab and the professed innocence of Mut-Bahlu, the punishment warranted a full and lengthy denial of any culpability by Mut-Bahlu. Mut-Bahlu went to great extremes to proclaim his innocence and his stalwart fidelity to the Egyptian king. He ended his letter with a commitment to have Ayyab in Pihilu and a vow of obedience to follow all regal orders.

As seen above, EA 256 names, at least, two rulers: Mut-Bahlu of Pihlu and Ayyab of Ashtaroth, and mentions a third territory, Garu, with a list of seven places. The text indicates that there were hostilities between Garu and Ashtaroth: "I went to the aid of Aštartu, when all the cities of Garu had become hostile."<sup>510</sup> EA 256 offers the sole occurrence in the Amarna corpus of a name of a political entity with a detailed list of its "towns":

*i-nu-ma na-ak-ru gab-bi*

When all the towns

*ālāni māt Ga-ri*

of the land of Garu had become

hostile

*āl Ú-du-mu āl A-du-ri*

Udumu, Aduru

*āl A-ra-ru āl Me-iš-tú*

Araru, Mesta

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thought to his servant" (EA 364:10-28).

<sup>510</sup>See Galil, Gershon. 1998. "Ashtaroth in the Amarna Period." *Past Links*. 373-385.

*āl Ma-ag-da-lì āl He-ni-a-na-bi*

Magdalu, Heni-anabi

*āl Za-ar-qí*

Sarqu.

Despite the unique syntactical structure listing seven “towns,” EA 256:20-28 has not been thoroughly studied, nor the relationship between Garu and the geopolitical surroundings, especially related to political entities in northern Canaan. In 1943 Albright stated, “The letter of Mut-Ba’lu (Amarna, No. 256)...has been misunderstood by all previous students. Minutely accurate philological and territorial exegesis, made possible by the great expansion of our knowledge during the past decade, enables us to clear up most of the subsisting difficulties.”<sup>511</sup> Most of Albright’s research addressed identification of the “towns” in EA 256:22-27 with Albright being the first to publish research on these toponyms. Albright depended heavily on philology and literary sources for most of the site locations, and of Garu’s seven cities mentioned, he located two in the Golan: Aduru and ‘En-nab.<sup>512</sup> Albright stated, “The rough identification of the district of Garu with Golan (modern Jolan) or Geshur is proved by the general situation that emerges from our letter, confirmed by identifiable place names.”<sup>513</sup> Yet, Albright identified *Ú-du-mu* as being “certainly Edom”, and nowhere does he try to harmonize this identification with Geshur or Golan. Albright suggested locating ‘En-nab at modern Nab by the spring ‘En Nab situated 10 km north of the confluence of the Raqad and Yarmuk rivers.<sup>514</sup> However, Epstein and Gutman found only Roman-Byzantine pottery there, and

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<sup>511</sup>Albright 1943:9.

<sup>512</sup>Albright 1943:14.

<sup>513</sup>Ibid.

<sup>514</sup>Ibid., p. 14, n. 41.

suggested that 'En-nab, which Aharoni suggested might be *Qrt-'nb* of Seti I's topographical list<sup>515</sup>, was Khirbet 'En Taruk, some 3 km southeast of Nab and has MB-Iron age sherds.<sup>516</sup> Albright proposed that Adura was "probably the modern Dura in northern Jolan."<sup>517</sup> In the end, Albright proposed identifications for three of Garu's "towns", with the other four only being translations of their Hebrew lexemes: Araru, Mešqu, Magdalu, Zarqu. Concerning the two "towns" that Garu had captured, Hayyunu and Yabiluma, Dever stated, "Albright has correctly identified several place-names in the Golan region, among them 'Iyyon ('Ayyanu) and 'Abel (Yabilima). While recognizing that the names are the same as those of the Thutmosis III list, Albright locates this 'Iyyon at modern 'Ayyun, two miles northwest of el-Hammeh on the Yarmuk. He then tentatively identifies 'Abel with Tell Abil, Abila of the Decapolis, 12 miles farther east on the Yarmuk."<sup>518</sup>

In the late 1950's and early 1960's when Israeli biblical scholars were just entering into the toponymical identification of biblical sites, Mazar used Albright's study as his basis for identifying biblical Geshur with Garu in EA 256. Adding to Albright's identification of Garu's "towns" Mazar proposed that Magdala be identified with Migdal-geder at Tell Duweir, at the confluence of the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers.<sup>519</sup> The Bible was Mazar's primary historical source and he tried to harmonize the orthographic

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<sup>515</sup>Aharoni 1979:166; see also Kitchen 1992: 26.

<sup>516</sup>See Epstein and Gutman 1972: 285, No. 162 and 286, No. 177, respectively; Epstein 1993b: 89.

<sup>517</sup>Aharoni 1943:14, n.37.

<sup>518</sup>See Dever, W. 1986. "'Abel-beth-ma'acah: "Northern Gateway of Ancient Israel." Pp. 207-22 in Geraty, L and Herr, L. (eds.) *The Archaeology of Jordan and Other Studies*. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, here pp. 213-14.

<sup>519</sup>Mazar 1961:19; however, no Bronze Age ceramics have been found (Mazar 1986: 117, n. 15; Glueck 1951: 140f.).

discrepancies between “Garu” and “Geshur” by emending Ga-ru, as an abbreviated form that omits the middle syllabic sign. Mazar stated:

It is true that the name Garu does not occur in any other source and that scholars have, not without reason, been puzzled by its connotation. However, it would seem that the problem can be solved by assuming a scribal error which has resulted in the omission from the word of one cuneiform sign, so that it was written as Ga-ri (genitive) instead of Ga-šu-ri.<sup>520</sup>

Mazar’s theory, with the emendation for Garu, as articulated in his 1961 article became the standard reference article concerning Geshur and the Geshurites.<sup>521</sup>

In 1967-1968 Epstein and Gutman undertook a surface survey of the Golan for the Archaeological Survey of Israel, which yielded multiple LBA-Iron Age sites.<sup>522</sup> This was the first modern archaeological research conducted in the Golan on a large scale. Based on this survey and further field-work, Epstein updated and modified Albright’s 1943 study on EA 256. In Epstein’s 1993 article, “The Cities of the Land of Ga-Ru-Geshur Mentioned in EA 256 Reconsidered,” she identified the cities in EA 256 in a limited geographical area on the southern Golan plateau.<sup>523</sup> Epstein’s considerations for identifying: Udumu, Aduru, Araru, Meshqu, Magdalu and Zarqu, were primarily based on her surface surveys, the topography and naturally defensible positions, and the preservation of ancient names in the modern topographical features. Epstein stated, “the settlement distribution pattern points to a predilection for sites on the broad upland plateau stretching between the Sea of Galilee and Nahal Raqqad and on the slopes

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<sup>520</sup>Mazar 1961:20.

<sup>521</sup>See *inter alia* Weidner, E. 1957-71. “Gari.” Pp. 146-47 in *RLA* III.

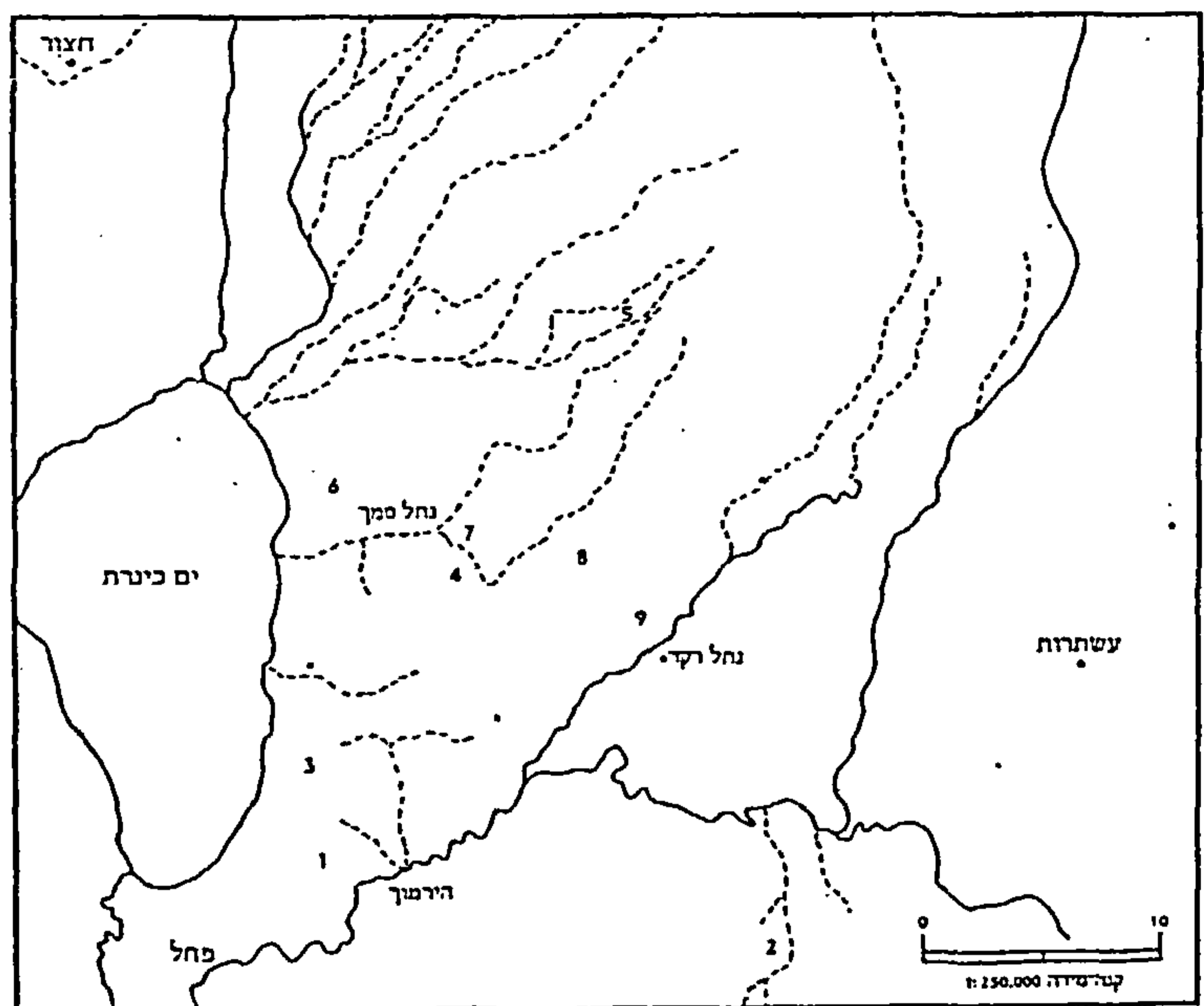
<sup>522</sup>See Epstein and Gutman 1972

<sup>523</sup>See chart 5.1 and map 5.1.

bordering the valleys on Nahal Samakh and its tributaries.”<sup>524</sup> She, also, found evidence for continuous settlement from MB II B to the Iron Age; though, with a 50% decrease of settlements in the LBA.<sup>525</sup>

Moran did not comment about the identification of Garu in his translation of EA 256: 23, but in his geographical index he wrote, “Garu, perhaps KUR *ga-<šū>-ri*, biblical Geshur.”<sup>526</sup> Since KUR *ga-<šū>-ri* does not appear in EA 256: 23 with the middle syllable, it appears that Moran is accepting the hypothesis of Albright, popularized by Mazar. Recently Lipinski has rejected Mazar’s emendation and stated, “...there is no reason why *Ga-ri* in EA 256, 23 should be emended into *Ga-<šū>-ri*...”<sup>527</sup> Lipinski further suggested that EA 256: 22-23 be translated, “when all the cities of the enemy’s land were hostile.”<sup>528</sup>

Map 5.1 Sites of EA 256



1. ‘Ayyun 2. Yabilima 3. Udumu 4. Aduru 5. Araru 6. Meshqu 7. Magdalu 8. Heni-anabi 9. Zarqu

<sup>524</sup>Epstein, C. 1993a. “The Golan.” Pp. 533-34 in Stern 1993; Epstein 1993b: 84, fig. 1.

<sup>525</sup>Epstein 1993a:533-34.

<sup>526</sup>Moran 1992: 389.

<sup>527</sup>Lipinski 2000: 336, n. 85.

<sup>528</sup>Ibid.



Chart 5.1 Site locations of EA 256

Possible locations of the "Cities" of EA 256			
	Albright (1943)	Epstein (1972; 1993)	Others
<i>Ú-du-mu</i>	Edom	'Ein Umm el-Adam (site 105)	
<i>A-du-ri</i>	"threshing floor" Dura (northern Golan)	Tell Abu Mdwawar (site 170)	Dura 3 km s/e of Gesher Benot Ya'aqov (Mazar 1986:116)
<i>A-ra-ru</i>	"juniper bush"	'Ein el Hariri (site 109)	=I33 Mazar (1954/1961) Aharoni (1979)
<i>Me-iš-tú</i>	"well watered terrain"	Mashrafawi/Shuqayyif (site 137)	
<i>Ma-ag-da-li</i>	"tower/fortress"	Bjuriyye (site 135) or el-Qusayyibe (site 130)	Migdal Sibayya or Migdal Geder Tell ed-Duweir (Mazar 1986: 117)
<i>He-ni-a-na-bi</i>	"spring of the grapevine" Tell Nab	Tell Nab (site 162)/ 'En et-Taruq (site 286)	'En et-Taruq (Mazar 1986: 116, n.14) Tell-esh-Shihab (Kitchen 1992: 26)
<i>Za-ar-qí</i>	"to sprinkle"	'ein et-Taruq (site 177)	Tell el-Fukhar (Kamlah 1993)
<i>Ha-ya-ni</i>	"ruin" 'Ayyun 3 km nw of el-Hammeh	el-Hammeh ?	
<i>Ya-bi-li-ma</i>	"streams of water" Abila (?)	Abila	

### 5.1.3.3 EA 256 in its Amarna Corpus Context

While Garu and its cities are only attested in EA 256, there are three other Amarna “text-groups” that may help in understanding the political situation around Garu:

1. EA 194-197, texts from northern Canaan/Damascus.
2. EA 201-206, texts from the near vicinity of Garu that serve as a “call to military offensive” for the city-states to the east of the Sea of Galilee.
3. EA 148, 227-228, 364, texts from the neighboring kingdoms of Hazor, Ashtaroth, and Tyre.

### 5.1.3.4 EA 194-197

EA 194-197 inform the Egyptian king of trouble in northern Canaan, east of the Sea of Galilee:

And who am I? My (only) purpose is to be a servant. Everything belongs to the king. Biridašwa saw this deed and moved Yanuamma to rebellion against me. Having barred the city gate against me, he took chariots from Aštartu but gave *both of them* to the ‘Apiru and did not give *both of them* to the king, my lord. When the king of Busruna and the king of Halunnu saw (this), they waged war with Biridašwa against me, constantly saying , “Come, let’s kill Biryawaza, and we must not let him go to [...]” But I got away from them and stayed in [...] Dimašqa, for [*by myself*h]ow can I serv[e *the king, my lord*]? (EA 197: 5-22)

This letter originates from Biryawaza, the “mayor of Damascus,”<sup>529</sup> who reminded the king of the years of fidelity starting with his father, Shutarna (EA 194:5-11), and even in the remote genealogical history connecting Damascus with Egypt.<sup>530</sup> Hachmann believed

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<sup>529</sup>Though Moran identifies Biryawaza as mayor of Damascus (1992:381), perhaps following, Na’aman 1988b, he is never given this title in the EA Letters, and not everyone agrees that he was mayor, see Pitard 1987: 66-70.

<sup>530</sup>See Hachmann, R. 1970. “Kamid el-Loz” Pp. 63-94 in Edzard, D.O. *et al.* (eds.) *Kamid el-Loz–Kumidi: Schriftdokumente aus Kamid el-Loz*. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt. Damascus was the most influential entity in the northern part of Canaan/southern Syria; besides Damascus there were the smaller kingdoms of Ruhizzi (EA 53; 191) and Lapana (EA 53; 54), also Na’aman, N. 1988b.

EA 194 was written in the beginning of Akhenaten's reign to assure the new king of his fidelity to Egyptian interests in the Damascus sphere.<sup>531</sup> Biryawaza requested aid, i.e., 200 men, from the king because of the new political alliances that formed among some of Egypt's vassals and Hatti:

May a large force of the king come [immediately] against the king of Hatti. The garrison of the king, my lord has left me. I am the servant of the king that has opened the ways for the troops, but the king my lord, should know that all the servants of the king have gone (run off) to Hatti, and all the commissioners of the king [...] Now the king, my lord, has been informed of this affair. No one has ever done such a thing. Moreover, may the king, my lord send me 200 men to guard the cities of the king, my lord, until I see the archers of the king. The king, my lord, must not neglect this deed that Biridašwa has committed, for he has moved the land of the king, my lord, and his cities to rebellion. (EA 196)

The far northern vassals began to align with Hatti except Biryawaza who was concerned about Hatti's power and the changed allegiances in the region.<sup>532</sup> After Ayyab's rule, Biridashwa became mayor of Ashtaroth (EA 196, 197), and is named with two neighboring rulers from Bušruna and Ḥalunna, both unnamed.<sup>533</sup> Biryawaza and Biridashwa (EA 196:41; 197:7, 15, 33) were opponents, and Biryawaza appealed to Egypt for help against Biridashwa. Biridashwa used his resources as mayor of Ashtaroth, and perhaps Yeno'am,<sup>534</sup> to mobilize chariots (EA 197:10-11, 13-19, 33-34) and attack Biryawaza's personal property (EA 196: 26-33, 38-43). Under Biridashwa's rule Ashtaroth was an important kingdom in this region.<sup>535</sup>

The political alliances made between Biridashwa and the rulers of Busruna and

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<sup>531</sup>Hachmann 1970: 66-67.

<sup>532</sup>See Redford 1992: 166-191.

<sup>533</sup>See Moran 1992: 389-90.

<sup>534</sup>See Na'aman 1977: 168, n. 4 who answers the scholarly tradition that states Biridashwa was the mayor of Yeno'am.

<sup>535</sup>See Na'aman 1988b: 181.

Halunna were strong enough to force Biryawaza from his business in A[*dura*<sup>536</sup> to seek protection in Damascus. In EA 53 Akizzi of Qatna reported to Pharaoh that Aitugama, mayor of Qidshu/Qadesh, plundered the house of Biryawaza, so it seems that Biryawaza was in the middle of a few military skirmishes during his rule, from his north and south. Na'aman noted that in an area as large as Upi (which may have included areas east of the Anti-Lebanon from northern Canaan to the Yarmuk river) that it was possible to have more than one palace, and that Biryawaza could have ruled an area that stretched from the region around the Yarmuk river to northern Canaan.<sup>537</sup>

Biryawaza appealed to the king that his, therefore both of their, kingdom was disintegrating. Biryawaza made an urgent appeal for help and listed how Biridashwa was taking over piece by piece some of the Egyptian vassals in the north. This plea for help, lest further territory be lost, was reinforced when Biryawaza reminded the king that he had already lost Kissa to Aitugama (EA 197, Itatkama) of Qidshu, and now the same could happen in northern Canaan, i.e. the king could lose Upi to Arsawuya and Biridashwa if intervention was not taken. Biryawaza portrayed his loyalty in the best possible manner, and made it clear that his sole intent was to protect the king's interest. While he waited for the king to act, by sending troops, Biryawaza guarded Kumidu for the king (EA 197).

#### 5.1.3.5 EA 198-200

EA 198-200 highlight problems in Egypt's northern vassal territories. In EA

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<sup>536</sup>See Moran 1992:275. The upper part of this tablet is broken, Na'aman reconstructs the place name based on the vicinity of Edrei with Yeno'am, which is problematic as well (Na'aman 1988b:183).

<sup>537</sup>Na'aman 1988b: 180ff; however, he omitted to integrate EA 256 into the geo-political context of this region.

198:10-17 Arašša, Kumidu's ruler, affirmed his allegiance to the king in a typical "formula of allegiance":

- I am indeed your loyal servant. May the king, my lord, inquire of all of his commissioners whether I am a loyal servant of the king, my lord. May the king, my lord, inquire of Hamašša, whether I am a loyal servant of the king, my lord.

The context of this statement was precipitated by the changing dynamics in the north where some of the vassals had already switched their loyalty to Hatti. Arašša may have had knowledge of Biryawaza's letters (EA 194-197) that he sent to Egypt, and therefore, wanted to assure the king that he was not part of the new alliance.

An ongoing problem in the northern region was the attacking of caravans that brought tribute to Egypt (EA 7). EA 199 (unknown source) stated, "I heard the consent of the king, my lord. I made very careful preparations, and I escorted all the king's caravans as far as Bušruna." As previously discussed, Bušruna was one of the former vassals that had formed an alliance with Ḫalunnu and Ashtaroth (EA 197), and a series of hostile actions developed in the area, so perhaps, that was the reason why this (unidentified) king would only escort the caravan to Busruna. EA 200 mentions the Ahlameans (a nomadic band of people, perhaps similar to the 'Apiru, in the Middle Euphrates region and northern Mesopotamia<sup>538</sup>) twice, and, while not certain, it may serve to report their movements in the north: "Here is what we hear...The Ahlamean(s?)...the king of Karaduniaš...the Ahlamean(s?)..." Na'aman suggested that the Babylonian caravans were being harassed by the Ahlameans.<sup>539</sup> EA 200 at the least reports that the

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<sup>538</sup>Moran 1992: 392; Millard noted that "the name Ahlamu, coupled with Aram in its earliest occurrence in cuneiform, was applied to visitors or immigrants into Babylonia as early as the seventeenth century and may have been borne by a related or parent tribe" (2000: 28; 1992a: 347-48).

<sup>539</sup>Na'aman 1988b:181, n. 14, cf. EA 16.

Ahlameans were present in northern Canaan, and, perhaps, there was either unrest or unrest was a concern. The text seems too fragmentary to understand the role of the king of Karaduniash, but in EA 7: 73-82 a king of Babylon complained that Biriawaza robbed his caravan going to Egypt.

EA 199-200, though brief, reveal a situation in northern Canaan that was a concern for the local authority (unnamed). A situation where caravans were being escorted, and escorted only so far, and the presence of Ahlameans may have been a threat. What is discernable from these letter fragments is that they were written to communicate these concerns to Egypt.

#### **5.1.3.6 EA 201-206**

EA 201-206 form a “block” of texts geographically grouped in the area east of the Sea of Galilee. They served as a “call to arms” in preparation to defend Egyptian interests in the region. In formulaic patterns with the typical “vow of allegiance” the vassals swore voluntary participation on behalf of Egyptian interests: “I am herewith, along with my troops and my chariots, at the disposition of the archers wherever the king, my lord, orders (me to go)” (EA 201:17-24). Not all the texts mention the name of the king, and some that do mention the king’s name do not mention the name of his kingdom. EA 201 and 203 give the ruler’s name and his governing city, yet EA 202 only gives the ruler’s name and not his city. The next three letters, EA 204-206, do not mention the ruler’s name, but give the names of their cities. It seems that all the places were located east of the Sea of Galilee, or further to the north toward Damascus. EA 204 and 206 where no names are given, which may indicate that the scribe was not as familiar with the region, have locales south of Damascus. Perhaps one could conclude that the further north one traveled toward Damascus, the greater the risk, and hence, the scribe

did not know the names of the rulers in EA 204-206.

EA 201 is from Artamanya<sup>540</sup> the ruler of Širibašani, presumably in the Bashan. EA 202 is from Amawaše and his dominion is not named though Moran listed him as possibly a mayor in the Bashan.<sup>541</sup> EA 203 names the ruler as ‘Abdi-Milki of Shashimi, located east of the Sea of Galilee. EA 204 gives no ruler, but the domain is Qanu (=biblical Kennath), most likely south of Damascus. EA 205 gives no ruler, but the domain is Ṭubu (=biblical Tob?) which is east of the Sea of Galilee. Finally, EA 206 gives no ruler, but is from Naziba which Moran located south of Damascus in the vicinity of Qanu.<sup>542</sup>

Chart 5.2 Territories and Rulers of EA 201-206 (based from Moran 1992)

Territories and Rulers of EA 201-206			
EA	Ruler	Territory	Location
201	Artamanya	Širibašani	E. of Sea of Galilee
202	Amawaše	-----	Bashan (?)
203	‘Abdi-Milki	Šashimi	E. of Sea of Galilee
204	-----	Qanu	S. of Damascus
205	-----	Ṭubu	E. of Sea of Galilee
206	-----	Naziba	S. of Damascus

From EA 201-206 and EA 194-197 one can deduce that Egyptian hegemony east of the Sea of Galilee was being challenged. Concerning this Bienkowski stated:

Most of the letters, however, contain routine and standardized responses

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<sup>540</sup>See Hess 1993: 37-38 who stated that the name is Indo-Aryan while Moran 1992: 380 labeled it “language unknown.”

<sup>541</sup>Moran 1992:380.

<sup>542</sup>Ibid., p.391.

and expressions of loyalty. They rather indicate that the Egyptian presence in Palestine was stable, and that the situation was normal (Several 1972, 132; Liverani 1979, 6-7). It is the Nineteenth Dynasty pharaohs who had problems with the rebellions in Palestine. The Egyptian presence was apparently increased in the thirteenth century B.C., probably to crack down on more frequent unrest.<sup>543</sup>

Of note is the clustering of the title, "king," for the rulers in northern Canaan. It was unusual for a vassal to address himself as king to the Egyptian ruler, the idea of "kingship" varied widely in the ANE. Meier stated, "Kingship in second-millennium Egypt was a far different phenomenon than kingship in Hatti, which differed in turn from kingship in Mesopotamia...the king of Egypt himself was a god, "an epiphany," in contrast to the Hittite king, who became a god when he died."<sup>544</sup> Yet, the Canaanite rulers referred to themselves and their neighbors as "kings."<sup>545</sup> The only occurrence of a vassal referring to himself as king to Egypt was the ruler of Hazor (EA 227:3). In EA 256:8 Mut-Bahlu referred to himself as a king to the Egyptian commissioner Yanhamu. In EA 197:13-14, for all Biryawaza's attempts to appease the king of Egypt he referred to the rulers of Buṣruna and Ḫalunni, in the region of Bashan, as kings. In like manner, in EA 147: 67 and 148: 40-41 Abimilki of Tyre referred to the rulers of Sidon and Hazor as kings. Finally in EA 364: 18 Ayyab of Ashtaroth referred to the king of Hazor. In sum, it seems, only vassals in the northern part of Canaan were extended the title "king."<sup>546</sup>

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<sup>543</sup>Bienkowski, P. 1987. "The Role of Hazor in the Late Bronze Age." *PEQ* 119: 50-61, cf. Weinstein, J.M. 1981. "The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: A Reassessment." *BASOR* 241: 1-28; Several, M.W. 1972. "Reconsidering the Egyptian Empire in Palestine during the Amarna Period." *PEQ* 104: 123-133; Liverani, M. 1979. *Three Amarna Essays*. Malibu: Undena Publications.

<sup>544</sup>Meier 2000: 166.

<sup>545</sup>Na'aman 1988b: 182-83.

<sup>546</sup>Bienkowski 1987: 55.



### 5.1.3.7 Hazor Texts: EA 227, 228, 148 and 364

In EA 227 and 228 the king of Hazor is attesting his loyalty to Egypt's king by stating that he is protecting the cities of the king, a responsibility of the vassal "mayor" (EA 227: 5-6).<sup>547</sup> While the king of Hazor is referred to as a king both by himself and the other rulers,<sup>548</sup> his intent was to assure his loyalty to Egypt. Hazor by all accounts was an important LBA city with EA 227:5-6 revealing that Hazor's realm and rule was greater than the single geographical entity, as the text mentions the protection of the cities.<sup>549</sup> On Hazor's autonomy, Bienkowski stated, "Hazor could be described as a major Canaanite enclave, nominally under Egyptian rule but relatively free of direct Egyptian control and influence...If Hazor had paid its tribute and supplied provisions regularly and on time, there may have been no need for an actual Egyptian presence, apart from the occasional visit by a special envoy."<sup>550</sup>

EA 148 records the accusation of Abdimilki, ruler of Tyre, that Hazor is joining the 'apiru against Egyptian interests in the north: "The king of Hasura has abandoned his house and has aligned himself with the 'Apiru. May the king be concerned about the

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<sup>547</sup>Moran 1992: 289, see also Na'aman, N. 2000. "The Egyptian-Canaanite Correspondence." Pp. 125-138 in Cohen and Westbrook 2000.

<sup>548</sup>There is no reason to question that even the rulers of smaller Canaanite city-states addressed one another as king, but the hubris in using this title in correspondence to Egypt is clear. Na'aman states, "the title "king" in the letter of Hazor (EA 227: 3) is probably a slip of the local scribe, resulting from the fact that this was the common inner Canaanite title for all city-states rulers"(1988b: 183, n.18).

<sup>549</sup>See Malamat, A. 1960. "Hazor, Head of all those Kingdoms." *JBL* 79: 12ff.; Yadin, Y. 1993a. "Hazor" Pp. 594-606 in Stern 1993; also, Ben-Ami, D. 2001. "The Iron Age I at Tel Hazor in Light of the Renewed Excavations." *IEJ* 51/2: 148-70; Bienkowski 1987. Note that the scribe did not include the names of the cities; while there are many reasons why this could be, it is of interest that the names of the cities of Garu (EA 256) were listed.

<sup>550</sup>Bienkoswki 1987: 59.

palace attendants. These are treacherous fellows. He has taken over the land of the king for the 'Apiru. May the king ask his commissioner, who is familiar with Canaan" (EA 148: 41-47). A difficulty in understanding Abdimilki's accusation is to discern what Tyre had to gain from making a statement against the loyalty of Hazor. Perhaps, Abdimilki was threatened by the developments in Hazor, and sought Egyptian help if/when Hazor extended its control towards the west.

EA 364 may show that Hazor was less than loyal to Egypt. Here, Ayyab, the mayor of Ashtaroth, was responding to some unknown accusations brought against him through Atahmaya, an Egyptian commissioner: "Moreover, note that it is the ruler of Hasura who has taken 3 cities from me. From the time I heard and verified this, there has been waging of war against him. Truly, may the king, my lord, take cognizance, and may the king, my lord, give thought to his servant" (EA 364:17-28). Ayyab was defending his actions and swearing allegiance to the king by guarding the cities of his realm for Egypt. Furthermore, Ayyab was quick to deflect blame by claiming he was protecting the king's cities and that Hazor's ruler had taken three cities from him, and that he, Ayyab, was currently waging war against Hazor. Hazor, then, was possibly threatening to expand towards the west (cf. EA 148) and had taken cities to its east, near Ashtaroth.

As noted by Finkelstein, Hazor was one of the larger LBA city-states in Canaan, and he concluded that Hazor's control extended throughout the upper Galilee, bordering 6-8 other city-states.<sup>551</sup> While delineating borders is difficult with ancient textual sources (not to mention the propensity to draw borders in modern ways with clearly defined

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<sup>551</sup>Finkelstein, I. 1996. "The Territorial-Political System of Canaan in the Late Bronze Age." *UF* 28: 221-255, here pp. 239-240.

lines!)<sup>552</sup> the above Amarna texts reveal that Hazor did indeed control an area in northwestern Canaan. Hazor had expansionist tendencies, and there was the possibility that Hazor could have extended its control over the slopes of the Golan to its east in order to have a secure command and control system to protect the main city.

A critical question arises, after one studies EA 227, 228, 148 and 364: What was the relationship between Hazor and Garu? The borders and regions delineated from the Amarna letters reveal that Hazor bordered on Ashtaroth, with Pihilu to Ashtaroth's south. The political situation revealed in the Amarna texts is too "cloudy" to understand fully the relationship between Hazor and Garu. It is clear that Garu was not part of the Egyptian sphere, for whatever reason, so there are no letters from Garu to Egypt,<sup>553</sup> and no information on Hazor in particular; this lacuna does not necessarily mean that one can interpret that Garu belonged to either: 1) Hazor or 2) Ashtaroth, as did Finkelstein when he tried to draw compactly all of Canaan's LBA borders in as few territories as possible.

#### 5.1.3.8 Conclusion

From the above study of the Amarna Letters some tentative conclusions about the nature and sphere of *mat-Garu* can be made. It appears that Garu was a LBA political entity outside of Egypt's political sphere in Canaan. While the territorial size is not directly specified, the fact that some seven to nine "cities" east of the Sea of Galilee were named signifies that it was not a single city-state entity, but perhaps an area with several

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<sup>552</sup>It is difficult to discern the effectiveness of the main city-states to control their peripheries, and it seems that there were areas that were not controlled by any one polity. The idea that LBA "Amarna" Canaan was carefully delineated into a series of neatly divided city-states with shared borders, when the text's themselves do not give boundary descriptions, seems forced on the text and the culture (*contra* Finkelstein 1996: 226).

<sup>553</sup>Naturally, one needs to understand the Amarna corpus is not "closed," i.e., there may be more tablets awaiting discovery.

places, perhaps a kingdom that may have covered an entire region in the central and southern Golan. The LBA political situation in Canaan suggests that Garu was north of Pihilu and perhaps bordered Ashtaroth. Hazor was across the Jordan valley to the west of Garu, and Damascus was north of Garu. From EA 256 one understands that Garu had sufficient power to seize entities in the surrounding area, thus it may have had other expansionist tendencies that worried its neighbors. The conclusions drawn from the EA Letters concerning the geographical location and nature of Garu compared with those drawn from the Bible about Geshur seem to indicate that both names refer to the same place, though this is not certain.

While Mazar's 1961 argument for the omission of the middle cuneiform syllable *-šū-* causing the shortening of Ga-<*šū*>-ru to Ga-ru is possible, it appears that Mazar's main argument for this omission had less to do with a scribal omission and more to do with reading the name, Geshur, into EA 256. Thereby harmonizing the name Garu with Geshur. However, perhaps it is better not to emend Garu, and understand its origin as still yet unknown, than to attempt a correlation with the biblical name of Geshur. By not making this emendation, one could argue that, perhaps, Garu reflects an indigenous language that is only known through a secondary language source. If so, then while the name, Garu, may be of unknown origin, the cities that are named seem to have Semitic roots describing geographic features, e.g., Magdalu, Zarqu, Mešqu. Granted Garu may have a Semitic root origin from גר, גיר, גרר, possibly meaning "to drag" in the qal stem.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>554</sup>As noted by Baer, D.A. 1997. "גרר." *NIDOTTE* 1: 897-98, "In Habakkuk 1:15 the Chaldean is compared to a fisherman who drags his catch of fish out of the sea in a net. The verb is locked in parallelism with bringing up with a hook and gathering in a fishnet." The possible connection to a territory which had its western

Furthermore, while not disagreeing with the idea that within ANE toponymical studies names of villages and towns are transferred from one period to another with consistency, especially when one is staying within the same language family, this may be the case where perhaps the solution is other than the direct preservation of the place name. Researchers who study biblical toponyms have a classifying system for them, and important to this study is the idea that biblical Geshur may have derived its name from its unique geographic/topographic location.<sup>555</sup> This may be a case where the biblical scribe referred to Geshur by its popular name at the time due to its geographic location, i.e. as a territory that served as a bridge to the north. In the end, it is not unusual for people from two different areas to use different names when referring to the same political entity.<sup>556</sup>

Besides EA 256, another group of texts that aid in understanding Garu is EA 194-197. These texts showed the fragile harmony and the possible disintegration of Egypt's control in northern Canaan. The texts reflect certain vassals beginning to break away from Egypt to align with Hatti, which caused Biryawaza to write and warn Egypt of the movements of the king of Ashtaroth and other kings in the region. It seems Garu, while in the same region, had no active part in the Amarna political system. Another block of texts, EA 198-200, indicated that the area around Garu had become unsafe for the

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border on a major body of water known for its abundance of fish is apparent.

<sup>555</sup>See Aharoni 1979: 105-130.

<sup>556</sup>See Deuteronomy 3:9 in a seemingly parenthetical comment the Dtr clarified that Hermon was called by other names: Sirion by Sidonians and Senir by Amorites. Mitanni was also called Hanigalbat, Nahrina, or "the land of the Hurrians" depending on the point of origin, e.g., Assyria or Egypt, and whether the reference was to the polity, the location, or the people (see §3.1). Lastly, Gebal, an ancient Levantine coastal city, attested in the Bible (Joshua 13:5; 1 Kings 5:18, 32) and in the EA Letters (EA 137), as well as other sources, is called Byblos by the Greeks, see Roth, R. 1992. "Gebal." *ABD* 2:922-23.

international caravan routes. Egypt did not want to lose control of these northern vassals that were located around the strategic trade routes, and EA 201-206 served to inform Egypt that these vassals were prepared to defend its interests. EA 201-206 were from vassals east of the Sea of Galilee in the region of Garu, but make no mention of Garu; thus reinforcing the idea that Garu was an independent kingdom outside of Egyptian control – and, most likely, off the main trade routes that connected Damascus and Ashtaroth. There are also Amarna texts that mention Hazor, and reveal that Hazor, like Garu, consisted of many cities and had expansionistic tendencies. Hazor had attacked cities to the east belonging to Ashtaroth. The Amarna texts are clear that Hazor was an Egyptian vassal, but, it seems, it sought to expand its kingdom against other vassals. Hazor's influence, most likely, extended east of the Sea of Galilee, but there is no mention about the relationship between Hazor and Garu.

In sum, as reflected in the Amarna letters, LBA Garu was a an entity that seemingly had a multiple cities, i.e., sites, able to expand its territory, perhaps through military campaigns. Garu was surrounded by Egyptian vassals, but this did not deter it from taking cities from them. Perhaps due to its position off the main travel route in Transjordan, it remained isolated in the greater LBA political world in northern Canaan.

#### **5.1.4 The Egyptian 19th-20th Dynasties (c. 1300-1170)**

##### **5.1.4.1 Seti I**

From Seti I's reign (c.1294/90-1279), three stelae were found in the area of Geshur.<sup>557</sup> Of these, one was found at Beth-Shean, and though broken in several pieces

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<sup>557</sup>See Kitchen, K.A. 1993. *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Notes and Comments I*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers; Brand, Peter J. 2000. *The Monuments of Seti I: Epigraphic, Historical and Art Historical Analysis*. Leiden: Brill, here pp. 123-125.

it is preserved complete and represents quality Egyptian craftsmanship.<sup>558</sup> It probably was erected after the king's army successfully quashed a rebellious movement in that key Egyptian garrison city. Also found at Beth-Shean was a smaller stele commemorating the same recapture of the city during year one of Seti I's campaigns in western Asia, and at the end of the list appear three place names important for this study: *qdr*, *qrt- 'nb* and *hdr*.<sup>559</sup> A third stele was found at Tell esh-Shihab, a strategic location where the main local east-west and north-south roads meet and may have served as a control post.<sup>560</sup> The site is strategically located on a high mound, surrounded almost entirely by the Yarmuk gorge, and fits well the Karnak relief of Seti which shows a river surrounded by trees.

However, Kitchen noted:

Regrettably, only the top half has survived, showing the king before the deities Amun and Mut of Thebes – any historical details have been lost with the now missing lower half that would have contained the main text of the monument. Tell esh-Shihab may have been the Kheni ('Ain?)-anab of EA 256, and Qiryath- 'Anab of Papyrus Anastasi I under Ramesses II.<sup>561</sup>

If Kitchen is correct and *Heni-anabi* and *Qrt- 'nb* were the same and located at Tell esh-Shihab, then this helps secure the location of one of the seven cities of Garu.<sup>562</sup> Adding to this discussion is the toponym Yeno 'am that appears on the reliefs of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, mentioned in the First Beth-Shean stela, and listed five times in the topographical lists of Seti I.<sup>563</sup> Yeno 'am's identification has been problematic.

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<sup>558</sup>*KRI* I, pp. 9-10; *RITANC* I, §§ 27-28, 17-19.

<sup>559</sup>*KRI* I, pp. 12-13; *RITANC* I §§ 32-34, 20-21.

<sup>560</sup>*KRI* I, pp. 14; *RITANC* I §§ 35-37, 21-22.

<sup>561</sup>Kitchen 1992:26.

<sup>562</sup>This was also proposed by Aharoni, though Mazar (1986: 116) saw little probability that this site was located at Tell esh-Shihab, see *COS* 3, 12b.

<sup>563</sup>See Hasel, M. 1998. *Domination and Resistance: Egyptian Military Activity in the Southern Levant, Ca. 1300-1185 B.C.* Leiden: Brill, p. 146.

Na'aman after reviewing the proposals has suggested it was located in the Bashan at Tell esh-Shihab.<sup>564</sup> Albright found Bronze Age sherds there, but no Iron Age sherds that would coincide with the lack of any historical documentation of Yeno 'am in the Iron Age.<sup>565</sup>

Also mentioned in Seti I's topographical list is the sole Transjordanian location: Pahil (Pella) which allied with the nearby rebel leader in Hamath against Beth-Shean. Kitchen also noted the toponym Ashtaroth on a granite sphinx dating to Seti I's reign, or earlier, at the Palace of Diocletian in Split, Croatia.<sup>566</sup>

Based on Egyptian epigraphical evidence, Kitchen stated that a troop division of Seti I went "to Yenoam late in year 1 then to Gadara, and even Tell esh-Shihab. But it is more likely that (if Year 1 is in mind) Sethos I much earlier had sent a force up via Yenoam and Gadara and Tell esh-Shihab, then north, to secure the land of Geshur and his communications up to the land of Upi and Damascus."<sup>567</sup> Without a doubt, Egypt campaigned near Geshur during Seti's reign, but I find the evidence somewhat lacking that would show "Egyptian overlordship in Geshur and Bashan."<sup>568</sup> But, the topographical lists affirm that the Egyptian army did campaign in the region of Geshur, starting in the south and advancing north from Gadara, to *qrt-'nb*<sup>569</sup>, then to Hazor and

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<sup>564</sup>Na'aman 1977:177.

<sup>565</sup>Albright 1925: 16ff., see also Na'aman 1977. While Kitchen does not agree with Na'aman's proposal, he does not discount it totally, see *COS* 2, 26 n. 4.

<sup>566</sup>Kitchen 1992:26.

<sup>567</sup>*RITANC* I § 30, p. 19.

<sup>568</sup>See Kitchen 1992: 26. One possible explanation for Seti I's campaigns in the area would have been to strike an ever expanding Geshur that threatened disrupting the Transjordanian trade route, as seen in the Amarna corpus. Kitchen does allow for Seti's campaign to "secure the land of Geshur" (*ibid.*)

<sup>569</sup>Papyrus Anastasi I, *ANET* 477; *KRI* II: 163: 41; *COS* 3, 12b.



the Huleh Valley. It is clear that Egypt had a strong interest in this region, but since Geshur is not mentioned one wonders if Egypt ventured into Geshur's heartland, off the main Transjordanian trade route? The evidence indicates that this area was still troublesome for Egypt, and it required military action to control the garrison centers. This is reinforced by the evidence in Seti I's topographical lists where the sole Transjordanian location is Pahil (Pella), which is named six times in the topographical lists and in the First Beth-Shean stele of Seti I.<sup>570</sup>

#### 5.1.4.2 Ramesses II

Ramesses II (ca.1279-1213) succeeded Seti I in 1279 B.C. Ramesses was groomed by his father, and trained in military tactics in order to preserve Egyptian interests. Ramesses, like his father, campaigned south of Geshur as Pahil (re)occurs on the topographical lists of Karnak. Furthermore, Kitchen points out, "Another place, *Qmhm*, might be speculatively understood as Qom-Ham, 'height?/settlement? of Ham' (Ham occurring just once in Gen 14:5), unless it were a variant of Qamon (Judg. 10:5), usually located south of the Yarmuk."<sup>571</sup>

In 1994 a stele dating to the fifty-sixth year of Ramesses II's reign was found at Sheikh Said, north of Tell esh-Shihab.<sup>572</sup> While the historical background is not known at this time, Kitchen is clear that "even a relatively modest-sized, heavy basalt stela that was assigned a specific year and season date must have had some *raison d'être* for its being set up in or near Damascus" late in the reign of Ramesses II (c.1223).<sup>573</sup> In

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<sup>570</sup>Hasel 1998: 124.

<sup>571</sup>Kitchen 1992: 26; cf. *RITANC I* §61, pp. 33-34; *KRI II*: 163: 26, 215: 11.

<sup>572</sup>*RITANC II* §§ 207-208; See Kitchen, K. 1999a. "Notes on a Stela of Ramesses II from near Damascus." *Göttinger Miszellen* 173:133-137, n. 3.

<sup>573</sup>See Kitchen 1999: 134 for a couple possible scenarios for its existence.

Ramesses II's twenty-first year peace was made with Hatti ending hostilities between these two great powers, and bringing to an end any possible campaign records.

#### 5.1.4.3 Merneptah

Merneptah's accession (ca.1213-1203) provided continuity with his father's reign and the desire to keep the Egyptian empire together. Merneptah early in his reign "dispatched his army to Canaan to quell all trace of revolt, putting down dissidents at Gezer...Ashqelon...and at Yanoam."<sup>574</sup> In his fifth year Egypt was the object of a failed military thrust from the Libyan tribes to its west and Nubia to its south which Merneptah commemorated with a victory stela, the 'Israel stela.'<sup>575</sup> Leaving aside the debates that surround the stela with regards to "the origins of Israel",<sup>576</sup> Yurco has argued that the depictions on the partially preserved Karnak reliefs should be reassigned to Merneptah, instead of Ramesses II, because of the representation of three city-states, which Yurco concludes were Ashkelon, Gezer, and Yeno'am.<sup>577</sup> Adding to the evidence of the historicity of Merneptah's campaign in Canaan is the Amada inscription that contains as part of the titulary of Merneptah the designation "the conqueror of Gezer." The debate about the nature of "Israel", whether a people or land, has partially focused on the

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<sup>574</sup>Kitchen, K.A. 1995. "Pharaoh Ramesses II and His Times." *CANE* 2: 763-774, here p. 772.

<sup>575</sup>Kitchen, K.A. 1982. *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips Ltd, esp. pp. 215-216.

<sup>576</sup>For an introduction and sources, see Hasel, M. 1994. "Israel in the Merneptah Stela." *BASOR* 296: 45-61.

<sup>577</sup>Yurco, F.J. 1986. "Merneptah's Canaanite Campaign." *JARCE* 23: 189-215; for a discussion with sources see Kitchen 2003: p.551, n. 162. Also, Kitchen 1982: 215, 220; *KRI* II, 165:4; Hasel 1994: 45-61; Stager, L. 1985. "Merneptah, Israel and Sea Peoples: New Light on an Old Relief." *EI* 18: 56-64; cf., Redford, D. 1986. "The Ashkelon Relief at Karnak and the Israel Stele." *IEJ* 36: 188-200.

literary structure of the inscription.<sup>578</sup> Åhlström and Edelman have proposed a concentric ring-structure of the inscription:

- A The (foreign) chieftains lie in prostrate, saying “Peace.” Not one lifts up his head among the Nine Bows.
- B Libya is captured, while Hatti is pacified.
- C Canaan is plundered,
- D Ashkelon is carried off,
- D1 and Gezer is captured.
- D2 Yenoam is made into non-existence;
- C’ Israel is wasted, its seed is not;
- B’ and Hurru is become a widow because of Egypt.
- A’ All lands united themselves in peace. Those who went about are subdued by the king of Upper and Lower Egypt...Merneptah.<sup>579</sup>

If Na’aman’s identification of Yenoam at Tell esh-Shihab is correct then the ‘Israel stele’ would indicate that Merneptah campaigned near Geshur.<sup>580</sup> Also, there is the possibility that Merneptah campaigned north of Geshur. In the ‘Border Journal’ of Merneptah Egyptian emissaries reached northern locations of Tyre and Aram. Singer notes:

The picture which emerges from the evidence concerning Merneptah’s reign is one of energetic attempts to tighten the Egyptian hold on different parts of Palestine, and perhaps even further north, following the apparent weakening of control at the end of the reign of Ramesses II. According to the ‘Border Journal’, Egyptian emissaries reached as far as Tyre and Aram. If the assumption is correct, that the ‘city of Merneptah in P3-Aram’ is Damascus/Upi, then, it follows that during the period under discussion, this city also became an Egyptian seat of government. At a different place in the Papyrus Anastasi III, mention is made of an Egyptian governor who bears the title ‘King’s envoy [to the rulers of] the

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<sup>578</sup>See Åhlström, G.W. and Edelman, D. 1985. “Merneptah’s Israel.” *JNES* 44: 59-61; for a discussion and recent evaluation see Hoffmeier, J.K. 1997. *Israel in Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, here pp. 27-31; Hasel 1994.

<sup>579</sup>Translation, Hoffmeier, J.K. in *COS* 2, 2.6, p. 41.

<sup>580</sup>The identification of Yenoam remains problematic, see Na’aman 1977; Hasel 1998: 146-150; Kitchen, *RITA* 1: 18; Ahituv 1984: 206-08.

foreign lands of Huru from Sile to Upi.’<sup>581</sup>

In conclusion, during the reigns of Ramesses II and Merneptah it seems that Egypt campaigned in the area of Geshur, but there is no mention of Geshur. While there are several possibilities why Geshur was not mentioned, of course all hypothetical, the most basic conclusion is that Geshur was located off the main Transjordanian trade route and was not a threat to Egyptian interests.

#### 5.1.4.4 Ramesses III (c. 1184-1153)

For about two decades following Merneptah’s reign, Egypt struggled with internal issues, and left no epigraphic information about its external affairs in western Asia.<sup>582</sup>

Under Ramesses III, Egypt strengthened and embarked on a period of unprecedented increase in the wealth and power of the royal temples and priestly apparatus. Also during this period Ramesses III in his eighth year came in conflict with the Sea Peoples.

Concerning Egypt’s battle with the Sea Peoples and its aftermath, Singer writes:

According to descriptions in the reliefs and in the texts, the Egyptian victory was overwhelming. However it turned out to be a ‘Pyrrhic victory’: the Egyptians were subsequently forced to settle many Sea Peoples in Canaan, a solution they found to be the least disadvantageous under the circumstances...By settling Philistines in fortresses along the seacoast, the Egyptians hoped to mobilize these superior fighters to block further assault by subsequent waves of invasion from the sea or by tribes from the hills and the desert fringe.<sup>583</sup>

Also at this time the Egyptians were strengthening their base in southern Canaan, i.e. Gaza, and reinforcing their control points in the northern valleys. At Beth-Shean

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<sup>581</sup>Singer, I. 1994. “Egyptians, Canaanites, and Philistines in the Period of the Emergence of Israel.” Pp. 282-338 in Finkelstein and Na’aman 1994.

<sup>582</sup>Though some artifacts have been found that may indicate some contact between Egypt and Canaan, e.g., at Tell Deir ‘Alla a faience vessel bearing the name of Taosert (1193-1185), see Franken, H.J. 1992a. “Deir ‘Alla, Tell.” *OEANE* 1: 137-38.

<sup>583</sup>Singer 1994:291.

(stratum VI), a new temple, a so-called 'Governor's Residence', and other administrative buildings were excavated.<sup>584</sup> At Megiddo (VIIa) was found an Egyptian administrative center identified by the ceramics and in a subterranean wing was found almost three hundred pieces of carved ivories, the latest work in this collection dating to the time of Ramesses III.<sup>585</sup>

Concerning the topographical lists that exist from Ramesses III's reign, Kitchen stated that virtually all of them are re-editions of previous pharaoh's lists, notably of Ramesses II who may have borrowed parts of his campaign records from Tuthmosis III (2002: 112, n.3). Naturally this creates a problem whether these texts can be used as evidence for campaigns in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Ramesses III.

#### 5.1.5 The Third Intermediate Period (1069-747)

Concerning Egypt's Third Intermediate Period, Kitchen stated, "After 1000 BC all Egyptian evidence for relations abroad is limited and fleeting. The centres of political power were almost entirely in Memphis and the Delta, where monuments are mainly fragmentary, and most written records on papyrus have long since perished. The monumental tradition of celebrating success abroad has itself now become attenuated."<sup>586</sup>

At the end of the tenth century and in the first quarter of the ninth century there

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<sup>584</sup>See Mazar, A. 1993. "Beth-Shean." Pp. 217-218 in Stern 1993.

<sup>585</sup>A. Mazar 1990:269-71, and references. See also, Yadin, Y. 1993b. "Megiddo/The Iron Age." Pp. 1012-1013 in Stern 1993; Finkelstein, I, Ussishkin, D., and Halpern, B. (eds.) 2000. *Megiddo III: The 1992-1996 Seasons*. Tel Aviv; Mazar, A. 2002. "Megiddo in the Thirteenth-Eleventh Centuries BCE: A Review of Some Recent Studies." Pp. 264-282 in Oren, E. and S. Ahituv (eds.) *Aharon Keminski Memorial Volume: Studies in Archaeology and Related Disciplines*. Beer-sheva. While I am very aware of the on-going chronological debate surrounding the excavations at Beth-shean and Megiddo, regardless of the outcome, for this paper, my point is that there was an Egyptian presence in the area of Geshur.

<sup>586</sup>Kitchen 1992: 29.

is evidence of an Egyptian attempt to regain part of its empire. Early in Shoshenq I's reign, founder of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, he campaigned across the Sinai into Palestine.<sup>587</sup> On the portal of the Amun temple in Karnak there is a set of reliefs that celebrate Shoshenq's campaign to Palestine, which the Bible places in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign (ca. 925 BC; cf. 1 Kgs 14: 25-26, 2 Chron 12:2-12). These reliefs are the only Egyptian epigraphic evidence to help one understand the geopolitical world of Transjordan at this time. Before Shoshenq campaigned in the southern Levant he "made recurrent attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of the Israelite kingdom: he supported Jeroboam's attempt to rebel against Solomon (1 Kgs 11:40), stirred up political unrest in Edom, and extended his power over Philistia."<sup>588</sup> Shoshenq's topographical list contains 154/5 towns where the Egyptians campaigned, and it is clear that Shoshenq campaigned in the upper Jordan valley, east of the Jordan river. Kitchen highlights that the:

names in rows II and V of the great list show the Egyptian forces briefly penetrating land east of the Jordan. In II, we have 19-22, 3*drm*, (LOST), *swd*, and Mahanaim. The first three names remain unidentified; Mahanaim is nowadays usually located at Tell edh-Dhahab el-Gharbi. In V, we have names 53-56, Penuel, a Hadashat ('New town'), then probably Succoth, and Adam(ah). So, we catch just a brief glimpse of settlements in the Wadi Zerqa (ancient Jabbok) and environs, c. 925 BC.<sup>589</sup>

It seems that the above part of the campaign was concentrated in the central Jordan valley and to the west, and did not venture to areas north of the Yarmuk river, and as Mazar notes, "the rich areas of the Kingdom of Israel seem to have been the main

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<sup>587</sup>See Kitchen, K. 1996. *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt* (1100-650 BC). Warminster: Aris and Phililips, esp. 293-302 (with route map, fig. 2), 432-47 (with diagram of lists and segments map, figs. 8-9). For a survey see Kitchen 2003:32-34 and literature cited therein.

<sup>588</sup>Mazar 1986:139.

<sup>589</sup>Kitchen 1992:29.

objective of the expedition.”<sup>590</sup> This would appear to harmonize with the biblical narratives where Geshur is not mentioned during Shoshenq’s reign.

#### 5.1.6 Conclusion: Egyptian Sources

The Egyptian written sources offer minimal help in understanding Geshur in the LB-Iron Age. In the early second millennium, Egypt may have had contact with Maacah, to Geshur’s north, and other areas of the Bashan, though probably only on main trade routes. There is the possibility that Egypt had some control in (or in the vicinity of) Geshur when Sinuhe was given the land of *I33*. Later, Thutmosis III campaigned to the east and west of Geshur, but there is no mention of Geshur among the identified sites on his itineraries. The same can be stated for Amenophis III’s reign. Certainly during the LBA, Egypt had an active presence in northern Canaan, but Geshur/Garu remained outside of any known Egyptian interest. In fact, EA 256 clarifies that not only was Garu independent from Egypt, but Egyptian vassals considered Garu a threat to Egyptian interests. Late in the second millennium under the reigns of Seti I and Ramesses II, one can conclude that Egyptian campaigns were conducted near Geshur. However, it seems that Egypt’s foreign policy aim for Canaan was to control the two main land routes that joined Egypt and Asia, and not complete land domination, thus Geshur would have remained outside of the purposes of Egyptian foreign policy, which continued into the reigns of Merneptah and Ramesses III. After Ramesses III’s reign, the ANE went through upheavals which included Egypt retreating from Canaan for some two hundred years. At the beginning of the tenth century evidence for Egypt conducting expansionistic campaigns is limited. Shoshenq I is the last Egyptian ruler who contributes to our

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<sup>590</sup>Mazar 1986:147.

knowledge of Palestine. Shoshenq I's topographical lists seem to indicate that he campaigned to the south and west of Geshur, on the main routes, but not north of the Yarmuk in Geshur. After Shoshenq I's reign, the Egyptian data for northern Palestine, and Geshur, all but cease.

## 5.2 Assyrian Sources

### 5.2.1 Introduction

Because the chronological framework of the history of the Syro-Hittite states is dependent on that of the Assyrian Kings and the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, the periods into which it conveniently divides are dictated by the reigns and activities of those monarchs.<sup>591</sup>

With regard to Assyria's involvement in the southern Levant, Tukulti-Ninurta I (ca. 1244-1208) was the last Assyrian king to reach the western Mediterranean coast until Tiglath-pileser I (ca. 1115), who conducted 28 military campaigns across the Euphrates. Following Tiglath-pileser I, Ashur-bel-kala boasted that he reached the "Great Sea" at Arvad where he delighted in killing a *nāhiru*.<sup>592</sup> No subsequent Assyrian king ventured into Syria until Ashurnasirpal II in 883/2.<sup>593</sup> Ashurnasirpal II's campaigns resulted in the peaceful subduing of Syria's northern and coastal areas:

At that time I made my way to the slopes of Mount Lebanon (and) went up to the Great Sea of the land of Amurru. I cleansed my weapons in the Great Sea (and) made sacrifices to the gods. I received tribute from the kings of the sea coast, from the lands of the people of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Mahallatu, Maizu, Kaizu, Amurru, and the city of Arvad which is (on an island) in the sea [...] They submitted to me.<sup>594</sup>

The power that Ashurnasirpal II exerted over the Levant initiated a new era of Assyrian

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<sup>591</sup>Hawkins 1982: 379.

<sup>592</sup>*RIMA 2*, A.0.89.7, p. 103.

<sup>593</sup>Grayson 1982: 253-9.

<sup>594</sup>*RIMA 2*, A.0.101.1, p. 218-19.



campaigns to this area.

### 5.2.2 Neo-Assyrian Sources (858-745)

Beginning with Shalmaneser III's reign (ca. 858-824) the Assyrians were a political power to be reckoned with in the Levant, with Shalmaneser continuing the aggressive expansionist policy and achievements of Ashurnasirpal II, his father. Shalmaneser was the first of the neo-Assyrian kings who appeared with his forces in central and southern Syria, and campaigned there four times resulting in the establishment of a firm power-base at the Euphrates, where he annexed Bit-Adini (ca. 858-855).<sup>595</sup> His initial success in Syria provided the base which supported subsequent campaigns to the region. This expansionistic tendency did not go unchecked and led to the formation of an opposing coalition of Levantine powers led by Hamath, ruled by Irhuleni (Luwian: Urhilina), and Damascus, ruled by Adad-idri/Hadad-ezer; the coalition also included contingents from Byblos, Israel, Musri, Irqata, Arwad, Usanatu, Šianu, Gindibu, Bit-Rehob and Ammon.<sup>596</sup> In his sixth campaign (853), Shalmaneser encountered strong resistance from the coalition at Qarqar; though his rhetoric would reveal otherwise:

...I razed, destroyed the city Qarqar, his royal city. An alliance had been formed of these twelve kings...They attacked to [wage] war and battle against me...I defeated them from the city of Qarqar as far as the city of Gulzau. I felled with the sword 14,000 troops, their fighting men, (and) rained down destruction (lit. flood) as the god Adad would. I filled the plain with their spread out corpses (and) <felled> their extensive troops with the sword. I made their blood flow in the *wadis*.<sup>597</sup>

After a hiatus of a few years, Shalmaneser returned to western Syria in 849, 848, and 845

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<sup>595</sup>*RIMA* 3, A.0.102.1, pp. 10-11; A.0.102.2, p.15; Grayson 1982: 260.

<sup>596</sup>Dion 1997: 184-187.

<sup>597</sup>Grayson A.0.102.2, pp. 23-24.

to subdue it, perhaps an indication that his 853 campaign to Qarqar was not as decisive as he claimed.<sup>598</sup>

The Syrian coalition began to fracture between 845 and 841 due to an internal political situation in Damascus, thus, opening yet another opportunity for Shalmaneser to strike Syria in 841, his 18<sup>th</sup> campaign. While the details of the transition of power from Hadad-ezer to Hazael are uncertain<sup>599</sup>, in 841 Hazael was the king of Damascus when Shalmaneser crossed the Euphrates for the sixteenth time:

*...Hazael of Damascus, trusting in the might of his soldiers, carried out an extensive muster of his troops. He fortified Mount Saniru, the mountain peak, which is before Mount Lebanon. I put to the sword 16,020 of his fighting men (and) took away from him...to save his life he ran away (but) I pursued him. I imprisoned him in Damascus, his royal city, cut down his gardens, (and) burned his shocks. I marched to Mount Hauranu (and) razed, destroyed, burned, (and) plundered cities without number...<sup>600</sup>*

Shalmaneser's might was felt by Hazael and the region around Damascus, but, in the end, Hazael locked himself in Damascus and survived.

During his 21<sup>st</sup> year, 838, Shalmaneser crossed the Euphrates again, and received tribute from the kings of Hatti, Tyre, Sidon and Byblos, and headed south toward Damascus. He conquered four fortified cities belonging to Hazael; two are "somewhat" identified: Danabu and Malaha, which Lemaire identified with Duneibeh (near Nawa) and Malah d'Ezra, respectively, both in the Bashan.<sup>601</sup> After the conquest of Hazael's four cities it was recorded that:

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<sup>598</sup>*RIMA* 3, A.0.102.6; See Dion 1997: 189-190; Yamada 2000a: 150-163.

<sup>599</sup>See §4.4.3; Pitard 1987: 134-37; Dion 1997: 191-92.

<sup>600</sup>*RIMA* 3, A.0.102.10; §4.4.3.

<sup>601</sup>See Lemaire 1991: 100-101. See also Dion 1997: 198, n. 120; Lemaire 2001: 113-143; Yamada, S. 2000a: 206-209; Sader 1987: 265ff. for further details of the reconstruction and the uncertainty of the location of these two cities. Recently, Lipinski suggested identifying Malaha with Hazor (2000: 350-351).

‘Ba’il of [KU]R Z/G[I-x-r]a-a-a seized my feet. I received his tribute. My royal image I placed in the temple in Laruba, his fortified city, and received the tribute of the men of Tyre, Sidon and Byblos.<sup>602</sup>

Based on this new reading by Yamada, the questions arise of 1) who is Ba’il, 2) what is the name of the land that has been partially preserved, and 3) where is the royal city, Laruba? Concerning the identification of the land, Yamada observes:

It is difficult, as Grayson notes (*RIMA* 3, p.79, notes on l.159’), to see how one can restore Surraya with traces copied by Hulin at the beginning of l. 160’. Now Lipinski has suggested to restore the land name as Simirra (in K. Radner [ed.], *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, 1/II: B-G, p. 242b); this is duly possible.<sup>603</sup>

However, Na’aman rejects the suggestion of Simirra:

The suggested restoration ‘[Ty]re’ (S[urr]aya) is unlikely in view of the recently published facsimile of the inscription...Lipiński (1999) suggested restoring it ‘Simirra’ (S[i-mir-r]a-a-a). However, not only does Simirra always appear as a city and not as a land (with one exception written long after it became an Assyrian province), but its name is consistently written with the SI-sign and never with the ZI-sign. Moreover, Simirra does not fit the route of a campaign conducted east of Mt. Anti-Lebanon.<sup>604</sup>

Na’aman then suggested restoring the land’s name as “G[i-šu(r)-r]a-a-a” or Geshur.<sup>605</sup>

Yet, he noted two interpretive problems with his restoration:

1) The hypocoristic name Ba’il, which is typically Phoenician, is not known in the limited Geshurite onomasticon: Talmai, Ammihur/Ammihud and Maacah. Or from the pottery discovered at the suggested excavation sites in the area, in particular at Bethsaida: ‘qb’, mky, zkryw.

2) Larubi is described as Ba’il’s *āl dannūti* (fortified city). Which would

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<sup>602</sup>Yamada, S. 2000b. “Peter Hulin’s Hand Copies of Shalmaneser III’s Inscriptions.” *Iraq* 62: 65-87.

<sup>603</sup>Yamada 2000a: 209, n. 449.

<sup>604</sup>Na’aman, N. 2002. “In Search of Reality Behind the Account of David’s Wars with Israel’s Neighbors.” *IEJ* 52: 200-224, here 205. See also Parpola, S. 1970. *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, here p. 323-24.

<sup>605</sup>Na’aman 2002: 205.

imply that there also be an *āl šarrūti* (royal residence).<sup>606</sup>

Neither of these two problems are insurmountable. The names of Geshur's kings, currently known, date to approximately the tenth century, and already contain West Semitic elements in the first and third generation.<sup>607</sup> By the ninth century time would have allowed for the introduction of other Semitic names in Geshur's royal line, i.e. Ba'il. Na'aman noted that the name Ba'il is not confined to the Phoenician coast, and is known in the eighth century onomasticon of the kingdom of Israel.<sup>608</sup> Regarding the site identification of Laruba, Ba'il's city, Na'aman suggested:

Provided the land's restoration is acceptable, Laruba, Ba'il's city, must be sought in the Geshurite territory, on route from the Bashan to the kingdom of Tyre...Tentatively (and with a large question mark) we may suggest identifying Laruba with Riblah (hariblah) mentioned in the description of the land of Canaan's eastern border in Num 34:11...it may be tentatively identified with 'En Gev[...].<sup>609</sup>

Since Larubi was identified as Ba'il's *āl dannūti*, two very good choices, Tell Hadar or Bethsaida, could have been Ba'il's *āl šarrūti*, both have ninth century stratum. If 'Ein Gev was the *āl dannūti* then Shalmaneser's route brought him south to 'Ein Gev before turning west toward the coast.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> year of Shalmaneser's campaigns, after he confined Hazael to Damascus, he proceeded south: "I marched to Mount Hauranu (and) razed, destroyed,

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<sup>606</sup>See Ikeda, Y. 1979. "Royal Cities and Fortified Cities." *Iraq* 41:75-87.

<sup>607</sup>See pp. 93-96 where I address the limited Geshurite onomastica.

<sup>608</sup>Na'aman 2002: 206, see also, Lemaire, A. 1977. *Inscriptions hebraïques*. Vol 1. *Les ostraca*. Paris, p. 50.

<sup>609</sup>Na'aman 2002: 206, also stratum III at 'Ein Gev (886-841/838) was occupied at this time, and an Aramaic graffito, *lshqy'*, was found, see Mazar *et al* 1964: 27. Also note the ancient route from the Bashan to Acco, see Kochavi: 1998a: 25-48.

(and) burned cities without number. I carried off more booty than could be counted.”<sup>610</sup> Unlike previous campaigns to central Syria (853, 849, 845) this time Shalmaneser was met only by Hazael. After failing to overthrow him, Shalmaneser contented himself with destroying the region around Damascus, then continued to the Hauran. The area was abundantly fertile as seen by the use of hyperbole in the inscription implying the wealth of the area. There was so much booty that the text does not even attempt to list it as “it was more booty than could be counted.”<sup>611</sup> This campaign further clarifies uncertainties about the year 21 campaign as it would place him in the same area where he took a route south from Damascus into the Hauran before heading west to the coastal area.<sup>612</sup> The rest of Shalmaneser’s reign was preoccupied with internal affairs. In the later years his control began to wane, and he sent his *turtānu*, Dayyan-Ashur, to command his army and campaigns.<sup>613</sup>

After a strong period of Assyrian domination, it was clear that Assyria was in decline beginning with the reign of Shamshi-Adad V (823-811), who struggled with his brother for the throne and was later occupied with Babylon (814-811).<sup>614</sup> Adad-nirari III (810-783), the son of Shamsi-Adad V, succeeded his father and conducted several military campaigns *ana māt hat-te-e*, but the exact number and effectiveness of these campaigns remains unknown. Adad-nirari led a campaign against a coalition of Syrian states in order to aid King Zakkur of Hamath which included a successful campaign

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<sup>610</sup>*RIMA* 3, A.0.102.8, p. 48. Also note that Tiglath-pileser III successfully campaigned in the Hauran, see Tadmor 1994: 205-07; *Misc.* I,1.14.

<sup>611</sup>*RIMA* 3, A.0.102.8, p. 48.

<sup>612</sup>*Contra* Yamada 2000a: 208-209 who placed Shalmaneser’s campaign on the Phoenicia coast.

<sup>613</sup>Yamada 2000: 221-24; Grayson 1982: 259-69.

<sup>614</sup>Grayson 1982: 269; Millard 1994a: 57.

against Damascus with ensuing tribute payment – something his grandfather failed on several attempts.<sup>615</sup> The exact dates of these campaigns remains unclear, with Hawkins preferring 796 BC over 805.<sup>616</sup> A summary of the campaigns appears on the Nimrud Slab of Adad-nirari with several Levantine states listed under his subjugation: Tyre, Sidon, Bit Humri, Edom, and Philistia. As Millard noted, “The text is a summary rather than a comprehensive account of a campaign, so its silence about the other Transjordanian kingdoms and Judah may not be meaningful for their history; they may have submitted also.”<sup>617</sup>

During the remainder of the first half of the eighth century after Adad-nirari’s reign, Assyria’s influence in the Levant was minimal, perhaps in part due to the rise of Urartu. Shalmaneser IV may have been in the “Cedar Mountain” in 775, and again in 773, his *turtānu*, Shamshi-ilu, led an army to Damascus (*a-na āl di-maš-qa*) and received tribute from its ruler, Khadianu.<sup>618</sup>

### 5.2.3 Neo-Assyrian Sources (745-722 B.C.)

In 745 Tiglath-pileser III seized power in Assyria which had been in a state of decline due to “internal insurrection and the independence of the great provincial governors.”<sup>619</sup> Tiglath-pileser centralized Assyria’s power and began building its empire, starting with Urartu. The former foreign political programs of Ashurnasirpal and Shalmaneser, which included periodic military campaigns in the west for the exacting of

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<sup>615</sup>*RIMA* 3, A.0.104.6, pp. 208-09.

<sup>616</sup>Hawkins 1982: 400, see also Millard and Tadmor 1973.

<sup>617</sup>Millard, A.R. 1992b. “Assyrian Involvement in Edom.” Pp. 35-40 in Bienkowski 1992a, here p. 35.

<sup>618</sup>*RIMA* 3, A.0.105.1; Grayson 1982: 276-79; Hawkins 1982: 404-05; Pitard 1987: 175.

<sup>619</sup>Hawkins 1982: 409; cf. Grayson 1991: 71-85.

tribute and loyalty, were radically altered under Tiglath-pileser III. He inaugurated a program of conquest followed by population deportation in order to establish an Assyrian provincial system administered by a central control.

In 737-735 Tiglath-pileser returned to the north to subdue Urartu. With Assyria occupied in the north, Rezin of Damascus sought greater control to his south and attacked Judah (2 Kings 16: 5-10).<sup>620</sup> Thus in 733-732 after Tiglath-pileser campaigned on the Philistia coast, he campaigned in Syria which brought many of the Levantine lands under Assyrian hegemony: Israel, Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Arabia along with a host of Syro-Hittite rulers.<sup>621</sup>

His campaigns may have been patterned after those of Shalmaneser III and Adad-nirari III: to subdue the north and then to extend to the west. Tiglath-pileser's concern in the north was Arpad and Urartu, and in the west, Damascus was the major power. Tiglath-pileser had greater success than his predecessors and gained control of these areas and incorporated them in the Assyrian provincial system.<sup>622</sup>

After Tiglath-pileser's death and subsequent internal crises in Assyria, Hoshea decided that the time was right for rebellion and he stopped paying tribute to Assyria. Consequently, Tiglath-pileser's successor, Shalmaneser V (726-722), successfully undertook a three year siege of Samaria bringing an end to Israel – and perhaps much of

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<sup>620</sup>For a discussion of Tiglath-pileser III vis-a-vis the references in the Bible and *ITP*, see § 4.4.5.

<sup>621</sup>See Tadmor 1994: *ITP* Ann. 23:13'; Summ. 9:r.5; Ann. 21'4; Ann. 23: 1'; Ann. 18:9'; Ann. 24: 13'; Ann. 13:10; Ann. 3:3; Ann. 26:9; Ann. 27:1; Misc. I, 2:9; Ann. 27:13; Hawkins 1982: 412-413.

<sup>622</sup>Though not mentioned in his inscriptions Tiglath-pileser campaigned in the southern Levant in the area of Geshur/Bashan/Gilead as shown from the Nimrud Reliefs of wall III relief 36 which shows the capture of Astar(a)tu (= Ashtaroth in Gilead) in the upper register and the king in his chariot in the lower register, see Tadmor 1994: 210, 239, Misc. II.2.

the area in northern Transjordan (2 Kings 17:1-6).<sup>623</sup>

The archaeological evidence for the area east of the Sea of Galilee seems to support the written sources that Assyrian kings beginning with Tiglath-pileser campaigned in this region. This is possibly seen by the destruction at Bethsaida, 'Ein Gev, and Beth-Shean.<sup>624</sup> After the Assyrian campaigns at this time there was evidence of limited resettlement, though of a poor nature. At the end of the eighth century and the beginning of the seventh, other Assyrian kings visited the area, Sennacherib (701) to quell revolts, Esarhaddon (673, 671) and Ashurbanipal (667) on their way to Egypt, all received tribute from southern Levantine states.

#### **5.2.4 Conclusion: Assyrian Sources**

The Assyrian sources are of limited use in understanding Geshur in the LBA and Iron Age. From the end of the twelfth to the early ninth century no Assyrian king campaigned in the region of Geshur. In 883/2 Ashurnasirpal II campaigned in Syria reaching Mt. Lebanon which began a period of Assyrian reassertion in the west. Shalmaneser III led four campaigns in central and southern Syria. These campaigns were partially directed at Damascus where he conquered four fortified cities belonging to Hazael – of which two are identified as Danabu and Malaha, both perhaps in the Bashan. Recently, Na'aman has proposed a new translation of Shalmaneser's twenty-first year campaign report whereby he may have traveled through Geshur. Thus, after the conquest of Hazael's four cities he may have traveled to Geshur, and received tribute from the king Ba'il at his fortified city, 'Ein Gev. This route was preferred by Shalmaneser and in his

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<sup>623</sup>Grayson 1991: 85-86.

<sup>624</sup>See the discussion in Chapter 6 concerning the archaeological record at Bethsaida and 'Ein Gev.



year 18 campaign after he campaigned against Damascus, he came south through the Hauran. It is also of note that while Shalmaneser struggled to defeat Damascus, when he traveled to the south he received the tribute from Tyre, Sidon, and Jehu of Israel, so it is possibly that Geshur gave tribute to him at this time. Then not until Tiglath-pileser III's reign do we again have written evidence of an Assyrian presence in the region. In 733-732 after campaigning on the Philistia coast, Tiglath-pileser campaigned in Syria which brought some Levantine states – Israel, Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Arabia along with a host of Syro-Hittite rulers – under Assyrian hegemony. While not mentioning Geshur, Tiglath-pileser's campaign routes brought him through the Hauran and Ashtaroth, and possibly Geshur, if one accepts the destruction of Bethsaida (stratum 5a) to him.

## Chapter 6

### Geshur: the Archaeological Record

#### 6.1 Introduction

As seen in Chapters 4 and 5, the written sources indicated contact amongst the various people and polities east of the Sea of Galilee during the LBA and Iron Age periods (EA 197, 255, 256). EA 256 seems to indicate that Garu was able to expand to areas south of the Yarmuk; however, the weight of the evidence seems to indicate that Geshur was a place north of the Yarmuk river.<sup>625</sup> Because of the textual evidence from the Amarna corpus and the Bible, the following chapter will explore primarily the region north of the Yarmuk river to the Hermon mountain range, i.e., today's Golan region, from an archaeological perspective. This chapter will survey the early history of research in this area, then utilize the surveys and archaeological work to better understand the area. After this, the second half of the chapter will utilize a so-called "ground plan approach"<sup>626</sup> to explore the archaeological record with a view to asking how this material may help in understanding the social history of the area. The natural and topographical features of the land will be taken into consideration including the division between the areas to the north and south of the Yarmuk.

#### 6.2 Research east of the Sea of Galilee

Many of the foundational "land" studies in the Golan and Hauran were conducted in the nineteenth century.<sup>627</sup> This was the era of "traveler-turned-scholar" when various

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<sup>625</sup>See §5.1.3.2.

<sup>626</sup>Flannery 1998: 15-57.

<sup>627</sup>See Ben-Arieh, Y. 1972. "The Geographical Exploration of the Holy Land." *PEQ* 104: 81-92. Ben-Arieh noted that the primary goal of these early explorers was to identify the locations of biblical events, and marks the resurgence of interest in Palestine after Napoleon's invasion (1799).

explorers wrote their “itinerary journals.”<sup>628</sup> One of the first was U.J. Seetzen who traveled around Banias and the western and southern parts of the Golan in 1806. In the same region, some five years later, J.L. Burckhardt, a Swiss scholar, explored the area from Damascus to Lebanon, also stopping at Banias and Hamat Gadar. The American scholar, E. Robinson, added to the early scholarship of historical-geography with short visits to the Golan and western Hauran in 1838 and 1852. Contemporary with Robinson, J.L. Porter investigated Damascus and southern Syria, with his research one of the first based on a prolonged season. S. Merrill conducted early archaeological expeditions in Transjordan on behalf of the American Palestine Exploration Society (APES) from 1875-1877. From 1879 to 1886 L. Oliphant surveyed the Golan focusing on the synagogues northeast of the Sea of Galilee. At the end of the nineteenth century, G.A. Smith added to the study of the Hauran with his travel accounts to various sites, from Tiberias to Hauran to Damascus, starting from the confluence of the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers. G. Schumacher, a surveyor for the Turkish rail authority in Transjordan, combined his occupation with his interest in biblical geography to produce books on the Golan and Hauran. With the research of Schumacher, the study of this region, in the minds of most, was completed.

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<sup>628</sup>See Seetzen, U.J. 1854-1855. *Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönicien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten* (3 vols.) Kruse, F. et al. (eds.) Berlin: Reimer; Burckhardt, J.L. 1822. *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*. London: Murray; Robinson, E. and Smith, E. 1841. *Biblical Researches in Palestine: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838* (3 vols.) Boston: Crocker & Brewster; Porter, J.L. 1855. *Five Years in Damascus* (2 vols.) London: John Murray; *ibid.* 1868. *The Giant Cities of Bashan and Syria's Holy Places*. London: Nelson and Sons; Merrill, S. 1881. *East of the Jordan: A Record of Travels and Observations in the Countries of Moab, Gilead and Bashan During the Years 1875-1877*. New York: Scribners (reprint 1883); Oliphant, L. 1886. *A Trip to the North-East of Lake Tiberias in Jaulan*. London; Schumacher, G. 1886. *Across the Jordan: An Exploration and Survey of Part of Hauran and Jaulan*. London: Watt; *ibid.* 1888. *The Jaulan*. London: Watt; Smith, G.A. 1901. “Notes of a Journey Through the Hauran, with Inscriptions Found by the Way.” *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, pp. 340-361; *ibid.* 1918. *Syria and the Holy Land*. New York.

While these early explorers and their studies shed some light on the Golan and Hauran, and may have been considered complete in their day, they were flawed in three general ways: 1) the researchers primarily traveled on secure main routes, 2) there was the tendency to mix local indigenous traditions with historical material,<sup>629</sup> and 3) even rudimentary archaeological principles, e.g., analyzing sherds, were not part of the investigations.<sup>630</sup>

After Schumacher's publications, there was a lapse of investigation in this region in the beginning of the twentieth century. Adding to the misconception that the area had already been thoroughly researched were the political events that divided Syria and Palestine following World War I. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 made Golan a boundary between the French Mandate which controlled Syria and Lebanon and the British Mandate in Palestine. In many ways, due to this boundary division and the natural topography, Golan became a "no-man's land" for research with the antiquities priorities of both governing bodies elsewhere. Thus Schumacher's influence carried into the scholarship of twentieth century.<sup>631</sup> This is most clearly seen in Smith's work where Schumacher was frequently and authoritatively used as his primary source for Golan and

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<sup>629</sup>Modern ethnoarchaeologists would not understand this as a flaw, see Steen, van der E. 2004. *Tribes and Territories in Transition, The Central East Jordan Valley in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age: A Study of the Sources*. Leuven: Peeters.

<sup>630</sup>It is interesting to note, that "time" was an important part of the details. I often wonder if during this era these explorers all procured the newest technological "time piece" for use in the field, as every few paragraphs a reference to the time is made!

<sup>631</sup>See Abel, F.-M. 1967. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) *Géographie de la Palestine*. (Études Bibliques, 2 volumes.) Paris: Gabalda; Avi-Yonah, M. 1966. *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquest (536 B.C. to A.D. 640): A Historical Geography*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books; Dussaud, R. 1927. *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*. Paris.

Hauran.<sup>632</sup>

It was Albright more than any other scholar of his time who viewed Palestine as one piece of the greater geopolitical world-system of the ANE.<sup>633</sup> Albright emphasized the synthesis of archaeological sites, considering the textual and philological data within the greater ANE context. Albright was less concerned with stratigraphy and settlement history than toponymic identification, which predominated much of his work in Golan and Hauran. B. Mazar, another doyen who worked in Golan and Hauran and led the way for Israeli archaeologists in method and the utilization of archaeological research, excavated at 'Ein Gev in 1961. Like Albright, Mazar's approach to Palestine was wide-ranging utilizing archaeological and textual sources from the ANE. Mazar researched prolifically in areas of archaeology and biblical history, and developed a geopolitical approach of the ancient world which included geographical, historical, and political factors which were progressive in their understanding of local conditions, economics, and demographics.<sup>634</sup> Mazar held a high view of the textual sources as a means to re-construct the ancient world and championed the study of the textual sources with the sites and settlements in order to arrive at a correct historical understanding. Mazar's 1961 article, "Geshur and Maacah," while influenced by Albright (1943), has become the standard scholarly reference for Geshur.

In 1967 following the Six-Day War and the Israeli occupation of Golan, this region became a focus of research by geographers, geologists, botanists, archaeologists, and others from a spectrum of disciplines. In the realm of archaeological investigation, it was

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<sup>632</sup>Smith 1901:340-361.

<sup>633</sup>See Albright 1925, 1941, 1943, 1975.

<sup>634</sup>See essays in B. Mazar 1986, 1992.

clear to post-1967 scholars that *inter alia* Schumacher's work needed to be updated with modern methods. In many ways, due to modern politics and natural topography, this region was frozen in time waiting for archaeological study, and in 1967 the Golan was included in the research agenda of Israel, though the area of Syrian Hauran would remain neglected.

In 1967 the Israel Department of Antiquities started surveys of areas under Israel's control and appointed C. Epstein and S. Gutman to conduct a regional survey of Golan, which covered 209 sites over a four-month period.<sup>635</sup> Following this Epstein continued research of the area, though she concentrated on the dolmen fields and sites from the Chalcolithic and EBA periods.<sup>636</sup> Concurrent with the 1967 study of Epstein and Gutman, D. Urman was appointed to survey the Arab villages of the area. Urman's research continued in the Golan though restricted to the Roman and Byzantine periods. In 1973 after the October Arab-Israeli War, the area to the east of the Golan was opened and G. Barkay surveyed 37 sites, and found no evidence for LBA or Iron Age occupation in the "northern Bashan."<sup>637</sup> However, Moshe Hartal, in his 1983-1987 survey of the northern Golan, classified twenty sites as Iron I and nine as Iron II, with five sites identified for both periods.<sup>638</sup>

Further to the east of the Golan were a few projects devoted to the Southern Hauran, where many of the same early twentieth century Golan researchers also

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<sup>635</sup>See Epstein and Gutman 1972.

<sup>636</sup>See Epstein, C. 1998. *The Chalcolithic Culture of the Golan*. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority.

<sup>637</sup>See Barkay *et al* 1974.

<sup>638</sup>Hartal, M. 1989. *Northern Golan Heights: The Archaeological Survey as a Source of Regional History*. Qazrin: Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums.

investigated.<sup>639</sup> At one time there were so many projects devoted to the Southern Hauran that Leclercq described the period from 1899-1909 as “*la grande déferlment*.”<sup>640</sup> It was the era when Brünnow and von Domszewski, Dussaud and Macler, Germer-Durand, and the Princeton expeditions were conducting overlapping field surveys in this region.<sup>641</sup> These surveys increased our knowledge of the area, but like much of the earlier research, there was an absence of modern methods and techniques. This is seen in the Princeton surveys conducted by Butler where emphasis was placed on visible architecture and epigraphy with no regard for other indicative archaeological markers and with no attempt to collect or analyze “the quantities of sherds of decorated, glazed pottery.”<sup>642</sup> In the last quarter of the twentieth century, investigations were again directed to this area, though the focus was the readily apparent later periods, especially Roman. This included F.E. Peters’s investigations of the history of the “lava-lands” from Nabataean times through the Islamic conquests, the work of D.S. Miller dealing with urbanization in the region during the Ottoman period, and Villeneuve and MacAdam’s research that focused on the epigraphy and its contribution to the knowledge of ancient villages of the Hauran.<sup>643</sup>

For the pre-historical period, F. Braemer and the I.F.A.P.O. Damascus utilized the

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<sup>639</sup>Albright 1925, 1943; Dussaud 1927; Schumacher 1886, 1888.

<sup>640</sup>Sartre, M. 1982. *IGLS. XIII, I, Bostra*. Paris, pp. 11-27, as cited in MacAdam 1986: 10.

<sup>641</sup>MacAdam 1986: 10.

<sup>642</sup>Butler, H.C. 1919. *Ancient Architecture in Syria, Sect. A: Southern Syria, Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Society Expedition to Syria (PPUAES), 1904-1905*. Leyden 1907-1919, here p. 143.

<sup>643</sup>Peters, F.E. 1980. “Regional Development in the Roman Empire: the Lava-Lands of Syria.” *Thought* 55: 110-121; Miller, D.S. 1984. *The Lava-Lands of Syria: Regional Urbanism in the Roman Empire* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University); Villeneuve, F. 1983. *Recherches sur les villages antiques du Haurâne*. (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Paris); MacAdam 1986.

work of Beaulieu<sup>644</sup> and the Princeton Expeditions of 1904/05 and 1909.<sup>645</sup> Braemer's survey was conducted from 1983 to 1989 with the object being: "*de retrouver des sites ayant été occupés avant les périodes hellénistique et romaine, et de déterminer ceux qui pourraient être fouillés avec le plus de profit, pour accroître notre connaissance de cette région aux âges du Bronze et de Fer.*"<sup>646</sup> Braemer stated that the research design of the survey was "*l'exploration aussi systématique que possible de trois zones dans lesquelles des vestiges pouvant être préromains ont été signalés.*"<sup>647</sup> The three zones differentiated were 1) the region in the north, bordered on the south by the Leja in the area of Shaba pass, 2) the region of the south-east in the area of the Jebel Druze, and 3) in the south bordering on the area of northern Jordan. Braemer outlined a total of 125 sites in the Hauran which were pre-Roman and of these he classified as *Bronze récent*: Tell el-Alsha'ri, Tell 'Ashtara, Bosra, Tell esh-Shehab, Sheikh Sa'd and four sites as *l'âge du Fer*: Tell 'Ashtara, Sheikh Sa'd, Tayyibeh, and Der'a. Braemer concluded that "*Seul l'âge du Fer n'a pas été reconnu dans la partie Est du Hawrān.*"<sup>648</sup>

The region has seen few single-site excavations, particularly due to the geological features with the absence of the typical mud-brick tell. Even where there are more archaeological remains, the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* lists only six sites:

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<sup>644</sup>Beaulieu, A. 1944-45. "La première civilisation du Djebel Druze." *Syria* 24: 232-250, pl. XX-XXVI.

<sup>645</sup>Braemer, F. 1984. "Prospections archéologiques dans le Hawrān. (Syrie)." *Syria* 61: 219-50; *ibid.* 1988. "Prospections archéologiques dans le Hawrān: les réseaux de l'eau." *Syria* 65: 99-137; *ibid.* 1993. "Prospections archéologiques dans le Hawrān (Syrie) III." *Syria* 70: 117-170.

<sup>646</sup>Braemer 1984: 219.

<sup>647</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>648</sup>*Ibid.*



Bostra, Sulaym, Suwayda, Qanawat, Shuhba, and Si'.<sup>649</sup> The abundance of classical remains at Bostra has led to its pre-classical history being largely overlooked; however, beginning in 1980 Helga Seeden investigated the pre-classical remains of Bostra and the region.<sup>650</sup> Tell 'Ashtara was excavated by A. Abou Assaf for three seasons (1966-1968), and revealed occupation during the LBA and Iron Age II, confirming Albright's survey.<sup>651</sup> On the Sea of Galilee's eastern shore there were several single-site excavations (which will be the focus of the following section). Prior to the inception of the 'Land of Geshur Project', directed by Kochavi, the archaeological research in the Golan primarily concentrated on either the pre-historic or Roman-Byzantine periods. Bethsaida, one of the largest sites near the Sea of Galilee, was first excavated in 1987 with primary interest in the Roman period, but with the uncovering of an Iron Age stratum the focus has shifted.<sup>652</sup> On the Sea of Galilee's western shore is Tell Kinrot/el-Oreimeh identified with the ancient settlement of Kinneret (Joshua 19:35; cf. 1 Kings 15:20) by G. Dalman in 1921 and Albright in 1923. V. Fritz conducted excavations from 1982-1985 and 1994-1997, and since 2002 the "Kinneret Regional Project" continues to explore the site and its environs.<sup>653</sup>

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<sup>649</sup>Stillwell, R. (ed.) 1976. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 1011-12.

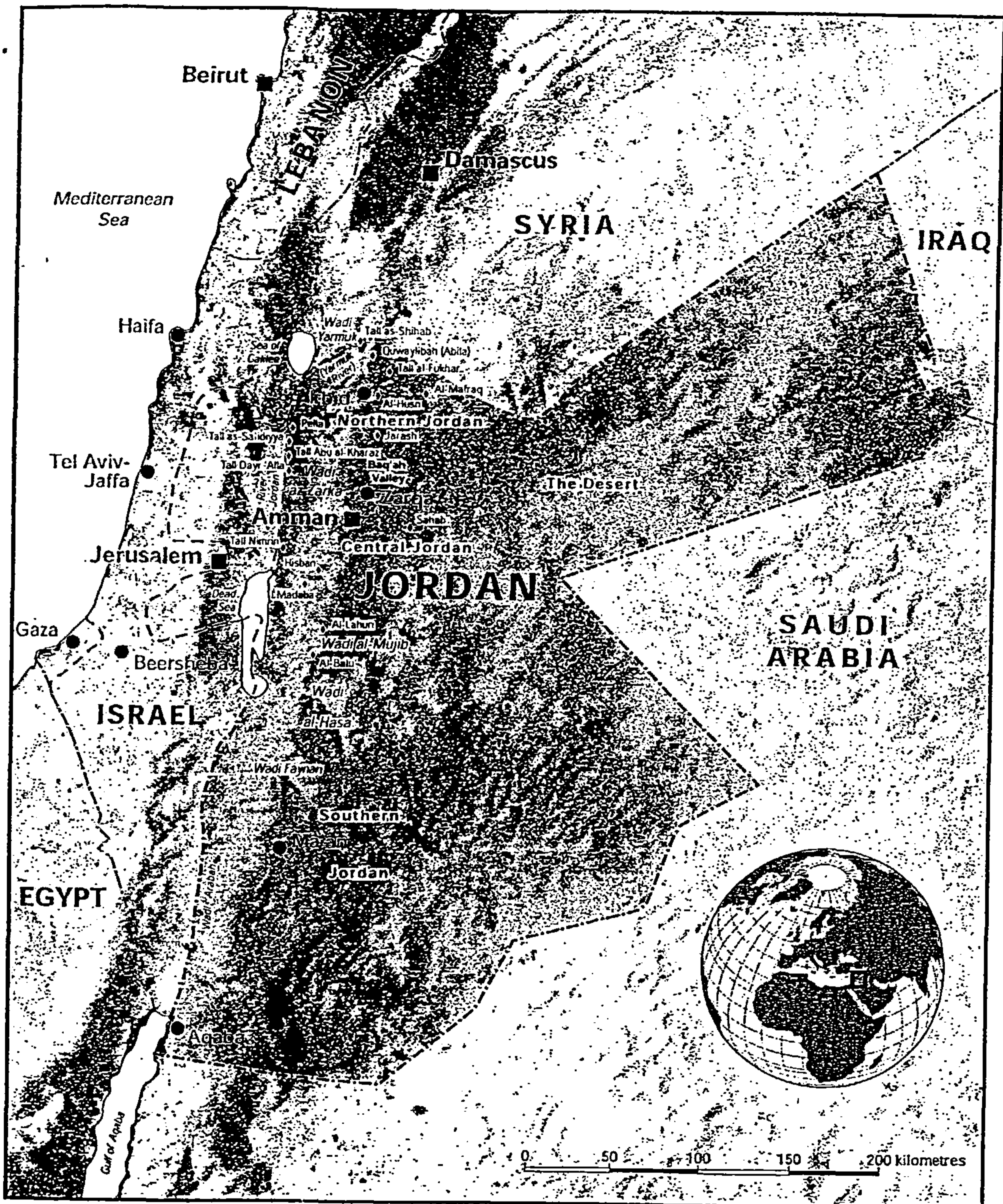
<sup>650</sup>Seeden, H. and Wilson, J. 1984. "Buṣrā in the Hawrān: AUB's Ethnoarchaeological Project 1980-1985." *Berytus* 32a: 19-34.

<sup>651</sup>Abou Assaf, A. 1968. "Tell-'Ashtara in Süd Syrien. Erste Kampagne, 1966." *AAAS* 18: 103-122; *ibid.* 1969. "Tell-'Ashtara. 2 Kampagne, 1967." *AAAS* 19: 101-108; Voûte, P.H. 1971-1972. "Chronique des fouilles et prospections en Syrie de 1965 a 1970." *Anatolica* 4: 83-129; Albright 1925: 13-17.

<sup>652</sup>See Arav and Freund 1995, 1999, 2004.

<sup>653</sup>See Fritz, V. 1990. *Kinneret, Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen auf dem Tell el-'Orēme am See Gennesaret 1982-1985*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz; *ibid.* 1993a. "Kinneret: Excavations at Tell El-Oreimeh (Tel Kinrot): Preliminary Report on the 1982-1985 Seasons." *TA* 20: 187-215; *ibid.* 1999. "Kinneret: Excavations at Tell El-

Map 6.1 Jordan showing the main Late Bronze Age sites (from MacDonald, Adams, and Bienkowski 2001)



*Zeraqoun Survey Jen' Kamlah*

### 6.3 Archaeological surveys: northern Jordan

Geomorphologically northern Jordan is bounded by the desert to the east, the Jordan river to the west, the Zerqa river (or perhaps the Ajlun Mountains) to the south,

Oreimeh (Tel Kinrot): Preliminary Report on the 1994-1997 Seasons." *TA* 26: 92-115; <http://www.helsinki.fi/teol/hyel/kinneret/contact.html>.

and the Yarmuk to the north. Though these boundaries may have provided some natural divisions for independent cultural identity, it is unlikely that they served as a complete natural barrier for the transmission of culture. While EA 256 indicated that Garu had expansionistic tendencies, it did not campaign or was not portrayed as campaigning, to our limited knowledge, to areas a far distance from the Yarmuk river gorge, i.e., to Pella and Ashtaroth. To a limited extent it appears that the topography aided Garu/Geshur in its social history (Joshua 12:5; 13:2; 13:13). Glueck conducted the foundational study on the archaeology of Transjordan in the Bronze and Iron Age periods with a series of surface surveys.<sup>654</sup> While Glueck concluded that much of Transjordan was inhabited only by *Shasu* during the MBA-LBA, the later research of Sauer revealed that the northern part had a long settlement history with the central and southern areas “weakly attested.”<sup>655</sup> The Egyptian written sources revealed that northern Jordan was of interest for Tuthmosis III in his 22nd/23rd year, also both Seti I and Ramesses II campaigned there.<sup>656</sup> Adding to Glueck’s research, S. Mittmann conducted an extensive surface survey of northern Jordan between the Yarmuk and Zerqa rivers in 1963-1964.<sup>657</sup> He reported a total of 335 sites: nineteen were LB II, seventy-four were Iron I and fifty were Iron II.<sup>658</sup> Sites 1-90 were

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<sup>654</sup>See Glueck, N. 1951. *Explorations in Eastern Palestine, IV, Text*. (AASOR XXV-XXVIII, part I), New Haven.; *ibid.* 1970. *The Other Side of the Jordan*. (rev. ed.) Cambridge, MA: ASOR.

<sup>655</sup>See Sauer, J. 1986. “Transjordan in the Bronze and Iron Ages: A Critique of Glueck’s Synthesis.” *BASOR* 263: 1-26; cf. Dever, W. 2000. “Nelson Glueck and the Other Half of the Holy Land.” Pp. 114-21 in Stager, Green, and Coogan 2000; Bienkowski, P. 1992b. “The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan: A Framework.” Pp. 1-12 in Bienkowski 1992a.

<sup>656</sup>See §§ 5.1.2, 5.1.4.

<sup>657</sup>Mittmann, S. 1970. *Beiträge zur Siedlungs - und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

<sup>658</sup>This excludes the 11 sites (336-346) south of Beth Shean, see Mittmann 1970: 263-64.

north of the Irbid area with ten LB II sites, twenty-two Iron I sites and twenty Iron II sites. Sites 91-200 were centered in the western region around Tell Abu-Kharaz where Mittmann found three LB II sites, twenty-eight Iron I sites, and seventeen Iron II sites. Sites 201-310 were in the southern region delineated by wadi Kufrinjah and Jerash region. Here Mittmann found two LB II sites, twenty-two Iron I sites, and twelve Iron II sites. In the eastern area, sites 310-35, he found only one LB II site, two Iron I sites and one Iron II site.<sup>659</sup> Mittmann concluded that the increase in Iron Age sites can be attributed to the presence of the newly arrived Israelite tribes.<sup>660</sup>

From 1975-1976 the Jordan Valley Survey was undertaken by Ibrahim, Sauer, and Yassine.<sup>661</sup> The survey covered a large area of the Jordan Valley collecting data between the Yarmuk in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. The survey revealed a total of 20 LB sites and 31 Iron Age sites, with the concentration of the LB sites between wadi Zerqa and wadi Kufrinjah, near Tells Deir Alla and Sa'idiyeh.

Another survey was conducted in the wadi el-Yabis area, some 15 km north of wadi Kufrinjah and 7 km south of Pella.<sup>662</sup> LB pottery was found at three sites, two in the valley and one in the highlands. There are 11 Iron Age sites along the banks of the wadi.

Two other surveys aid in understanding the settlement history of this area. First, in 1981 G. King *et al* visited twenty-two sites on the eastern fringe of northern Transjordan, and found limited evidence of LBA occupation, but far greater indicators of

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<sup>659</sup>For a convenient chart of the sites, see Mittmann 1970: 256-264.

<sup>660</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>661</sup>See Ibrahim, M.M., Sauer, J.A., and Yassine, Kh. 1976. "The East Jordan Valley Survey, 1975." *BASOR* 222: 41-66.

<sup>662</sup>See Mabry, J. and Palumbo, G. 1988. "The 1987 Wadi el-Yabis Survey." *ADAJ* 32: 275-305; Palumbo, G., Mabry, J., and Kuijt, I. 1990. "The Wadi el-Yabis survey report on the 1989 field season." *ADAJ* 36: 25-42.

Iron I-II occupation.<sup>663</sup> King observed a clear presence of ten Iron II sites with one Iron I site and suggested that the eastern fringe of northern Transjordan in the LBA and Iron I was sparsely settled. The other survey was in the Maqarin reservoir on the southern slopes of the Yarmuk river, and identified thirty-one sites, two were dated to LBA and three to Iron Age.<sup>664</sup> Ottosson noted that, “The Maqarin survey gives the impression that the southern slopes of the Yarmouk and its adjacent valleys were very sparsely inhabited in the Iron Age. The land usable for settlement and cultivation is to be found north of the Yarmouk.”<sup>665</sup>

#### **6.4 LBA-Iron Age sites: northern Jordan**

Adding to the surveys conducted in northern Jordan, there have been single-site excavations. Many of the excavation reports are preliminary, so they need to be handled cautiously. Based on the textual indicators of the possible location of Garu/Geshur and the geomorphological divisions of northern Jordan<sup>666</sup>, this research limits excavation reports that were conducted in the northern Jordan plateau, south and west of the Yarmuk river.

##### **6.4.1 Tell el-Fukhar**

Tell el-Fukhar is one of a cluster of tells (tell Umm ar-Riglen, tell al-Subba and kh. az-Zaraqun) on the eastern side of wadi ash-Shallah, which flows into the Yarmuk. The tell is 11 km north-east of Irbid and 5 km north-west of Ramtha in a fertile plain on a spur that extends 375 m from the plateau toward the southwest into the wadi, with a

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<sup>663</sup>See King, G., Lenzen C.J., and Rollefson, G.O. 1983. “Survey of Byzantine and Islamic Sites in Jordan: Second Season Report, 1981.” *ADAJ* 27: 385-436.

<sup>664</sup>See Kerestes, T.M. *et al.* 1978. “An Archaeological Survey of Three Reservoir Areas in Northern Jordan, 1978.” *ADAJ* 22: 108-35.

<sup>665</sup>Ottosson 1993: 95.

<sup>666</sup>Macumber 2001: 1-30.

maximum width of 205 m.<sup>667</sup> There is an 80 x 100 m “acropolis” at the top of the tell from which a long saddle-depression extends to the bottom of the tell to a small plain which is watered by a strong spring, ‘Ayn ash-Shallala, and may indicate the fertility of the area in antiquity.

Mittmann surveyed the tell and found evidence of multiple periods: EB II-III, MB I, LB II, Iron I-II, late Hellenistic and Roman<sup>668</sup>, and due to its settlement history Mittmann recommended its excavation to M. Ottosson.<sup>669</sup> In 1990-1991 Ottosson conducted excavations, followed by J. Strange in 1992-1993.<sup>670</sup> The LB IIB stratum revealed a large public building some 25 m long with a ca. 1.5 m wide outer wall and a ca. 1.5 m foundation of large stones with a mudbrick superstructure standing to a height of 2.3 m. The rooms of the building had thick plaster floors with two rooms filled with destruction debris from upper floors. The building was partially excavated and yielded a doorway flanked by a pillar, built of large 1 x 1 msq boulders.<sup>671</sup> Strange, tentatively, interpreted the building as either a temple or palace preferring the latter, and suggested it was a *bit-hilani* type.<sup>672</sup> The building was destroyed at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C. On the northern side of the tell a large city-wall was found, and the remains of a possible city

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<sup>667</sup>Strange, J. 2000. “The Late Bronze Age in Northern Jordan in the Light of the Finds at Tell el-Fukhar.” Pp. 476-481 in Stager, Green and Coogan 2000.

<sup>668</sup>Mittmann 1970:13, 256.

<sup>669</sup>Ottosson, M. 1993. “The Iron Age of Northern Jordan.” Pp. 90-103 in Lemaire, A. and Otzen, B. (eds.) 1993. *History and Traditions of Early Israel* (VTSup 50) Leiden: Brill.

<sup>670</sup>Strange, J. 1997. “Tell al-Fukhar 1990-1993.” *SHAJ* 6: 399-406.

<sup>671</sup>Ibid., p. 402.

<sup>672</sup>Strange, J. 2001. “The Late Bronze Age.” Pp. 291-321 in MacDonald, Adams and Bienkowski 2001: 307; Cf., Arav, R. and Bennett, M. 2000. “The *bīt hilāni* at Bethsaida: Its place in Aramaean/Neo-Hittite and Israelite Palace Architecture in the Iron Age II.” *IEJ* 50/1-2: 47-81, they do not include this in their list of *bit-hilani*.

gate.<sup>673</sup> Tell el-Fukhar's possible international connections are highlighted by its finds: Mycenaean and Cypriot sherds, a large pithos, a glazed knob,<sup>674</sup> a bronze lamp, and a glass pendant of a nude seemingly pregnant woman (goddess?).<sup>675</sup>

During the LBA-Iron Age transition there was evidence of occupation in the ruins of the "palace."<sup>676</sup> Ottosson noted neither a cultural nor demographic change during the LB II/Iron I transition. The Iron I strata indicated that the tell was occupied, with more substantial walls found during Iron IB, and the appearance of the "collared rim" jar being used as recycled ovens.<sup>677</sup> A number of finely paved floors were excavated to the wall revealing doorposts and pillars which were probably reused from the LBA city. A well-cut standing stone measuring 1.23 m high was found *in situ* a few centimeters behind a wall with two large flat rocks found in front of the standing stone, its use is waiting interpretation.<sup>678</sup> A so-called Philistine sherd was found in the fill near the LB gate that, according to Strange, "is the only Philistine sherd found in the highlands of Jordan...this seems to give a *terminus ante quem* of c. 1050 BC for the beginning of this period."<sup>679</sup> There is no evidence for Iron IIA-B, but Strange uncovered more than 20 dressed silos at

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<sup>673</sup>Strange 1997: 402.

<sup>674</sup>This has parallels attested at Nuzi, but the ceramic analysis was inconclusive to the provenance, see McGovern, P.E. 1997. "A Ceramic Sequence for Northern Jordan: An Archaeological and Chemical Perspective." *SHAJ* 6: 421-425, here p. 425.

<sup>675</sup>McGovern, P.E. 1985. *Late Bronze Age Palestinian Pendants*. Sheffield: JSOT/ASOR. Strange (2000: 478, 2001: 299) suggests the identification of Hathor.

<sup>676</sup>*Contra* Herr and Najjar 2001: 324 who state that el-Fukhar is one of the sites with evidence of a peaceful transition from LBA to Iron Age, thus missing the 13<sup>th</sup> century destruction level.

<sup>677</sup>Strange 1997: 402; McGovern 1997: 421-425.

<sup>678</sup>Ottosson, M. 1992. "Tell el-Fukhar." *AJA* 96: 518. This stele is similar to the unmarked stelae found at Bethsaida (to date seven) usually seen at entrances. See Arav, R. 2001. "Notes and News, Bethsaida, 2000." *IEJ* 51/2: 239-246.

<sup>679</sup>Strange 2001: 292; 1997: 402-403.

the top of the tell, some were very deep reaching the foundations of the LBA palace.<sup>680</sup>

The silos were assigned to Iron II C, but no signs of occupation were found.<sup>681</sup>

#### 6.4.2 Abila

Abila lies 15 km north-northeast of the modern city of Irbid and 5 km south of the Yarmuk river. Surface surveys conducted in 1980 revealed that Abila was occupied from about 4000 B.C. to A.D. 1500, with ongoing excavations confirming the settlement history.<sup>682</sup> The site measures 1.5 km long from north to south and 0.5 km wide from east to west, with kh. Umm el-'Amad to the south and a saddle depression between the mounds.

The research focus at Abila has been the Roman/Byzantine periods; however, in 1988 one objective was to excavate Bronze and Iron Age tombs in Area H. Tombs H 10 and H13 located at the crest of wadi Qweilbeh were identified as Late Bronze/Iron I. Tomb H 10 had been looted leaving scattered sherds dating to this period, and below a meter of soil was a burial chamber measuring 1.15 x 0.72 x 2.2 m sealed with a large

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<sup>680</sup>Strange 1997: 403. Also see Herr and Najjir 2001: 335 who state, "The Assyrian destruction seems to have destroyed the local will to establish significant settlements in the area." Yet, it seems that the abundance of grain silos need to be accounted for somewhere in the settlement history.

<sup>681</sup>Ottosson 1993: 100. On the tentative interpretation as Zarqu (EA 256) see Kamlah, J. 1993. "Tell el Fuhhar (Zarqu?) und die pflanzenhaltende Göttin in Palästina: Ergebnisse des Zeraqon-Surveys 1989." *ZDPV* 109: 101-27, as cited in Strange 2000: 479.

<sup>682</sup>See Mare, W.H. *et al.* 1981. "Abila Excavation Reports 1981." *BA* 44: 179-80; *ibid.* 1987. "The 1986 Season at Abila of the Decapolis." *ADAJ* 33: 205-19; *ibid.* 1991. "The 1988 Season of Excavation at Abila of the Decapolis." *ADAJ* 35: 203-220; *ibid.* 1992. "Internal Settlement Patterns in Abila." *SHAJ* 4: 309-314; *ibid.* 1989. "Quweilbeh." Pp. 472-86 in Homès-Frédéricq and Hennessy 1989b. Almost yearly excavation reports have appeared in the *Near Eastern Archaeological Society Bulletin* see Wineland, J.D. 2001. *Ancient Abila, An Archaeological History*. (BAR International 989) Oxford, and literature therein.



stone.<sup>683</sup> The chamber contained skull fragments, a body oriented towards the west, some Bronze and Iron Age sherds, and a common scarab dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> dynasties (ca. 1550-1069 B.C.) corresponding to the dating of the ceramics.<sup>684</sup> The LBA and Iron Age were represented by pottery in areas A, AA, B-F and tombs H 10, 13, and some domestic installations, including an exposed wall.<sup>685</sup> The current evidence would indicate that Abila was a small LB/Iron Age settlement – though evidence is lacking to suggest it was a thriving city during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.<sup>686</sup>

### 6.4.3 Irbid

Tell Irbid in northwestern Jordan, within modern Irbid, has had several rescue excavations since 1984 due to the town's rapid expansion. The tell is an obvious part of the landscape and dominates the north Jordanian plateau as one of the largest tells in the region measuring ca. 350 x 400 m. The excavator's objective was to identify the tell's stratigraphy by conducting two probes near two tombs, which had yielded no remains.<sup>687</sup> The probes revealed three occupational strata: Phase I, ca. 1150-800 B.C.; Phase II, ca. 1300-1150 B.C.; and Phase III, 3200 B.C.<sup>688</sup> During Phase III (EB I) a wall constructed of large basaltic boulders measuring 4 x 4 m enclosed the city. This wall was reused and

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<sup>683</sup>Mare 1991: 215.

<sup>684</sup>See Wineland 2001: 99. The tomb was dated broadly to 1475-1300 B.C. based on the pottery. W. Ward dated the scarab, but a more precise date was not possible due to its commonness.

<sup>685</sup>Wineland 2001: 101.

<sup>686</sup>*Contra* Wineland 2001: 43.

<sup>687</sup>Lenzen, C.J., Gordon, R.L., and McQuitty, A.M. 1985. "Excavations at Tell Irbid and Beit Ras." *ADAJ* 29: 151-59; Lenzen, C.J., McQuitty, A.M., and Humbert, J.-B. 1989. "Irbid." Pp. 298-300 in Homès-Frédéricq and Hennessy 1989a; Lenzen, C.J. 1992. "Tell Irbid." *ABD* 3: 456-57, and literature therein.

<sup>688</sup>Lenzen in an attempt to clarify the dating of the tell rejected the common tri-period European system by using centuries, but returned (?) to the traditional dating nomenclature, see Lenzen 1992.

incorporated in the Phase II city with an additional outer wall surrounding the inner wall. Also found and attributed to Phase II were four to five rooms, a tower structure, and a “sanctuary” with cultic objects dating to Phase I.<sup>689</sup> Phase II was the major occupational period (1200 B.C.) and ended with destruction, which Lenzen suggested was not militarily based due to lack of evidence.<sup>690</sup> In Area C room 1 of Phase II destruction debris filled the room and contained the following: an incense stand, a basalt stand, two bowls, a “cup and saucer” which was used as a lamp, a lamp, two goblets, and two large storage jars. These items were well preserved and allowed the room to be interpreted as possibly a “cultic” site dating to 1200 B.C.<sup>691</sup> To the north of room 1, was excavated an area near the inner wall which contained the remains of eleven vessels, which ranged from storage jars to pitchers. These were dated to the same period as the those found in room 1, and interpreted as a possible storage room related to it.<sup>692</sup> The tell’s occupation resumed after the destruction, but its nature changed from public to domestic and light industrial use, possibly a wine installation.<sup>693</sup> In 1958 a number of tombs were excavated at Irbid with their findings corresponding to Lenzen’s excavation results.<sup>694</sup> From the material remains found in the tombs, Tombs A and C were dated to 1000-850 B.C., and tomb B was dated from the second quarter of the thirteenth century B.C. and was used for burials until the

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<sup>689</sup>Lenzen 1992: 456.

<sup>690</sup>See Lenzen 1992: 456 where the presence of two arrowheads is lack of a military destruction for one person, but evidence of a sure military defeat to another!

<sup>691</sup>Initially Lenzen (1985: 155) was cautious about this interpretation, suggested by J. Tubb and J. Sauer, but later the room was referred to as a “sanctuary” based on the finds, see Lenzen 1992: 456.

<sup>692</sup>Lenzen 1985: 155.

<sup>693</sup>Lenzen, C.J. 1988. “Tell Irbid and its Context: a problem in archaeological interpretation.” *BN* 42: 27-35.

<sup>694</sup>See Dajani, R.W. 1964. “Iron Age Tombs at Irbid.” *ADAJ* 8-9: 99-101; *ibid.* 1966. “Four Iron Age Tombs from Irbid.” *ADAJ* 11: 88-101.

tenth to ninth century B.C. Tomb D's use was dated between 1350-1100 B.C.

#### 6.4.4 Tell er-Rumeith

Tell er-Rumeith lies 40 km east of Irbid and 5 km south of Ramtha. The site is a circular rocky outcrop 50 m in diameter. In 1962 P. Lapp took soundings here which revealed a straightforward stratigraphy with occupation from 933-733 B.C.<sup>695</sup> In 1967 Lapp returned and excavated four Iron Age strata (VIII-V) in order to articulate the findings from the 1962 soundings. Lapp identified a fort with an outer casemate wall some 1.25-1.5 m wide (stratum VIII), which had at least two fire destruction levels with up to a half a meter of burn material.<sup>696</sup> He dated stratum VIII "to the time of Solomon." Stratum VII had another fort built on top of the destruction of the stratum VIII fort with a stone wall some 1.5 m wide. Lapp identified this as an Aramean border fort, and dated it to ca. 885 B.C. with its destruction in the mid-ninth century B.C.<sup>697</sup> The ceramic assemblage of stratum VII was not like the Palestinian-style ceramics of stratum VIII, but rather it was distinctly Syrian in nature.<sup>698</sup> Stratum VI contained houses constructed by a consistently executed plan, and ceramics dating to ca. 800 B.C. Lapp assigned stratum VI to Hazael's era and southward expansion, which explained the absence of any defensive structure.<sup>699</sup> In stratum V a copper-refining kiln was found in the destruction debris which is similar to others known in Palestine at the time.<sup>700</sup> Lapp assigned stratum V's destruction to Tiglath-pileser III (733 B.C.), with the possibility that the site was re-

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<sup>695</sup>Lapp, P.W. 1975. *The Tale of the Tell*. Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press.

<sup>696</sup>Ibid., p. 114-15.

<sup>697</sup>Ibid., p. 116-18.

<sup>698</sup>Ibid., p. 115-16.

<sup>699</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>700</sup>Ibid.

used as a station for Assyrian troops for a short period thereafter.

#### 6.4.5 Tell el-Husn

In 1983 a highway project between the Baq'ah valley and Ramtha obligated a one-week emergency excavation, which was conducted in 1984, on its route. Originally designed as a surface survey to gain the interest of local authorities, it soon became apparent that excavations were needed. The surface survey, while not presuming to be exhaustive, recorded 30 sites which needed more thorough examining. One of these sites, Tell el-Husn, was investigated by A. Leonard and C. Leonard who found sherds which indicated the tell's lower city was settled in the LB-Iron II periods.<sup>701</sup> Traces of an intensively burnt casemate wall were found and dated to Iron II.

#### 6.4.6 Saḥem

Saḥem, a modern village in north-west Jordan, lies 22 km northwest of Irbid and 5.5 km south of the Yarmuk river overlooking the Sea of Galilee at 450 m above sea-level. Saḥem is an agricultural area with a number of natural springs.<sup>702</sup> From 25 June to 15 July 1992 a rescue excavation was conducted under the supervision of I.A. Melhem and H. Tan'ani when a tomb was uncovered during a construction project.<sup>703</sup> The tomb contained a large quantity of items: 78 ceramic vessels, a female stone figurine, three clay figurines (two females and a bull), five daggers, two arrowheads, two knives, jewelry and scarabs.<sup>704</sup> Two of the clay figurines and the stone figurine, seemingly all depict female

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<sup>701</sup>Leonard, A. 1987. "The Jarash-Tell el-Husn Highway survey." *ADAJ* 31: 343-90. The report lacks clear information and should be used cautiously. The reports of LBA pottery from Tell el-Husn have been lost (Strange 2001: 297).

<sup>702</sup>Glueck 1951: 133.

<sup>703</sup>Fischer, P.M. 1997. *A Late Bronze to Early Iron Age Tomb at Saḥem, Jordan*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

<sup>704</sup>See Fischer 1997 for the list of over 200 items found.

goddesses. The clay figurines may have been imported from Cisjordan and demonstrate “a religious amalgamation” of the Egyptian goddess Hathor and the Canaanite goddesses Ashera/Astarte/Anat.<sup>705</sup> The female stone figurine and the bull figurine were probably both used as fertility idols with the gilded dagger also probably connected with cults and offerings.

As Fischer judiciously noted, “The picture of society reflected by just one tomb is no doubt incomplete since it represents only a limited part of society...Excavation at a burial site is by itself of limited value.”<sup>706</sup> With that caveat, he dated the tomb’s use from the end of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the twelfth century B.C. with evidence from the various finds suggesting multi-phase usage. The objects from the tomb “reflect the life of an obviously prosperous society, whose wealth was based on agriculture.”<sup>707</sup> It is clear that the people acquired valuable imported jewelry made of gold, silver and bronze, as well as weapons. There was no imported Mycenaean or Cypriot pottery, but there was locally made imitation “Mycenaean” pottery accounting for 27% of the ceramics<sup>708</sup>, perhaps indicating a strong local ceramic industry and a desire for this foreign type of pottery.

#### 6.4.7 Tell esh-Shihab

Tell esh-Shihab lies 28 km northeast of Irbid on the Yarmuk river and the main Transjordanian trade route. Albright visited the site and noted an abundance of Bronze

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<sup>705</sup>Fischer 1997: 89-90; see also Pritchard, J. 1943. *Palestinian Figurines in Relation to Certain Goddesses Known Through Literature*. (AOS 24). New Haven: American Oriental Society, pp. 59-96; for an updated source see Keel, O. 1998. *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God in Ancient Israel*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, pp. 97-108.

<sup>706</sup>Fischer 1997: 89.

<sup>707</sup>Ibid.

<sup>708</sup>Fischer 1997: 86.

Age pottery, and reserved speculation of any Iron Age occupation.<sup>709</sup> While no excavation has been undertaken, the upper portion of a stela of Seti I was found there.<sup>710</sup> When viewed with the stelae found at Beth-Shean and Sheik Sa'd it seems possible that there was an Egyptian presence, of some sort, from the Jordan valley to the trade route in the east leading to Damascus.<sup>711</sup> Na'aman suggested that the site was ancient Yeno 'am.<sup>712</sup>

#### 6.4.8 Tell el-Baider

Tell el-Baider was included in the Maqarin survey<sup>713</sup>, which gave the impression that the southern slopes of the Yarmuk river were sparsely populated in the Iron Age. It lies south of the Yarmuk across from the Zeizen railway station. A circular walled structure approximately 45 m in diameter surrounds the hill, and a gateway of dressed basaltic blocks were visible at the surface, as well as LBA pottery.<sup>714</sup> Ottosson noted its similarity with Khanasiri and Aideun, situated 20 km and 3 kms respectively west of Mafraq, as well as Tell Hadar to the north.

#### 6.4.9 Aideun

Aideun lies 5 km south-west of Mafraq on a commanding hilltop 790m high overlooking the Mafraq plain. The hill is part of a natural line of hills with numerous caves and cisterns. The site consists of a circular structure approximately 90 m in diameter with the slopes of the tell exhibiting traces of a glacis.<sup>715</sup> The circular rampart

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<sup>709</sup>Albright 1925:17.

<sup>710</sup>Kitchen 1992: 26.

<sup>711</sup>See § 5.1.4.

<sup>712</sup>Na'aman 1977:177.

<sup>713</sup>Kerestes *et al.* 1978.

<sup>714</sup>Ottosson 1993: 95.

<sup>715</sup>See Humbert, J-B. 1989a. "Aidun." Pp. 125-126 in Homès-Frédéricq and Hennessy 1989a.

is up to 3 m wide and made of hewn and adjusted blocks with the inner area divided by walls with radiating corner-stones. The area is covered with debris with sherds dating to Iron Age II.<sup>716</sup>

#### 6.4.10 Khanasiri

Tell Khanasiri rises 860 m and the summit offers a view of southern Syria – Jebel Druz, Hauran and Mount Hermon and to the west Jebel ‘Ajlûn. It stands completely isolated, and its high rounded hill can be seen from afar. Glueck noted that the hill’s upper parts seem to be of an artificial construction, but did not find any pottery earlier than Roman.<sup>717</sup> On top of the tell, J. Sapin noted a circular structure with a diameter of 65 m resembling the one at Aiden, which is 15 km away and also a strategic area. The northern area of the tell has “houses” with sherds from the Iron Age which may help date the circular construction.<sup>718</sup>

#### 6.4.11 Khirbet Mafrâq/Feiden (el)

El Feiden was an Iron Age site with its highest point at 708 m and a diameter of ca. 70 m. It lies on wadi el Feiden at the edge of the desert. Glueck visited the site<sup>719</sup>, and in 1986 J.B. Humbert and F. Zayadine conducted excavations. On its western side was a cyclopean stronghold measuring 70 x 47 m built on virgin rock. Based on the ceramics the excavators dated the site’s beginning to the 11th-10th century B.C., and believed it was deserted at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>720</sup> In 1976 a tomb was excavated and dated to the

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<sup>716</sup>Glueck 1951: 81-82 did not find Iron Age sherds at the site.

<sup>717</sup>Glueck 1951: 90-92.

<sup>718</sup>Homès-Frédéricq and Hennessy 1989a: 347-348.

<sup>719</sup>Glueck 1951:1-2.

<sup>720</sup>Humbert, J.-B. 1989b. “Feiden (el).” Pp. 221-224 in Homès-Frédéricq and Hennessy 1989a.

end of the LBA or from LB-Iron transition.<sup>721</sup>

Chart 6.1 Occupation histories by century for north Jordan Plateau sites

Occupation histories by century for north Jordan Plateau sites							
Site\Century	14 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
el-Fukhar	S*	S/d	S	S‡	A	A	s?
Abila	s?	s?/t	--	--	--	--	--
Irbid	S	S*/t	s/in?/t	--	s/in?/t	s/in?/t	--
er-Rumeith	--	--	--	--	S	S	S/d
el-Husn	S?	S?	S?	S?	S/d?	A/d?	--
Saḥem	s/t	s/t	s/t	--	--	--	--
esh-Shihab	--	‡	--	--	--	--	--
el-Baider	S	S	A	--	--	--	--
Aiden	--	--	--	--	S	S	S
Khanasiri	--	--	S	S	S	S	S
el-Feiden	--	--	--	S	S	S	S/A

S=Settlement; s=settlement of limited nature; d=destruction; t=tomb; ?=in question; E=Egyptian Evidence; W=writing; EA=Amarna Letter; ‡=stele; \*=high-point; A=Abandoned; R=resettled; »=continuation; α=sanctuary; in=industry

## 6.5 Towards a synthesis of the occupational history of Northern Jordan

Due to the nature of archaeological research in the southern Levant, the researcher must first deal with previous surveys as “they represent always the first step of any archaeological research.”<sup>722</sup> Nelson Glueck in his pioneering work postulated that Transjordan during much of the LBA, especially south of the Zerqa river, was abandoned

<sup>721</sup>See Piccirillo, M. 1976. “Una Tomba del Ferro I a Mafraq.” *Liber Annuus* 26: 27-30.

<sup>722</sup>Homès-Frédéricq, D. 1992. “General Introduction to the Theme ‘Sites and Settlements in Jordan.’” *SHAJ* 4: 37-46.



and not resettled until Iron I/II.<sup>723</sup> Glueck suggested that Transjordan during the LBA may have been occupied by nomadic or semi-nomadic people. He has been criticized for correlating his archaeological evidence with the Bible.<sup>724</sup> However, with the maturing of archaeological research in Transjordan, Glueck's study became an important starting point for more research, which is revealing that the MB-LBA are not "particularly obtrusive in the archaeological record of Transjordan in comparison with either the Early Bronze Age or the Iron Age."<sup>725</sup>

During the last three decades more refined approaches in the method of archaeological survey have aided the understanding of Transjordan's settlement history. Mittmann's survey reported 335 sites in northern Jordan between the Yarmuk and Zerqa rivers with the majority of LB II sites concentrated in northern Transjordan; however, by Iron I/II the settlement/site patterns had shifted southward.<sup>726</sup> However, the Jordan Valley Survey found a concentration of LB sites situated between wadi Zerqa and wadi Kufrinjeh, which seems to harmonize with well-known sites excavated in the northern Jordan Valley, e.g., Pella, Deir 'Alla, Abu Kharaz. From these survey and excavation reports it seems that there was a strong foreign presence, most likely Egyptian, which distinguishes these sites with the sites in the north Jordan plateau.<sup>727</sup>

From the limited data from the various survey and excavation reports, it appears that there was evidence of limited settlement at sites in northern Jordan, near the Yarmuk

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<sup>723</sup>Glueck 1951: 423.

<sup>724</sup>Sauer, J.A. 1986. "Transjordan in the Bronze and Iron Ages: A Critique of Glueck's Synthesis." *BASOR* 263: 1-26; *ibid.* 1982. "Prospects for Archaeology in Jordan and Syria." *BA* 45/2: 73-84.

<sup>725</sup>Routledge 2004: 61.

<sup>726</sup>Mittmann 1970: 256-264.

<sup>727</sup>See Routledge 2004: 58-86.

river, during the LBA. But with the transition to the Iron Age the current data would seem to indicate that there was the beginning of movement away from the area, with a growth of sites in the south and north in the Iron Age II period.

While firm conclusions can not be made, the excavations at Tell el-Fukhar reveal a similar architectural pattern to those at Bethsaida. Ottosson had postulated a possible “Aramean” presence at Tell el-Fukhar, and perhaps that may be further defined as Geshurite. This harmonizes with the excavations of the sites to the east of the Sea of Galilee, where there seems to be a few larger settlements which began in the Iron Age. Perhaps this indicates that at the end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age, the people who dwelt in northern Jordan migrated north to sites along the Sea of Galilee when people started settling in the Jordan Valley.

## **6.6 Sites east of the Sea of Galilee**

### **6.6.1 Bostra**

The fertility of the Hauran Plain, west of the Jebal Druze, has made it ideal for settlement throughout history as attested by the abundance of monuments spanning from Nabatean to early Islamic eras. Bostra, located south of the basalt plateau 42 km east of Der'a and 10 km north of Jordan, has served as the chief administrative center of this region.<sup>728</sup> In antiquity the city was mentioned twice in the Amarna Letters (EA 197: 13; 199: 13), but due to its abundance of Nabataean and Roman-Byzantine architectural and inscriptional remains archaeological research projects have not concentrated on pre-classical periods. However, in 1980 Seeden initiated a project to explore Bronze Age Bostra.<sup>729</sup> Seeden selected the tell's northwest section to excavate due to its manageable

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<sup>728</sup>See Dentzer, J-M. 1997. “Bosra.” *OEANE* 1: 350-353.

<sup>729</sup>Seeden and Wilson 1984; Seeden, H. 1986. “Bronze Age Village Occupation at Buṣrā: AUB Excavations on the Northwest Tell, 1983-1984.” *Berytus*

size, being under 8 m high and less than 8 hectares, and proximity to a natural water source. During the first campaign a significant quantity of MB-LBA pottery was found at a depth of 2 m in two areas.<sup>730</sup> In the second season (1983-1984) some 25,000 sherds were collected with 5,000 dated to the Bronze Age.<sup>731</sup> Seeden concluded that these sherds revealed that the vessels were all locally produced due to the amount of finely crushed volcanic filler and grog.<sup>732</sup> The site had no trace of a wall, leading Seeden to conclude that the population comprised primarily of “agro-pastoralists.”<sup>733</sup> Seeden stated, “The inhabitants of the last bronze age village at Busrā moved away and abandoned the site. The cause for the abandonment left no imprints in the excavated archaeological record...A millennium was to pass before the site was settled again.”<sup>734</sup>

### 6.6.2 Ashtaroth

Some 15 km north of the Yarmuk and 5 km south of Nawa on a fertile plain are three mounds in close proximity to one another: Sheikh Sa‘d, Tell ‘Ashtarah and Tell el-Ash‘ari.<sup>735</sup> These mounds have been variously identified with Ashtaroth or Karnaim, or both. Albright identified Sheikh Sa‘d as Karnaim and found EB-Early Iron sherds, though he noted an absence of LB sherds.<sup>736</sup> Albright identified Tell ‘Ashtarah as ancient Ashtaroth and found sherds from all Bronze periods – “including some remarkably

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34: 11-32.

<sup>730</sup>See Seeden and Wilson 1984.

<sup>731</sup>Seeden 1986: 19.

<sup>732</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>733</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<sup>734</sup>Ibid.

<sup>735</sup>See Albright 1925, 1943.

<sup>736</sup>See Albright 1925: 15. Kochavi (1998a: 36) states, “Karniam = Sheikh Sa‘ad came to prominence in the Iron Age. A Ramesses II stela and a statue of a Neo-Hittite lion found there attest to its importance.”

interesting decorated pieces” – and the early Iron Age. But, he found no evidence for later Iron periods, which he correlated with the capital city moving to Karnaim during the Assyrian restructuring of the western provinces.<sup>737</sup> Abou Assaf excavated here for three seasons (1966-1968), and confirmed Albright’s survey of LB-Iron Age occupation with abandonment between Iron I and II. Level III (Iron II) revealed a rich array of ceramics, found in three spots on the tell, which Abou Assaf identified as “*araméenne*.”<sup>738</sup> Level IV revealed imported Mycenaean, Cypriot, and “Philistine” sherds.<sup>739</sup> In area C levels V and VI the material revealed a rich Bronze Age culture and “*un atelier de travail du bronze équipé de quatre fours...*” The finds included ceramics, jewelry, a terra-cotta figurine of a woman’s face, *et surtout l’effigie d’une divinité en bronze*, and other figurines.<sup>740</sup> Abou Assaf excavated three tombs which he dated to 900-700 B.C. The third site, Tell el-Ash’ari, is similar to Tell ‘Ashtarah but is better situated geographically with natural protection from the wadi Ehreir gorge. Here Albright identified sherds from the Bronze periods, but no Iron Age sherds. He identified the site as ancient Raphon-Raphana (Thutmose III # 29; 1 Macc 5:37). Of interest was a stele found in secondary use which resembles the engraved stele found at Bethsaida.<sup>741</sup>

### 6.6.3 Edre’i/Der’ah

At Edre’i, modern Der’ah, Albright collected sherds from Early Bronze to the present, and stated that the early Iron Age was particularly well attested.<sup>742</sup> According to

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<sup>737</sup>Albright 1925: 15.

<sup>738</sup>Voûte 1971-1972: 126; Abou Assaf 1966.

<sup>739</sup>Voûte 1971-1972: 126.

<sup>740</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>741</sup>See Bennett and Keel 1998: 8-11; Abb. 11a-b. 12.

<sup>742</sup>Albright 1925: 16.

the biblical story, along with Ashtaroth, Edre'i was a settlement where Og, the king of Bashan, dwelt (Joshua 12:4; 13:12, 31; Num 21:33; Deut 3:10).

#### 6.6.4 Tell el-Duweir

Tell el-Duweir lies at the entrance of the Yarmuk valley. Albright visited the mound, which measures ca. 25 x 20 m, and found LB-Early Iron pottery with its ancient town walls still visible.<sup>743</sup> However, when Glueck surveyed the site he was of the opinion that Albright would have re-assigned most of his sherd readings from LBA to the Iron Age.<sup>744</sup>

#### 6.6.5 'Ein Gev

Tell 'Ein Gev lies on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and is an elongated artificial mound that rises a few meters above the surrounding plain. The tell, today's kibbutz 'Ein Gev, lies between wadi Nuqeib on the north and the river Susitha (wadi el-Husn) on the south. The tell covers approximately 30 dunam (120 x 125 m) and is divided into two sections, a large southern end being relatively flat with a smaller northern part rising 3 m above it. Schumacher noticed several foundation walls at the site.<sup>745</sup> In the fall of 1961 Mazar conducted soundings and established a stratigraphic sequence.<sup>746</sup> The northern and southern boundaries of the tell have steep slopes with 250 m between them. The western boundary was in close proximity to the lake and the eastern boundary, less clearly discernible, some 120 m away as distinguished by large amounts of sherds in the foundation trenches of houses.<sup>747</sup> The excavators assumed that the topography reflects the

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<sup>743</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>744</sup>Albright 1951: 141.

<sup>745</sup>Schumacher 1888.

<sup>746</sup>Mazar, B. *et al.* 1964. "Ein Gev: Excavations in 1961." *IEJ* 14/1-2: 1-33; *ibid.* 1993. "Ein Gev." Pp. 409-411 in Stern 1993.

<sup>747</sup>Mazar *et al* 1964: 5.

layout of the ancient settlement, where the southern end contained dwellings and the higher northern area was the citadel.

• The tell's southern limit (Area A) is a fairly steep slope, 15 m long and 3.5 m high. The excavators cut a 25 x 2.5 m trench down the entire length of the slope, then continued farther to the north, the tell's flatter part, in order to identify the stratigraphy of the city walls. The excavations in Area A revealed five occupation levels (I-V) dated from the tenth to the eighth centuries B.C.<sup>748</sup>

In Area B soundings were conducted on the western side of the elevated northern area to determine the nature and history of the citadel which the excavators concluded measured approximately 60 x 60 m. These soundings revealed four occupation levels – though the strata in Areas A and C were not identical. The excavations in Area B revealed that the citadel wall was 1.35 m wide and preserved to a height of 4.15 m. Mazar stated, “It was a massive construction, built on virgin soil with very large, undressed stones on both sides and rubble filled between.”<sup>749</sup>

In an attempt to synchronize the strata of Areas A-C and explain the results Mazar concluded that the solid city-wall (stratum V), a casemate wall, and citadel (stratum IV) dated to the tenth century B.C.<sup>750</sup> The transition from stratum V to IV underwent an organizational change in the settlement fortification. The casemate wall (stratum IV) had an outer wall of 1.75 m and inner wall of 1.15 m with a 1.4 m cavity between them, thus it was stronger than similar walls at Megiddo (IVa) and Hazor (VIII). Mazar dated stratum III from Ben-Hadad's conquest (c. 886 B.C.) to Shalmaneser III's campaigns, and believed

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<sup>748</sup>Mazar *et al* 1964; Mazar 1993.

<sup>749</sup>Mazar *et al* 1964: 15.

<sup>750</sup>See Mazar *et al* 1964: 19. Note that Mazar later changed the nomenclature of the excavation, see Mazar 1993: 409-411.

that a different people settled there and built the new town on the ruins. They used an elaborate system of defenses including a plan of “offsets and insets,” which became common in the beginning of the ninth century B.C., with a stone-faced glacis with a slope of 1:3.<sup>751</sup> In room 23 (wall 11), which was paved with large flagstones, incense vessels were found possibly implying a cultic function. To the north of wall 11 was a possible courtyard where an inscribed storage jar was found which read *lšqy*, “belonging to the cupbearer.”<sup>752</sup> On paleographic grounds the Aramaic inscription is stated to be dated no later than mid-ninth century B.C.<sup>753</sup> In stratum III room 11 was found an incense bowl, a votive axe made of nephrite (similar to ones at Megiddo and Zinjirli), and a tripod basalt bowl elongated with a crudely fashioned ram’s horns on the base – similar bowls bearing heads of animals (especially bulls) were carved on Iron Age bowls from Zinjirli, Carchemish and Halaf.<sup>754</sup> North of the city-wall a street (locus 9) with a width of 1.75 m to 3 m passed between the city-wall and the large building providing access to the courtyard.

The buildings of stratum II were built on stratum III’s burned destruction. A similarity in architecture and character of the finds in strata II and III led Mazar to conclude that they belonged to the same historical-cultural period. The ceramics of stratum II were similar to those of stratum III with some innovations characteristic of the

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<sup>751</sup>See Yadin 1963: 322-323.

<sup>752</sup>Mazar *et al* 1964: 27-29.

<sup>753</sup>Mazar 1993: 411.

<sup>754</sup>Mazar 1964: 23 believed room 11 was probably a storage room for cultic objects and compares it to Megiddo 2081 (stratum IV B-V A). Also of note was a vessel found by the residents of the kibbutz of a bowl with a bar-handle and clay ring attached to it (Mazar *et al* 1964: 49, Fig. 11:9). Above the handle is a schematic bull’s head looking inward, and Mazar 1964: 26 stated that there are no parallels for this.

eighth century, i.e., widespread introduction of wheel burnishing. In stratum I and stratum II the stratigraphic origin of some of the pottery is uncertain, including some sherds of ring-based bowls with stepped sides. At Tell Jemmeh these were labeled “Assyrian type” and others have been found at Halaf and Hazor.<sup>755</sup> Stratum II was completely destroyed by fire towards the end of the ninth century B.C. Stratum I, built on stratum II’s ruins, was a of completely different nature with a large public building and stone walls 1.1 m thick. Mazar indicated it could have served as a storehouse or fort, and dated it to 790-733 B.C. based on the ceramics.

In the early 1950's when kibbutz members were planting palm trees they found two basalt stelae measuring 70 x 50 x 25 cm, one decorated with a palm tree in relief.<sup>756</sup> In the area of these finds, two trial trenches (D1 and D2) were dug with the lower strata corresponding to Areas A-C.

From 1990-1992 excavations were renewed at ‘Ein Gev by H. Kanaseki and H. Ogawa under the auspices of the “Land of Geshur Project.”<sup>757</sup> The excavators chose to excavate the tell’s northeast quadrant, 70 m east of Mazar’s 1964 excavations (Area B and C), and identified five strata, three belonging to the Iron Age. Stratum V was a strong fortified settlement built in the tenth century B.C. on virgin soil.<sup>758</sup> The city-wall, built of large basalt boulders, measured 2 m thick with a stone-lined trench. The wall ran along the tell’s eastern slope in a north-south direction and was excavated to a depth of 3.5 m, without reaching its foundation. Stratum IV contained the remains of a public building with 18 m of its length uncovered. Kochavi identified it as a store-house preceding the

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<sup>755</sup>Mazar *et al* 1964: 30.

<sup>756</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>757</sup>Hereafter LGP.

<sup>758</sup>See Kochavi 1998a: 30; Hino, H. 1994. *‘En Gev Excavation*. Tenri, Japan.



stratum III structure.<sup>759</sup> In Stratum III two tripartite buildings were excavated, built with the same orientation as the stratum IV storehouse, and each consisted of three long halls. The central hall was wider and unpaved while the halls on either side were narrower and paved.<sup>760</sup> Two rows of eleven pillars, each a monolith about 1.4 m high and square in cross section, divided the halls.<sup>761</sup> The buildings were 18 m long, thus similar in size to pillared buildings (the commonly called “stables”) at Megiddo. The excavations and reports are incomplete, but Kochavi tentatively assigned the tell’s occupation to the tenth century B.C., thus concurring with the earlier excavations. In the ninth century, Kochavi believes that it was a major “Aramean” settlement constructed as a frontier fort, fifteen kms south of Bethsaida. The settlement may have come to an end in the eighth century B.C., commonly attributed to Tiglath-Pileser III’s campaigns.

Kochavi noted that the ancient name of Aphek was preserved in the name of the Mishnaic-talmudic-period (second to sixth centuries C.E.) town of Afeka located at the source of the ‘Ein Gev River about four miles uphill from ‘Ein Gev; later the Arab village of Fiq, and now Kibbutz Afiq.<sup>762</sup> Since no Iron Age remains were found in this area, Kochavi at first thought that Tel Soreg, located about one mile downhill along the ‘Ein Gev River, might have been ancient Aphek, but after excavations he ruled out Tel Soreg, and thought it amounted to only a small fort guarding a section of the pass. Thus he concluded that Tel ‘Ein-Gev due to its strategic location, the size of its finds, and the fact that there are no other good choices support the suggestion that it was the Transjordanian

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<sup>759</sup>Kochavi 1998a: 30.

<sup>760</sup>See Kochavi, M. 1999. “Tripartite Buildings, Divided Structures, Divide Scholars.” *BAR* 25: 44-50; 1998a, 1998b; cf. Herr, L. 1988. “Tripartite Buildings and the Marketplace in Iron Age Israel.” *BASOR* 272: 47-67.

<sup>761</sup>Kochavi 1998a: 44, fig. 7.

<sup>762</sup>Kochavi 1992: 43-44.

biblical Aphek.

#### 6.6.6 Tell Soreg

In 1980 D. Ben-Ami conducted a surface survey at Tell Soreg and found an abundance of Iron Age sherds. The site lies on a white limestone hill standing out from the basalt covered surroundings 1 km east of Kibbutz Afiq, at the point where the 'Ein Gev river begins its steep descent into the Sea of Galilee. The isolated hill is fed by several small springs and covers less than one acre. The tell was excavated from 1987-1989 by L. Vinitzky under the auspices of LGP, but yielded no clear stratigraphy. The ceramic finds suggest that it was first occupied in MB I (2200-2000 B.C.) with the pottery resembling that of Gilead and the Jordan Valley.<sup>763</sup> A few silo pits and collared-rim jars, resembling ones found at Tell el-Fukhar (§6.4.1), suggest occupation in Iron I. The first town walls were built in the ninth-eighth century B.C. and seem to have been fortification walls, with one 23 m long and 1 m wide. Several perpendicular walls run from this wall with small casemate-like rooms where an abundance of Iron II sherds were found on paved floors. The small finds, which included: mortars, pestles, grinding stones, together with the rock cut stone-lined silos seem to indicate that the site was an agricultural settlement.<sup>764</sup>

#### 6.6.7 Tell Kinrot/Kinneret

Tell Kinrot is also called Tell el-Oreimeh or by its ancient name, Kinneret (Joshua 19:35), as identified by Dalman and Albright.<sup>765</sup> The tell lies on the western shores of the Sea of Galilee and dominates the fertile Ginnosar plain along the important trade route

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<sup>763</sup>Kochavi 1989: 7.

<sup>764</sup>See Faust, A. 2000. "Ethnic Complexity in Northern Israel during Iron Age II." *PEQ* 132: 2-27.

<sup>765</sup>See Dalman 1921, Albright 1923.

from the coastal plain to Damascus.<sup>766</sup> Though not part of southern Syria, I have included the research on Kinneret due to: 1) geographical proximity to Bethsaida, 2) possible trade connections from Tell Hadar/Tell 'Ein Gev<sup>767</sup>, and 3) reports that Kinneret was a Geshurite city.<sup>768</sup> The site has two topographical areas with a depression between them: 1) a southern plateau, and 2) a lower elevation northern part. The site was first examined by Karge from 1909-1911, perhaps due to two important surface finds: a scarab bearing the name of Queen Tiy, the wife of Amenhotep III, and an Egyptian stela fragment mentioning a war against Mitanni.<sup>769</sup> Since then various groups have excavated the site, most recently, V. Fritz from 1982-1985 then 1994-1997, and in 2002 the 'Kinneret Regional Project' was established. Based on the tell's topography, five areas have been excavated. Fritz identified five strata from EB II to early Iron for the settlement on the slope, but not represented equally.<sup>770</sup> The city, after a period of occupation at the end of MB IIC/LB I, was abandoned during LB II and resettled in the early Iron Age. Fritz stated, "The city existed in three discernible occupation levels during the Early Iron Age. The pottery in Strata 2 and 3 exhibits hardly any differentiation and can be dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The

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<sup>766</sup>See Fritz, V. 1993b. "Chinnereth, Tel." Pp. 299-301 in Stern 1993.

<sup>767</sup>See Kochavi 1998a.

<sup>768</sup>Comments by S. Münger at the 2002 ASOR meetings; see also [www.kinneret-excavations.org](http://www.kinneret-excavations.org).

<sup>769</sup>Fritz 1993b: 299.

<sup>770</sup>Fritz 1990, 1993a, 1993b and 1999 has modified his chronology from that recorded in the earlier reports to the 1999a article. The stratigraphy of the tell is of ongoing concern, see Fritz's (new) dating influenced (?) by findings from Tell Hadar, see Coldstream, N. and Mazar, A. 2003. "Greek Pottery from Tel Rehov and Iron Age Chronology." *IEJ* 53: 29-48., n. 1; Kopcke, G. 2002. "1000 B.C.E.? 900 B.C.E.? A Greek Vase from Lake Galilee." Pp. 109-117 in Ehrenberg, E. (ed.) *Leaving No Stones Unturned. Essays on the Ancient Near East and Egypt in Honor of Donald P. Hansen.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns; Knauf, E.A. 2002. "Kinneret and Early Iron Age Chronology." *BN* 113: 18-23; Münger, S. 2005. "Of Pots and Strata...: A Reply to 'Kinneret and Early Iron Age Chronology' by E.A. Knauf." *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Evangelischen Instituts für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes* 9/10: 77-91.

city was probably destroyed at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century; the date of its foundation, however, cannot at present be established.”<sup>771</sup> Iron Age occupation (11<sup>th</sup> century B.C./stratum 3/VI) was evidenced by a fortified city with three different city-wall systems on the slope’s north-eastern edge (Area G). The style and structure of the city were different from that of neighboring Israelite cities of the same period, two of the walls were 11 m wide with a glacis, and may identify the city as “Canaanite.”<sup>772</sup> In Area K a residential quarter, which lacked a discernible plan, was partially excavated with the only unifying structure being a road on the north and south, and perhaps another one on the east and west.<sup>773</sup> Fritz believes that the site was abandoned by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C., but resettled in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century as a “squatter habitation.”<sup>774</sup> Stratum III consisted of the remains of external walls which were identified as belonging to a “fort” which measured 20 x 25 m.<sup>775</sup> Stratum II saw the foundation of a new Iron IIB city covering ca. 1 hectare with a two-chamber city gate and four large towers incorporated into its fortifications.<sup>776</sup> One gate chamber was excavated, measuring 3.3 x 3.3 m, and was at a higher level than the gate passage. It was reached by three steps and lined inside with benches along three walls. From there, Fritz uncovered a paved “street” which led into a square room behind the chamber and to a pillared building which was 13 m long and had two rows of nine pillars forming a central paved hall of 2.5 m, and side halls of beaten earth 2 to 2.2 m wide.<sup>777</sup> Fritz found large quantities of ceramics, different from those of

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<sup>771</sup>Fritz 1999: 94.

<sup>772</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>773</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>774</sup>Ibid., p. 112-114.

<sup>775</sup>Fritz 1993a: 190.

<sup>776</sup>Ibid.

<sup>777</sup>See Fritz 1993a, 1999; Kochavi 1998a.

strata V and IV, and interpreted that as a sign of residential use and suggested that the building functioned as a barracks.<sup>778</sup> Fritz noted the stratum II pottery differs from that of strata V and IV. A thick layer of burnt material in the gate area and pillared building implies a violent destruction of the settlement, assigned to the end of the eighth century B.C. Fritz highlighted two finds from stratum II. First, a bronze figurine of a seated god, found in the small room next to the city gate with, seemingly, no direct parallels. Fritz concluded that it has a Syrian origin and probably dates from the LBA.<sup>779</sup> Second, a “lion bowl” dated to the last third of the 8<sup>th</sup> century which features a “female” lion looking into the center and gives the impression that it is being held by a human right hand. The bowl was made of Egyptian Blue and Fritz believes that is in an “Assyrian style.”<sup>780</sup> On the terrace in front of the stratum II city gate Fritz partially excavated a large building measuring 30 x 25 m which he interpreted as a palace built by the Assyrians during their rule in the area in the eighth-seventh centuries B.C.<sup>781</sup>

#### 6.6.8 Tell Hadar

Tell Hadar, a four acre mound, lies 7 km north of ‘Ein Gev on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, west of the Golan plateau. The site was noted by Epstein and Gutman who observed several Bronze and Iron Age mounds along the eastern shore in this region during their 1967-68 survey.<sup>782</sup> M. Kochavi excavated the site from 1987-1993, and found six strata, three of which spanned the LB-Iron Ages.<sup>783</sup>

The LB I period (stratum VI) was attested by massive concentric defensive walls

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<sup>778</sup>Fritz 1993a: 200.

<sup>779</sup>Ibid., pp. 207-208.

<sup>780</sup>Ibid.

<sup>781</sup>Fritz 1993a: 203.

<sup>782</sup>See Epstein and Gutman 1972: 282, site 140; Epstein 1993: 83-90.

<sup>783</sup>See Kochavi *et al.* 1992, Kochavi 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1999.

visible on the surface.<sup>784</sup> The outer wall circumscribed the tell's base and was over 4 m wide. The inner wall, located roughly half-way up the mound's slope, was some 25 m from the outer wall and nearly 2.5 m wide. These walls were constructed with large basalt boulders and perhaps rose 5 m above ground-level with the upper half possibly constructed of mudbrick. A round tower 20 m in diameter formed part of the defensive wall.<sup>785</sup> Kochavi suggested Tell Hadar's circular fortification wall, a defensive system, was unknown at Iron II Israelite sites, though it had affinities to contemporary neo-Hittite centers in Turkey and northern Syria.<sup>786</sup> The gateway through the inner defensive wall on the east has an unusual form: a ca. 3 m wide opening, flanked on one side by a 1 m thick pier and on the other by a wall bending inward at an angle to form a distinctive "snail-mouth" entrance.<sup>787</sup> Found in the destruction debris of this gateway were: basalt bowls, a large basin, an undecorated orthostat, and two stylized animal legs from a basaltic tripod bowl (which Kochavi interpreted as reflecting Phoenician influence). A second undecorated orthostat was found in the 1990 season.<sup>788</sup>

The site was "resettled" during Iron I (stratum V) and Kochavi found a number of stone-lined silos next to the inner wall of the LB construction.<sup>789</sup> Architecturally,

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<sup>784</sup>See Kochavi 1998a: 41, fig. 3.

<sup>785</sup>Ibid.

<sup>786</sup>However, see §6.4.8-10 where similar sites have been found south of the Yarmuk. For a similar structure from the Syrian Middle Bronze age see Matthiae, P. 1989/1990. "Tall Tuqan 1986." *AfO* 36/37: 335-339; Frankfort, H. 1996. *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed. updated by M. Roaf and D. Matthews) New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 276-89.

<sup>787</sup>Kochavi *et al* 1992: 35.

<sup>788</sup>Ibid.

<sup>789</sup>Kochavi does not mention a destruction layer or abandonment of the LB site (stratum VI), but consistently mentions that the site was "resettled" in Iron I (strata V and IV). Kochavi stated that "a stratigraphical and chronological gap of two to three hundred years exists, however, between them and the preceding and later strata. Contamination may be safely ruled out in this case" (Kochavi 1998b: 471).

stratum IV yielded three public buildings: a storehouse, a tripartite-pillared structure, and a granary. In the debris (2 m deep) of the tripartite-pillared structure were 120 complete vessels which Kochavi stated “is one of the largest, cleanest representatives of the 11<sup>th</sup> century assemblages from this region.”<sup>790</sup> Also found were Phoenician decorated flasks and jugs, and bowls of a type currently only found in Gilead. Within this “sealed context” was a Greek “proto-geometric” bowl, published by Kopcke. Specialists agree that this bowl belongs to the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Kochavi had consistently dated stratum IV to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but he may lower the date to c. 980 B.C. due to this find.<sup>791</sup> P. Beck identified 70% of the pottery as storage vessels with another 15% being household pottery and miscellanea with 15% being imports from Gilead, Upper Galilee and the Mediterranean coast, and Beck noted a complete lack of any household bowls.<sup>792</sup>

After the discovery of the tripartite-building structures at Tell Hadar and ‘Ein Gev, Kochavi surveyed thirty-five similar buildings at 12 sites in the southern Levant.<sup>793</sup> Kochavi concluded, based on five criteria, that the buildings should be regarded as entrêpôts. According to Kochavi these appeared in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and were located outside of the central hill country in areas seemingly more advanced in their societal and political development: Tell Abu-Hawam (Canaanite/Phoenician), Tell Qasile (Philistine), Tell Masos (Amalekite) and Tell Hadar (Geshurite).<sup>794</sup> Kochavi believes that these places

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<sup>790</sup>Kochavi 1998b: 471.

<sup>791</sup>See Coldstream and Mazar 2003: 29, n. 1.

<sup>792</sup>Kochavi 1998b: 471.

<sup>793</sup>See Kochavi 1998a; 1998b; 1999; Herr 1988; cf., Blakely, J. 2002. “Reconciling Two Maps: Archaeological Evidence for the Kingdoms of David and Solomon.” *BASOR* 327: 49-54.

<sup>794</sup>See Kochavi 1998b: 477. Kochavi has accepted Herzog’s identification that Tell Masos can be linked to the Amalekites, see Herzog, Z. 1983. “Enclosed Settlements in the Negeb and the Wilderness of Beer-sheba.” *BASOR* 250: 41-49, here pp. 43, 47.

were at a stage where they had the infrastructure for commerce, international trade, and rudimentary centralized marketplaces.<sup>795</sup> Tell Hadar's identification as an entrepôt is also indicated by its 11<sup>th</sup> century pottery assemblage, with 70% being storage vessels, 15% imports, and the absence of household bowls. Connected to the building complex was found a unit of six squarish rooms (ca. 10 x 10 m) lined in two parallel units of three, which Kochavi interpreted as a "granary." The rooms were plastered and had stone floors with a thin layer of mudbrick and beaten lime, ideal conditions for storing grain. The "granary" was covered by 2 m of debris, with carbonized wheat grains identified (room 3), and the intensity of the destruction suggests it was full at the time. Kochavi suggested that it was a regional center for grain distribution. Kochavi *et al* noted that this type of granary was unique in the region, though it finds parallels in Egypt.<sup>796</sup> Stratum III contained several private buildings of the "four-room house" type, and a certain degree of urban planning was observed with houses lined along paved streets. This phase of settlement probably lasted for much of the ninth century, with Tell Hadar being "regarded as the agricultural 'daughter' of the larger, well fortified 'En Gev."<sup>797</sup> Strata II-I saw a major change in the tell's urban plan with the LB inner city-wall no longer an integral part of the design structure of the new houses. The houses were built outside of the city-wall and resembled the 'broad house' model and not the 'four-room' model observed in stratum III. An Aramaic (?) inscription incised on the shoulder of a storage jar was also

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<sup>795</sup>Kochavi 1998b: 477.

<sup>796</sup>Kochavi *et al* 1992:37. See also Kemp, B. 1986. "Large Middle Kingdom Granary Buildings (and the Archaeology of Administration). *ZfÄS* 113: 120-36; Borowski, O. 1987. *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, pp. 76-78. Borowski concluded that granaries did not belong to individuals but "to a large social organization, such as the state." He also noted that these types of granaries were not part of the "United Monarchy in Israel."

<sup>797</sup>Kochavi 1993: 140.



found from this period.<sup>798</sup> Kochavi believes that Tell Hadar was replaced in strategic importance by 'Ein Gev, and became a small village for peasants and fishermen until its destruction in 732 B.C.

### 6.6.9 Bethsaida

Bethsaida (et-Tell), an oval-shaped 400 x 200 m mound, lies 45 m north of the Sea of Galilee at the northern center of the Beteiha alluvial plain, an extension of the lava flows of the northern Golan Heights.<sup>799</sup> The tell is 165.9 m below sea level at its peak and rises some 30 m from its surroundings. The tell's eastern slope descends steeply into a ravine with the southern and western slopes gradually sloping to the Beteiha plain, the western slope being c. 250 m away from the Jordan river. The tell's northern side is the most easily accessible and is an extension of the basaltic Golan plateau.<sup>800</sup>

Since 1987 R. Arav has been excavating the site which he divided into two distinct areas: 1) a lower city, constituting most of the mound, and 2) an upper city, which is at the tell's northeastern edge, the focus of the current excavations. Of these two areas, Arav has focused on the upper city in three areas: 1) Area A, at the south, was divided into two sections, one on the eastern slope extending to the western moderate slope, and the other in a north-south direction extending to the southern edge of the upper city<sup>801</sup>; 2) Area B, north of area A where a palace was found<sup>802</sup>; and 3) Area C, north of Area B where excavations in the first year uncovered a 11.3 x 4.5 m building, currently interpreted as a

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<sup>798</sup>Currently awaiting decipherment, see Kochavi 1993: 188.

<sup>799</sup>See Arav and Freund 1995, 1999, 2004; Arav, Freund, and Shroder 2000; Arav 1995, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004; Arav and Bennett 2000.

<sup>800</sup>Arav and Freund 1995: 3.

<sup>801</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>802</sup>Arav and Bennett 2000.

## Roman temple.<sup>803</sup>

Arav has preliminarily delineated seven levels of occupation:

- 1: Level 1 consists of the most recent remains dating from the Middle Ages to the present.
2. Level 2 consists of four phases of occupation during the early Hellenistic and early Roman periods (ca. 333 B.C. - A.D. 67). Numerous intact early Roman vessels were excavated which may have belonged to the "temple."
3. Level 3 consists of occupation during the Persian period ( 540-332 B.C.), but to date there have been sparse indicators of settlement during this period.
4. Level 4 is proposed to consist of occupation phases of the aftermath of the Assyrian conquest (732 B.C.) to the end of the Babylonian period (540 B.C). At present no remains have been found for this period; thus Arav's proposal is based on material found in Level 3 and Level 5.
5. Level 5 consists of the Iron II B phase (925-732 B.C.) and has the greatest concentration of building activity in two discernible phases. Though there are many structures dated to this period, the majority of them attributed to level 5b with 5a representing amendments and reinforcements, Arav is still trying to correlate the relationship of the structures.<sup>804</sup> He has discerned that Bethsaida had two gateways. There was an outer gateway some 9-11 m wide with one tower discernible, from there one entered a plaza measuring 33 m long, paved with large basalt flagstones.<sup>805</sup> Opening from that was the major architectural structure, an inner city-gate, first observed in 1996, with "right-angle axial" and four chambers

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<sup>803</sup>Arav and Freund 1999: 18-19.

<sup>804</sup>Arav 2001: 242.

<sup>805</sup>Arav, Freund and Shroder 2000: 50.

on the eastern-side of the city. The chambers measured ca. 4 x 12 m and had walls 2 m thick. A chamber on either side is thought to have functioned as a granary – with chamber 3 yielding over one ton of burnt barley.<sup>806</sup> The city-gate was protected by a northern and southern tower each ca. 7 x 11 m. At the entrance to the city by the southern tower's base, Arav has identified two high places.<sup>807</sup> A cobbled roadway, measuring some 4 m wide, leads to the city-gate and was flanked by a wall on its east.<sup>808</sup> A fierce conflagration destroyed the gate, evidenced by the burn level in chamber 3, with 15 arrows and spearheads found there.<sup>809</sup>

The gate's northwest corner served as an entrance to the "palace complex" where standing stones were found and interpreted as stelae/*matzevot* for cultic purposes, with comparisons made with similar stelae at Tell Dan.<sup>810</sup> In 1997 a "cult corner" was discovered at the gate's entrance and dated to the eighth century B.C. It was built into an L-shaped niche by an offset in the gate's outer wall. The corner featured a 1.53 x 1.53 m raised platform, reached by two steps. At the top was a stone basin in which was found three perforated tripod cups.<sup>811</sup> At the foot of the platform was a stele *in situ* made from local basalt carved in relief with a front facing bull with long crescent-shaped horns standing on his feet with a

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<sup>806</sup>Arav, Freund and Shroder 2000: 53. In 1886 Schumacher observed the road on the Bashan plateau, and estimated that 10,000 tons of grain annually passed from here to the ports in Haifa (1886: 18-24; 37-38). Kochavi also identified a granary at Tell Hadar, see § 6.6.8.

<sup>807</sup>Arav 2001: 243-44.

<sup>808</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>809</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 244-45.

<sup>810</sup>Arav and Freund 1995: 12; 1999: 45; cf., Biran 1994.

<sup>811</sup>For a similar cup found at 'Ein Gev, see Mazar *et al* 1964: 25-26.

dagger on his left thigh and a rosette-like object over the dagger. The stele was face down and cracked in four places. Bennett and Keel believed that the relief was composed of figurative and non-figurative elements.<sup>812</sup> The “Bethsaida stele” is the fourth stele known with this style of carving and is significant because it was the first to be found in a sealed archaeological context, the others were found in secondary use, thus providing a date for the stelae. Two were found in the Hauran, one at Tell el-Ash’ari (§ 6.6.2) and the other at Tell ‘Awas Salhad, and the fourth is in the Gaziantep museum, in southern Turkey.<sup>813</sup> Bennett and Keel believe that the crescent and rosette help interpret the stele as a depiction of the Mesopotamian moon god, Sin, and not the more common association of the bull with the storm deity, Hadad.<sup>814</sup> T. Ornan agrees in part with this interpretation, but argues that the stele is an amalgamation of the lunar god and storm god.<sup>815</sup> Ornan stated, “It seems that the double role of the bull in this case grants the visual message of the monuments ambiguity, which also corresponds to the combination of figurative and non-figurative portrayal on the stele...It is hard to determine whether what we face here is a moon god with ‘storm’ attributes or a storm deity with lunar features.”<sup>816</sup> While the interpretation is uncertain, most likely this was a cult corner where “an act of homage to the deity represented on the stele may have consisted of drawing water from the basin in one of the perforated cups, raising it before the image and allowing some to flow from the holes in a small cascade back

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<sup>812</sup>Bennett and Keel 1998.

<sup>813</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-11, see Abb. 11a-b, 12.

<sup>814</sup>Ibid., pp. 22-44

<sup>815</sup>Ornan, T. 2001. “The Bull and its Two Masters: Moon and Storm Deities in Relation to the Bull in Ancient Near Eastern Art.” *IEJ* 51/1: 3-26.

<sup>816</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

into the basin.”<sup>817</sup> The southern tower also had a “cult corner” where a sloping ramp led up to a 2 m high shelf, perhaps a *bamah*.<sup>818</sup> Arav believes this may reflect the settlement’s mixed ethnic composition, with accommodation for two different religious traditions.<sup>819</sup> South of the southern tower was found a three-stepped high-place similar to the one at the northern tower, though no stele or basin was found, to date.<sup>820</sup> Currently, seven stelae have been found in relation to the gate, and five high-places. Recently, a 15 m long bench was discovered built alongside the wall of the courtyard, outside the gate’s north tower. Arav noted that, “This long stone bench is a unique discovery and is a clear evidence for a special designated group of people. It is suggested here that it was the seat of the elders of the city.”<sup>821</sup> If Arav is correct then this is another sign of the urban nature of Bethsaida, already in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Level 5 ended c. 732 B.C., as determined by C-14 analysis of barley samples from chamber 3.<sup>822</sup>

6. Level 6 consists of the Iron II A phase (1000-925 B.C.). Arav dated the city-wall and the so-called *bit-hilani* to this period.<sup>823</sup> The *bit-hilani* (Area B) measures 28.25 x 15 m and is constructed of local basaltic boulders. No distinct floors were found, and the pottery was mixed, with very little assigned to Iron II. Noteworthy finds from level 6 included the Pataikos statue,<sup>824</sup> a handle with the inscription

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<sup>817</sup>See Zevit, Z. 2001. *The Religions of Ancient Israel, A Synthesis of Parallaxic Approaches*. London: Continuum, pp. 152-53.

<sup>818</sup>Arav, Freund and Shroder 2000: 53.

<sup>819</sup>Ibid.

<sup>820</sup>Arav 2001: 243-44.

<sup>821</sup>Arav 2004: 208-09.

<sup>822</sup>Arav 2001: 244-45.

<sup>823</sup>Arav and Bennett 2000.

<sup>824</sup>Arav, R. and Bennett, M. 1997. “An Egyptian Figurine of Pataikos at Bethsaida.” *IEJ* 47: 198-213.

מכּי<sup>825</sup>, a bulla,<sup>826</sup> a figurine depicting a woman with Egyptian Hathor hairstyle, an assemblage of intact vessels, and a handle stamped with a dancer.<sup>827</sup> Excavation of a section inside the gate revealed a possible “storage house” with two rooms similar to the unit found at Tell Hadar, though larger and with walls twice as thick; based on the pottery Arav dates this to the tenth century.<sup>828</sup> Arav believes that there is a tenth century gate but it lies under the ninth century gate.<sup>829</sup> East of the *bit-hilani* runs a 6.2 m wide city-wall constructed of semi-dressed basalt boulders. Arav noted in places it was widened by 1-2 m in both interior and exterior faces with the addition of bastions.<sup>830</sup> These walls, with their short, steep glacis, would be a formidable structure to breach. The thickness of the walls indicates that they were constructed to defend the city, seemingly from a formidable foe. A solid fieldstone pavement comes out from the wall.<sup>831</sup>

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<sup>825</sup>To date, this is one of three names found engraved on pottery (Arav 1991:91). The other two are: 1) עקבא, which was dated to the eighth century and perhaps has the root meaning “to guard” (Arav 1995: 17-18; Arav, Freund, and Shroder 2000: 54), and 2) זכריו, was stated to be found in an Iron age context (Arav, Freund, and Shroder 2000: 54-55). It consists of two elements, the verbal root, זכר “to remember,” plus the theophoric suffix for Yahweh.

<sup>826</sup>Brandl, B. 1995. “An Israelite Bulla in Phoenician Style from Bethsaida (et-Tell).” Pp. 141-164 in Arav and Freund 1995. Brandl dated the bulla to the ninth century, and states, “The bulla and its scaraboid belong to a small but distinctive group that contains several Egyptian motifs which were transformed into Phoenician style and ordered differently, but always in three registers”(Brandl 1995: 151).

<sup>827</sup>Arav and Bernett 2000: 69.

<sup>828</sup>Arav 2001: 241. Also, see London, G. and Shuster, R. 1999. “Bethsaida Iron Age Ceramics.” Pp. 175-224 in Arav and Freund 1999. Recently Finkelstein has challenged Arav’s dating, see Finkelstein, I. 2002. “Chronology Rejoinders.” *PEQ* 134/2: 118-29, here pp. 126-27.

<sup>829</sup>Arav 2000: 54.

<sup>830</sup>This type of fortification is rare in Israelite Iron Age cities, currently, the only other parallel is at Tel Dan, see Biran, A. 1992. *Tel Dan*. Jerusalem: Israel Department of Antiquities, here pp. 4-6. Thus, perhaps this reflects a need for greater security features in the north.

<sup>831</sup>Arav 2001: 239.

7. Level 7 consists of the earliest occupation level dating from the EBA (3050-2700 B.C.). Only trace evidence of pottery sherds and few architectural remains are ascribed to this phase.

According to Arav, after fifteen years of excavations at Bethsaida, a capital city of Geshur has been found which flourished from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>832</sup> Based on the excavation reports of Bethsaida alone, it is difficult to arrive at a “capital city.” Arav has yet to articulate the relationship, if there was one, between Bethsaida and its periphery.

#### 6.6.10 Horvat Kanaf

Horvat Kanaf lies in the southern Golan ca. 2 km south of Moshav Ma'ale Gamla and ca. 4.5 km east of the Sea of Galilee. The site was built on a summit of a spur between nahal Kanaf in the south and wadi Sfamnun in the north. It is surrounded on three-sides by steep cliffs, and is connected to the Golan Heights on its eastern edge. Ma'oz conducted four short seasons of excavations from 1978-1980 and 1985 in two areas: Area A, a synagogue and environs, and Area B, a residential structure on the southern slope. The excavations revealed a stratigraphic sequence from MB-present, with stratum VII revealing parts of walls, foundations, and floors attributed to the LB-Iron age (thirteenth-tenth century). The settlement ceased to exist at the end of the eleventh century or beginning of the tenth, then was resettled in the Mid-Hellenistic period (stratum VI, 150-81 B.C.).<sup>833</sup>

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<sup>832</sup>Arav, R. 2002. “Bethsaida: A Profile of a Capital City in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE.” Pp. 274-275 in *SBL Abstracts* 2002.

<sup>833</sup>Ma'oz, Z. 1993. “Kanaf, Horvat.” Pp. 847-850 in Stern 1993.

Chart 6.2 Occupation histories by century for sites east of the Sea of Galilee

Occupation histories by century for sites east of the Sea of Galilee							
Site\Century	14 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
Bostra	S/E/A	--	--	--	--	--	--
Tell 'Ashtarah	S/E/A	S	S	A	--	S	--
Tell el-Ash'ari	S	S †	A	--	--	--	--
Sheik Sa'd	--	--	S	--	--	--	--
Edre'i	s?	s?	S?	S?	?	?	?
el-Duweir	s?	s?	s?	s?	?	?	?
'Ein Gev	--	--	--	S*	S	S/d	A
Soreg	A	--	--	--	S	S	S?
Kinrot/Kinneret	A/E?	--	S?	S/d?	S	S	S/d?
Hadar	S?/A?	--	S?	S?	S	S	S/d
Bethsaida	--	--	--	--	S	S	S/d
Horvat Kanaf	--	s	s	s/A	A	--	--

S=Settlement; s=settlement of limited nature; d=destruction; t=tomb; ?=in question; E=Egyptian Evidence; W=writing; EA=Amarna Letter; †=stele; \*=high-point; A=Abandoned; R=resettled; »=continuation; □=sanctuary; in=industry

### 6.7 Towards a synthesis of the occupational history east of the Sea of Galilee

A synthesis of the data from excavation reports of sites which have either been examined or excavated can be outlined. During the LBA there were several sites which had a rich settlement history in the eastern part of the Hauran (Tell 'Ashtarah, Tell el-Ash'ari, Bostra). These sites, however, were abandoned in the Iron Age, which correlates with Braemer's findings that this area was not discernibly occupied at this time.<sup>834</sup> The reports for northern Jordan also show destruction levels at the end of LB II. Yet, to the north and west the situation is reversed. The sites closer to the Sea of Galilee were not

<sup>834</sup>Braemer 1984: 219. Harmonizing with the prevailing notion of the collapse of the LBA society, see Liverani 1987.



occupied during the LBA, but were settled in the Iron Age. At the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the tenth, the reports indicate that large-scale building campaigns had been in progress (storage buildings, granaries, palaces, tripartite buildings) which would assume the need and infrastructure in place at the time. The architectural remains and finds at Hadar, 'Ein Gev, Soreg and Bethsaida would possibly indicate that there was a well organized Iron Age culture with a large city (Tell Hadar before Bethsaida) governing smaller satellite settlements ('Ein Gev, Hadar, Soreg), perhaps commercial centers or defensive sites.<sup>835</sup> The similarities of the tripartite buildings at Hadar and 'Ein Gev along with similarities of the buildings at Hadar and Bethsaida may indicate that one central kingdom was behind the planning. Bethsaida and Hadar are thought to have had storage areas for large grain quantities. If true, this highlights the strong central control which existed, both to cultivate the grain, to use it to support a large population, and perhaps as a commodity for trading purposes. While difficult to prove from the excavations, one might even be able to argue that at one time Hadar may have been the principal city (11<sup>th</sup> century) while a newer and bigger city was being built at Bethsaida and necessary security added at the southern sites of 'Ein Gev and Soreg.

While still hypothetical, it seems the more south-eastern LBA sites and the Iron Age sites in the north can now be connected. The "Bethsaida stele" while often studied independently from geopolitical *realia* of this region, should be understood in conjunction with the similar stelae found at Tell el-Ash'ari and Tell 'Awas Salhad. Though the latter

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<sup>835</sup>S. Mazzoni has shown that many of the LBA Syrian territories survived the collapse of the LBA and the ensuing "crises years" to be rebuilt, see Mazzoni, S. 1994. "Aramaean and Luwian New Foundations." Pp. 319-35 in Mazzoni, S. (ed.) 1994. *Nuove fondazioni nel Vicino Oriente Antico: Realtà e Ideologia*. Pisa: Giardini; *ibid.* 1995. "Settlement Pattern and New Urbanization in Syria at the Time of the Assyrian Conquest." Pp. 181-191 in Liverani 1995.

were found in secondary use, the find at Bethsaida indicates that this style of stela was part of the culture of the area. It is not out of the question then to suggest that at the end of the LBA, based on commonality of the stelae, that a group from Tell el-Asha'ari may have resettled in the area of Bethsaida, taking their cultic practices, as attested by the similar stelae. In the end, it seems possible that at the end of the LBA a new settlement could have taken place from the more southerly area, around Tell el-Fukhar and satellite sites of el-Baider, Aiden, and Khanasir, to the area east of the Sea of Galilee, first at Tell Hadar and later to Bethsaida.

### **6.8 Geshur: a “ground plan approach”**

After a survey of excavation and survey data from the area in the Golan and Yarmuk basin, one may ask the question, “so what?” Is there any possible data that may reveal the social history of this area in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age periods? Does the data allow questions to be advanced concerning the social history of this space, and are there indicators that might be embedded in the data that may reveal a process of social change or complexity? Bruce Trigger noted that “unilinear evolutionists in the nineteenth century and more recently neoevolutionists believed that all societies at the same stage of development were very similar. Societies could therefore be assigned to a particular stage on the basis of a small number of distinctive criteria or even a single trait.”<sup>836</sup> If one views the archaeological material from a distance, and asks the question, “Are there any indicators in the material culture that may aid in understanding Geshur?” What might be these indicators?

⦿ Kent Flannery states, “Most of the world’s primary states arose at times when writing was either absent or limited in subject matter...For this reason there has long been

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<sup>836</sup>Trigger, B. 2003. *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, here p. 43.

a need for a set of clues by which archaic states can be identified on the basis of archaeological data.”<sup>837</sup> Are there indicators in the archaeological record that may point towards or reflect upon the social, political, and perhaps religious spheres of Geshur? Flannery highlighted several “clues” for identifying archaic states: 1) settlement hierarchies, 2) governmental and residential palaces, 3) temples, 4) priests residencies, and 5) royal tombs.<sup>838</sup> Yet, he does not limit possible clues of archaic states to just these, and suggests that there may be other indicators (his: clues) to archaic states: fortifications, military and political expansion, states sponsored craft-production, as well as possibly others. Flannery is not proposing a definition for the state, but only asking if the archaeologist has possibly found evidence of one, i.e., a material trait for a possible stage in a polities existence. These indicators may help in understanding the state, and may have had a “wide-circulation” within archaic states. As Routledge found in his Moab studies, “...specific genres of representing and expressing kingship were widely circulated, most likely through the creative replication of concrete models. In other words, actual buildings, actual inscriptions, and actual statuary provided the media for the transmission of the common themes of styles, and phrases that we can recognize across the relatively significant spatial and cultural divides for the Iron Age Levant.”<sup>839</sup> To that end, the following will engage Flannery’s “ground plan approach” to read clues that are found in the material culture that may point to the possibility of a socially complex polity, during the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age periods. At this level, granted, the research is left in the arena of “traits” that aid in illuminating the process.

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<sup>837</sup>Flannery 1998: 15-57. On the presence or absence of writing as a criteria for early civilizations, see Trigger 2003: 584-625.

<sup>838</sup>Flannery 1998: 15.

<sup>839</sup>Routledge 2004: 154.

## 6.8.1 Geshur: the material remains

### 6.8.1.1 Palace structures

· Even before discussing the place of palaces in the southern Levant, one could ask, “What type of societies might have palaces?” In a study of chiefdoms and states, Sanders noted a distinction between the two, especially related to the building of palaces.<sup>840</sup> The chief could have the corvée labor construct temples and buildings that would function for the whole, but not his private residence, i.e., palace. Whereas a king could utilize corvée labor to construct his palace(s). As noted by Flannery, this difference is not hard to imagine:

Chiefdoms are rank societies; all but the most elaborate had a continuum of statuses without a division into social classes. In a village of 1,000 persons, one might expect to find as many as 10 to 15 chiefly families, all with relatively elite residences...Many archaic states, on the other hand, were stratified societies that built monumental palaces for their royal families.<sup>841</sup>

Even with that said, Flannery, after a study of palaces, noted that not all palaces are created equal. There are different types of palaces of varying complexity and size: 1) largely administrative for governmental assembly, 2) smaller residential palaces, and 3) larger multi-functional structures. Palaces are generally identified based on their size, especially compared with domestic architecture. Also, their location vis-à-vis the settlement pattern, the construction material and plan, and the finds recovered aid in interpreting a possible palace structure. Flannery concludes that “in many regions, there was a time lag between the first evidence of statehood and the first unmistakable

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<sup>840</sup>Sanders, W.T. 1974. “Chiefdom to State: Political Evolution at Kaminaljuyú, Guatemala.” Pp. 97-116 in Moore, C.B. (ed.) *Reconstructing Complex Societies: An Archaeological Colloquium*. Cambridge, Mass: ASOR.

<sup>841</sup>Flannery 1998: 21.

palace.”<sup>842</sup> Naturally, there is the assumption that the evidence of monumental building, i.e., a palace, is an indicator of a socially more complex people, this is true in that we place an indexable value therein.

There seems to be an emerging view that there were three primary types of “palace” structures in the southern Levant in the Iron Age.<sup>843</sup> Though, the usual caveat applies concerning the difficulty of identifying and interpreting buildings as “palaces” due to the lack of written sources and the fragmentary nature of many of the building remains.

The first palace type is the so-called *bît-hilani*. The architectural features of the *bît-hilani* are unclear and debated. Does *bît-hilani* refer to the palace *en toto* or only one part of the palace, commonly thought to be the façade, the vestibule or portico built in front of the palace gates? The term has evolved and now seems to be used to refer to: 1) the vestibule or portico, with one to three columns or pillars, and 2) the two “long rooms” with the “longitudinal axis” parallel to the façade, the first may have served as a throne room with adjacent parallel rooms behind it.<sup>844</sup> The *bît-hilani* is generally thought to have originated in northern Syria at the beginning of the first millennium B.C., with antecedent architectural elements perhaps evident as early as the LBA at Alalakh (IV).<sup>845</sup>

In the southern Levant, Arav and Bernett have proposed that a *bît-hilani* was

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<sup>842</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>843</sup>Reich, R. 1992. “Palaces and Residences in the Iron Age.” Pp. 202-22 in Kempinski, A. and Reich, R. (eds.) *The Architecture of Ancient Israel*. Jerusalem: IES; also see Nigro, L. 1994. *Ricerca sull'Architettura Palaziale della Palestina nelle età del Bronzo e del Ferro*. Rome: Università Degli Studi Di Roma “La Sapienza.”

<sup>844</sup>See Frankfort, H. 1952. “The Origin of the *bît-hilani*’.” *Iraq* 14:120-31; Renger, J. and Hrouda, B. “Hilani, *bît*.” *RDA* 5: 405-9; Winter, I. 1982. “Art as Evidence for Interaction: Relations between the Assyrian Empires and North Syria.” Pp. 355-82 in Nissen, H.J. and Renger, J. (eds.) *Mesopotamia und seine Nachbarn*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.

<sup>845</sup>Stein, D.L. 1997. “Alalakh.” *OEANE* 1: 55-59.

uncovered at Bethsaida.<sup>846</sup> Area B (level 6) of the Bethsaida excavation revealed this large public building measuring 28.25 x 15 m, with walls averaging 1.4 m wide. After studying the pottery finds from the building Arav and Bennett favored dating the initial phase of construction in the first half of the tenth century B.C.<sup>847</sup> The key architectural features they used in furthering their interpretation as a *bît-hilani* were: 1) the absence of an interior courtyard, with the main entrance in the long wall, 2) the main hall is accessed through a vestibule that is shorter in length than the main hall, 3) the longitudinal axis of the vestibule and the main hall is parallel to the longitudinal axis of the whole building, and 4) a row of rooms are found on the periphery of the main hall. Furthermore the context of the building is found embedded with other architectural features suggesting a *bît-hilani*: 1) the building has an enjoining “plaza” in its front, 2) a gate structure encloses and secures the plaza, hence the building, and 3) the building was built near an outer city wall. However, problematic with identifying this building as a *bît-hilani* is the early date of the tenth century when compared to the other buildings often identified as *bît-hilani* in Syria, and dated much later. Arav and Bennett are forthright when they discuss the problem of identifying the Bethsaida building as an early example of a *bît-hilani* when most of the other commonly accepted *bît-hilani*, i.e., those structures found at 1) Tell Halaf, 2) the eight seemingly monumental building structures at Zinjirli, 3) Tell Tayanat, and 4) Sakjegözü, are dated generally later, perhaps as early as the mid-tenth century to the seventh century B.C.<sup>848</sup> Perhaps the so-called *bît-hilani* at Bethsaida is an earlier example of this style of public building. Perhaps others may be excavated in the future

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<sup>846</sup>Arav and Bennett 2000: 70-78, especially n. 68 where they acknowledge the problematic nature of identifying these building.

<sup>847</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>848</sup>Ibid., pp. 50-51.

that might help understand the evolution of a building style, one that was finessed with time and resources to the examples found at places like Tell Halaf and Zinjirli. In the Transjordan at Tell el-Fukhar there is evidence of possibly another large monumental building that is initially being interpreted as a *bît-hilani* from the LB IIB period, but the evidence is still fragmentary.<sup>849</sup> The questions concerning the chronology and interpretation are still part of an ongoing discussion, but what seems clear is at the beginning of the tenth century at Bethsaida there appeared a large monumental building that seems to be “clue-like” for the presence of an archaic state.

Also found in the southern Levant are monumental public buildings consisting of a number of small rectangular rooms, usually dated to the ninth through eighth century B.C. These buildings seem to have been constructed from an initial main structure, with a long narrow court, then went through a process of having rooms added to the main structure. Examples of this type of monumental building are well known at various sites in Palestine: Lachish<sup>850</sup>, Samaria<sup>851</sup>, Megiddo (338)<sup>852</sup>, and the Hazor citadel.<sup>853</sup> It is thought that these buildings are a type of palatial residences constructed for royal representatives. To date, this form of building has not been identified in the region east of the Sea of Galilee.

The third example of monumental buildings in Palestine appear towards the end of the eighth century B.C., and are characterized by large open courts with reception

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<sup>849</sup>Strange 2001: 307; see also 6.4.1.

<sup>850</sup>Reich 1992: 208-10.

<sup>851</sup>Nigro 1994: 228-80.

<sup>852</sup>See the discussion regarding this in Ussishkin, D. 1989. “Schumacher’s Shrine in Building 338 at Megiddo.” *IEJ* 39/3-4: 149-72; Stern, E. 1990. “Schumacher’s Shrine in Building 338 at Megiddo: A Rejoinder.” *IEJ* 40/2-3: 102-7.

<sup>853</sup>Yadin 1993a: 594-606.

rooms. These buildings are often referred to as a type of “Assyrian-style” palace, and scholars are unsure exactly how to classify and interpret the buildings. Are they “authentic” Assyrian-style palaces or are they indigenous palaces that employ certain architectural features of the Assyrian style, but have unique elements?<sup>854</sup> Fritz interprets building 737 at Tell Kinrot as an example in the area of the Sea of Galilee, along with building 3002 at Hazor (stratum III) and buildings 1052 and 1369 at Megiddo (stratum III), and believes that this building style reflects on a possible building tradition from southern Mesopotamia, first encountered during the expansion of Assyrian hegemony.<sup>855</sup> As noted by Reich, “Royal Assyrian architecture is distinguished by a series of architectural conventions, uniform ground plans and characteristic building materials and architectural elements.”<sup>856</sup> The question of whether an “Assyrian architect” planned and executed the construction of these buildings, or whether a local architect was influenced by the buildings in Assyria is beyond the scope of this thesis. Either way, as Routledge noted, “...the construction of monumental buildings in the southern Levant drew on models with global, rather than local or regional, points of reference.”<sup>857</sup>

It almost does not have to be stated that the construction of large monumental buildings required a relationship between the people building them, and the people who would occupy them. Somewhere labor<sup>و</sup><sub>ا</sub> and resources are being used to support the so-called hierarchical elite. Of the three types of palace structures prescribed for the southern Levant, Bethsaida has one possible example of a large monumental building, the structure

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<sup>854</sup>Reich 1992: 214-15, 218-19.

<sup>855</sup>Fritz, V. 1995. *The City in Ancient Israel*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, pp. 144-45.

<sup>856</sup>Reich 1992: 214.

<sup>857</sup>Routledge 2004: 172.



at Tell el-Fukhar needs further study. The other two types, seem to have originated from a later period, and perhaps reveal an "Assyrian style." Besides the possible example from Kinrot, there are no examples of the other two in the area of the Golan, naturally this may be as much to do with time and resources as absence of evidence of monumental buildings.

### 6.8.1.2 Administrative buildings

As noted by Z. Herzog, "Within the urban system of Iron Age Israel, the most widespread structure used for administrative purposes was unquestionably the pillared building."<sup>858</sup> These buildings have well-defined architectural elements that are common to them: 1) two rows of pillars that divide the space into, 2) three halls, 3) cobble floors in the aisles, and 4) beaten earth or lime floor in the entrance.<sup>859</sup> The size of the buildings are fairly uniform, measuring from 16-18 m in length and 10-12.5 m in width. Due to the similarity in the plan and construction of the buildings, most interpreters had sought uniform interpretations, i.e., same form means same function. Kochavi noted there have been thirty-five tripartite pillared buildings found in "Israel" to date.<sup>860</sup> The interpretation of these buildings has been varied: military barracks,<sup>861</sup> bazaars,<sup>862</sup> stables,<sup>863</sup> store-

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<sup>858</sup>Herzog, Z. 1992a. "Administrative Structures in the Iron Age." Pp. 223-30 in Kempinski, A. and Reich, R. (eds.) *The Architecture of Ancient Israel*. Jerusalem: IES.

<sup>859</sup>See Herr 1988: 48 for a table on the features of pillared buildings.

<sup>860</sup>See Kochavi 1998b: 471. A general tripartite building plan is seen as early as 4000 B.C. in Mesopotamian temples (Flannery 1998: 37-38); it would seem that this type of building has a long history in Mesopotamia, and perhaps has evolved in form and function.

<sup>861</sup>Fritz, V. 1977. "Bestimmung und Herkunft des Pfeiler-hauses in Israel." *ZDPV* 93: 30-45.

<sup>862</sup>Herr 1988: 47-67.

<sup>863</sup>Holladay, J. 1986. "The Stables of Ancient Israel." Pp. 103-66 in Geraty and Herr 1986.

houses,<sup>864</sup> and entrepôts.<sup>865</sup> While an early consensus may have been the so-called stable interpretation, when several of these buildings were found with large quantities of vessels this interpretation was revisited and debated.<sup>866</sup> Today, many scholars still seek one explanation for the buildings, though recently A.Mazar has proposed that the buildings may have served different functions.<sup>867</sup> Perhaps, as Stager suggests, “the reason there are so many different interpretations of their functions is that they all may be correct.”<sup>868</sup>

At Tell Hadar and Beersheba the presence of a variety of ceramic objects (bowls, jugs, cooking-pots, flasks) may indicate that the buildings served an administrative purpose as storage centers or entrepôts, as Kochavi prefers.<sup>869</sup> Kochavi also supports his interpretation as entrepôts from their spatial distribution in the southern Levant, especially in areas that may be connected to more prominent travel routes.<sup>870</sup> As noted by Herr, an analysis of the tripartite building also needs to integrate the location of the building vis-à-vis other architectural structures at any site.<sup>871</sup> If one assumes that Iron Age cities were carefully planned and executed,<sup>872</sup> then the placement of the tripartite building may aid in understanding its function. The location near a city gate and in open public spaces was

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<sup>864</sup>Herzog 1992a.

<sup>865</sup>Kochavi 1998b.

<sup>866</sup>Herzog 1992a, also see Routledge, B. 1995. “‘For the Sake of the Argument’: Reflections on the Structure of Argumentation in Syro-Palestinian Archaeology.” *PEQ* 127: 41-49.

<sup>867</sup>Mazar, A. 1990. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, ca. 10,000-586 B.C.* New York: Doubleday, pp. 476-78.

<sup>868</sup>See King, P. and Stager, L. 2001. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, p. 91.

<sup>869</sup>Though as Holladay (1986: 106) noted that the finds may reflect the buildings last use, and not its initially intended use.

<sup>870</sup>Kochavi 1998b: 476-77.

<sup>871</sup>Herr 1988: 47.

<sup>872</sup>See Shiloh, Y. 1978. “Elements in the Development of Town Planning in the Israelite City.” *IEJ* 28: 36-51.

one strand of evidence that lead Herr to conclude that they were most likely market places.

At Tell Hadar Kochavi excavated a tripartite building with two other adjoining buildings that may help in understanding the function of the tripartite building. Sharing a common wall and entrance with the tripartite building was a six room building of similar proportions to the tripartite building. Due to the large amounts of carbonized grain found in this building Kochavi interpreted it as a granary. In essence there was only one building with two sections. A second tripartite building was excavated with solid internal walls, not the pillared variety, with the so-called clerestory form, and contained storage jars. The form and contents of the building, and its position related to the other tripartite pillared building, supported an interpretation as a storehouse.<sup>873</sup> In the 1992-1993 excavations at Hazor a similar building with three long halls divided by solid walls was found aligned to a tripartite pillared building, perhaps also a storage building.<sup>874</sup>

Also east of the Sea of Galilee at Tell 'Ein Gev (stratum III) two tripartite buildings were excavated, and each consisted of three long halls. The central hall was wider and unpaved while the halls on either side were narrower and paved. Two rows of eleven pillars, each a monolith about 1.4 m high and square in cross section divided the halls.<sup>875</sup> The buildings were 18 m long, thus similar in size to other Iron II pillared buildings. The excavations and reports at 'Ein Gev are incomplete, but Kochavi tentatively assigned these structures to the tenth century B.C. On the western shore of the Sea of Galilee at Tell Kinrot (stratum II) Fritz excavated a pillared building that was 13 m long and had

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<sup>873</sup>Kochavi 1998b: 474.

<sup>874</sup>See Ben-Tor, A. 1994. "Tel Hazor – 1992/3." *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 14: 9-13.

<sup>875</sup>See Kochavi 1998a: 44, fig. 7

two rows of nine pillars forming a 2.5 m central paved hall with side halls of beaten earth 2 to 2.2 m wide.<sup>876</sup> Fritz found large quantities of ceramics that were different than those of strata V and IV, and interpreted the structure as a barracks.

From a chronological perspective, granting the difficulty of the ongoing discussion regarding chronology, a tentative observation can be made that the tripartite structure at Tell Hadar is one of the earliest tripartite buildings in the region with a preliminary date to the eleventh century B.C. Of the current known tripartite buildings the only others possibly dating this early are at Abu Huwam, Tel Masos, and perhaps Tell Qasile, the others are assigned dates starting in the ninth century B.C.<sup>877</sup> Their spatial distribution may indicate that they were constructed on ancient trade routes. It is well known that in the 1920's Saarisalo observed and commented on the camels carrying grain on the Darb el-Hawarna connecting the Golan area with the Mediterranean coast.<sup>878</sup> Also of note is the ongoing use of tripartite building in the Golan region at both 'Ein Gev and Kinrot after the abandonment of Tell Hadar in Iron II.

### 6.8.1.3 Gate structures

In the ANE the gate is generally regarded as a public space for people to gather and conduct both civil and personal affairs during the Iron Age, as contrasted with Middle Bronze Age gates that served primarily a military/defensive role.<sup>879</sup> Fortifications served the purpose to protect, but they also became symbols of power, which no doubt may be understood as markers of sovereignty over an area. In the southern Levant there are two well-known gate types: the six-chambered gate and the four-chambered gate. While there

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<sup>876</sup>Fritz 1993, 1999; Kochavi 1998a

<sup>877</sup>Herr 1998: 49.

<sup>878</sup>Saarisalo 1927: 23-24.

<sup>879</sup>See Routledge 2004: 173-76.

is an ongoing discussion related to the chronology and origin of these gates, there seems to be a consensus that they represent an architectural genre related to royal building endeavors. These gateways were major building projects and seem to have been constructed, for the most part, in the same way. Herzog noted that Iron Age gates differ from their Bronze Age counterparts, and believes that in the Iron Age the gate structure may have evolved from a purely defensive function to incorporate civilian needs, thus fulfilling possible social, economic, and military requirements of the people.<sup>880</sup> From a variety of sources (textual, epigraphical, and archaeological), Routledge concluded that Iron Age gate structures in the southern Levant may have reached a height of six meters or more.<sup>881</sup>

As discussed earlier, Arav in 1996 at Bethsaida first noted the presence of what materialized as a four-chambered gate (level 5b). The uniform chambers measure ca. 4 x 12 m with walls 2 m thick, thus the entire structure measures ca. 35 x 17.35 m and is one of the largest four-chambered gate structures in the southern Levant.<sup>882</sup> This gate was accessed from a 4 m wide “road” from possibly an outer gate that led to a finely paved plaza, ca. 14 x 15 m, separating the outer gate from the inner gate. The gate structure was flanked by a northern and southern tower each ca. 7 x 11 m. Contributing to the idea of the gate as civilian space was a “15 meter long bench built alongside the wall of the courtyard.”<sup>883</sup> If Arav is correct about the possibility of the existence of an outer gate, this

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<sup>880</sup>See Herzog, Z. 1992b. “Settlement and Fortification Planning in the Iron Age.” Pp. 231-74 in Kempinski, A. and Reich, R. (eds.) *The Architecture of Ancient Israel*. Jerusalem: IES.

<sup>881</sup>Routledge 2004: 176.

<sup>882</sup>See Chart 6.3 Chambered gates in the Galilee and Golan region, p. 270.

<sup>883</sup>Arav, R. 2004. “The Elders of the City – How Old is this Establishment? The Case of Bethsaida.” Pp. 208-209 in *SBL Abstracts* 2004.

would be another indicator of the importance of this site at the beginning of the Iron II period, as only larger cities that were presumed to be “capital-like” would be accessed through an outer and inner gate structure. In addition to this gate, Arav has detected another gate (level 6), which remains covered by the excavated four-chambered gate, and is currently part of the research agenda of the Bethsaida Excavation Project. Part of a wall (W855) has been uncovered below the level 5 gate, and revealed a solid wall constructed of large semi-dressed basalt boulders. The wall was measured at ca. 5 m thick. A solid fieldstone pavement connects at the base of the wall. Arav has also excavated parts of two rooms, ca. 3.5 m in length, which he is tentatively interpreting as “storage rooms” based on finding the one room filled with carbonated wheat.<sup>884</sup>

It seems that at the beginning of the Iron II period, the gate complexes in the Galilee/Golan region were generally associated with larger sites. All would have been major projects requiring significant resources to construct, thus indicating a more advanced level of society, perhaps, another “clue” of an archaic state.

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<sup>884</sup>Arav, R. 2001. “Notes and News, Bethsaida, 2000.” *IEJ* 51/2: 239-246.

Chart 6.3 Chambered gates in the Galilee and Golan region

Comparison of chambered gates in the Galilee/Golan region <sup>885</sup>				
Site (Stratum)	Dimension (Facade/Depth m)	Chambers (number/size dimension)	Period (century)	Fortifications
Megiddo (III)	24.5 x 12.5	2: 4.6 x 8.0	8 <sup>th</sup> - 7 <sup>th</sup>	no wall: external wall of "houses"
Kinrot/Kinneret (II)	(not given) <sup>886</sup>	2: 3 x 3	9 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup>	towers/wall
Hazor (X)	18.20 x 20.50	6: 3 x 5	10 <sup>th</sup>	towers
Megiddo (IVB)	17.5 x 19.75	6: 2.8 x 4.8	10 <sup>th</sup> (end)	fore-gate
Megiddo (IVA)	25 x 15.5	4: 3 x 8.2	Late 9 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup>	towers
Dan	29.50 x 17.8	4: 4.5 x 9.0	10 <sup>th</sup> (end)	fore-gate
Bethsaida (V)	35 x 17.35	4: 4 x 12	9 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup>	towers fore-gate

#### 6.8.1.4 Public "grain" storage units

In an urban setting with monumental and public buildings that point to some form of "kingly" activity, there may have existed special buildings for the purpose of storing resources, such as cereals. As early as the EB III period the storing of cereal has possibly been discernable in the southern Levant. At Bet Yerah (Khirbet el-Kerak) a so-called public granary was thought to have existed at the beginning of the EB III.<sup>887</sup> A stone podium, measuring 30 x 40 m., was discovered with nine round brick silos constructed on it. The silos, which varied from 7-9 m. in diameter, were not preserved, but evidence was

<sup>885</sup>Adapted from Herzog 1992b: 268, and derived from data in § 6.6.

<sup>886</sup>Note: the two chamber gate was not an independent structure; it was built in an existing wall measuring ca. 11 m in thickness, see Fritz 1993a.

<sup>887</sup>Caution is needed in discussing the Bet Yerah excavations. They are currently under renewed research, see [www.fas.harvard.edu/~semitic/wl/digsites](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~semitic/wl/digsites) as well as [www.tau.ac.il/humanities/archaeology/news](http://www.tau.ac.il/humanities/archaeology/news).

found that they were divided into quarters by means of partitions that may have supported a roof structure.<sup>888</sup> In the center of the silos was a court and a single room, thought to have been used for administrative purposes. Kempinski notes that these silos have near exact parallels with a central silo unit discovered in eastern Anatolia at Yanik Tepe, possibly indicating a cross-cultural connection between the two locations.<sup>889</sup> Another possible international parallel of the Bet Yerah structure was the pyxis in the form of a building model, usually interpreted as a granary, found at Melos in the Cyclades.<sup>890</sup> If indeed the structure was constructed to serve as a storage for grain, this helps identify the practice of a storage based economy, with the possibility of a central administrative structure.

There have been several so-called public silos uncovered in Iron Age sites in the southern Levant. Herzog notes that the silos were round in order to better facilitate and protect the storage and distribution of the grain.<sup>891</sup> The largest structure attributed to be a silo was discovered at Megiddo (stratum II), and assigned to the end of the eighth century.<sup>892</sup> The silo is lined with unhewn stones with its upper diameter some 11 m and extending to a depth of 7 m with the bottom measuring some 7 m, thus having a volume of approximately 450 cubic meters.<sup>893</sup> The remains of the silo included two “staircases” that provided access to the structure. Two other smaller silos were found at Megiddo

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<sup>888</sup>Kempinski, A. 1992. Fortifications, Public Buildings, and Town Planning in the Early Bronze Age.” Pp. 68-80 in Kempinski, A. and Reich, R. (eds.) *The Architecture of Ancient Israel*. Jerusalem: IES.

<sup>889</sup>Ibid., p. 77, see also Amiran, R. 1965. “Yenik Tepe, Shengavit and Khirbet Kerak Ware.” *Anatolian Studies* 15: 165-67.

<sup>890</sup>See Getz-Preziosi, P. (ed.) 1977. *Art and Culture of the Cyclades in the Third Millennium B.C.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, fig. 360a, pp. 336, 520-521.

<sup>891</sup>Herzog 1992a: 228.

<sup>892</sup>Lamon, R.S. and Shipton, G.M. 1939. *Megiddo, I*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 66-68, Fig. 72, 77.

<sup>893</sup>Herzog 1992a: 228.



(stratum IV B) each with a diameter of 3 m. Both were found near the northern complex of storehouses, and were interpreted as storage buildings for bulk quantities of cereal.<sup>894</sup> Herzog notes that at Tel en-Nasbeh a different storage method was used whereby a series of smaller silos, ranging in diameter from 1.2-2 m, were constructed in an extension of the city by the construction of a solid wall.<sup>895</sup> This construction technique was interpreted as possible evidence for the use of grain storage for the royal administration.

As stated above, Kochavi interpreted one part of the tripartite buildings at Tell Hadar as a possible “granary.”<sup>896</sup> This so-called granary consisted of six 10 x 10 m rooms that were plastered and had stone floors with a thin layer of mudbrick and beaten lime. The greatest height of a preserved wall was approximately 2 m, and Kochavi believes that there may have been a second story on this structure. In room 3, a large quantity of carbonized grain was discovered almost 60 cm deep, and traces of grain were found in the other rooms. At Bethsaida in chamber 3 (level 5), Arav excavated nearly a 1 m thick layer of barely grain, that he estimated weighed 1 ton. This may suggest that this chamber functioned as a granary, at least in its final stage.<sup>897</sup> In three of the four chambers of the Bethsaida gate, Arav found evidence of grain storage. A section was cut through the floor of chamber 1 revealing a sequence of layers of grain. Arav interpreted this as indicating the custom of storing grain in the chambers, and not a reaction to a possible siege.<sup>898</sup>

At a minimum, one may suggest that the presence of so-called granaries in the area east of the Sea of Galilee may indicate: 1) agriculture was a resource in the social structure

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<sup>894</sup>Ibid., also see Lamon and Shipton 1939: 47, fig., 49.

<sup>895</sup>Herzog 1992a: 228.

<sup>896</sup>Kochavi *et al.* 1992: 36-37.

<sup>897</sup>Arav 1999: 131.

<sup>898</sup>Arav, R. (personal communication)

of the area, and 2) there was a collection and redistribution of agricultural products, i.e., a known practice based on a storage-based economy, that points toward the possible existence of a central administration. This seems to harmonize with the environmental and ethnographic perceptions of the area as a region with sustainable resources.

#### 6.8.1.5 Temples

Trigger notes that “kings were assiduous in their public and private devotion to the supernatural: building temples, making elaborate sacrifices to the gods, and presiding over lavish rituals that ensured the proper functioning of the universe and the welfare of society.”<sup>899</sup> Sahlins argued that each stage in the development of society has a dominant source of symbolic production that supplies the major idioms that permit social relations to be understood and publically discussed. Sahlins noted that once societies grew too large for kinship and other personal relations to provide the basic metaphors that guided thinking about social relations, religion filled the space.<sup>900</sup> Thus, if the area of the Golan and western Yarmuk region were evolving from a kin-based society to something merging towards more social stratification, one may ask if there has been a “temple” found in the archaeological footprint? Currently there are no structures being identified as temples in the area. However, before a premature judgement is made to this strand of information, i.e., absence is to be equated with a phase, or nature, in the complexity of a people, a closer look at some cross-cultural parallels may be judicious.

It has been suggested above that the Bethsaida palace building seems to be on an affinity continuum with similar buildings in northern Syria. It seems that the major Iron

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<sup>899</sup>Trigger 2003: 90.

<sup>900</sup>Sahlins, M. 1976. *Culture and Practical Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 211-12.

Age sites in northern Syria, the so-called Aramean sites (Zinjirli, Sakjegözü, Tell Tayinat, Tell Halaf), that have been excavated and have revealed at least one palace are also lacking current evidence of temple structures. At present, there seems to be only one example of a temple in an Iron Age northern Syrian context. The so-called temple at Tell Tayinat stood next to the palace and was a long-room structure with a porch in the front formed by elongated walls, and in the rear a separate room thought to be a place for the deity. However, even here the temple was found with the *bit-hilani* associated with the Second Building Period (Phase O, ca. 800-725) of the site, and not the palace structures of the First Building Period (ca. 950-900).<sup>901</sup> Zinjirli with all its palaces lacks a temple. Perhaps the absence of “temples” is merely a function of resources, time, and luck, or perhaps temples were not part of the fabric of the people, perhaps indicating a level of complexity. Flannery notes that “not every culture with large, elaborate palaces also had formal standardized temples. In contrast to their neighbors in Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Minoans and Mycenaeans of the eastern Mediterranean built no great temples and carved no large statues of their deities.”<sup>902</sup> The current absence of a temple may also indicate the degree of maturity of the polity. Marcus and Feinman noted that first-generation states often had either a palace or a temple, but not both. It was not until the state matured, i.e., became a second-generation state, that both of these institutions were found, perhaps illustrated by the remains at Tell Tayinat.<sup>903</sup>

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<sup>901</sup>See Harrison, T. 2001. “Tell Ta’yinat and the Kingdom of Unqi.” Pp. 115-32 in Daviau, P.M. Michele *et al.* (eds.) *The World of the Arameans II: Biblical Studies in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion*. (JSOTSupp 325) Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, also Mazzoni, S. 1995. “Settlement Pattern and New Urbanization in Syria at the Time of the Assyrian Conquest.” Pp. 181-191 in Liverani 1995, here p. 188.

<sup>902</sup>Flannery 1998: 43.

<sup>903</sup>Feinman, G. and Marcus, J. (eds.) 1998. *Archaic States*. Sante Fe: School of American Research Press, p. 12.

#### 6.8.1.6 Stelae

As noted by Routledge, the visual depiction of kings and deities in stone was a key component in the representation of ancient Near Eastern kingship from its very inception, thus sculpture and stone reliefs may be one media for identifying “state.”<sup>904</sup> In the southern Levant, there is a general divide where sculpture and reliefs have been found. In Israel, which has had a long history of excavation research, there is a paucity of this style of monumental stone-work. Though the reason for this may not have been sufficiently probed, it does seem that an argument can be made on religious or ideological grounds that one should not expect to find engraved or other monumental artwork (Exodus 20:1-4), naturally if one limits the discussion to the end of the second millennium and beginning of the first millennium B.C.

As noted above, in the Minoan and Mycenaean spheres of the eastern Mediterranean no standardized temples have been excavated. However, as noted by Graham, that did not mean that they did not produce recognizable and somewhat standardized ritual spaces. Graham notes that in the Palace of Minos there was an abundance of small shrines either representing their deities or divine symbols.<sup>905</sup> Flannery also notes that the later Mycenaeans seemingly set aside certain rooms within their palaces as sacred places and built recognizable, but unstandardized, shrines, so-called cult centers and sanctuaries.<sup>906</sup>

The area of northern Syria and south-eastern Anatolia has been a source of a

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<sup>904</sup>Routledge 2004:178.

<sup>905</sup>Graham, J. 1987. *The Palaces of Crete*. Revised edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 18-19.

<sup>906</sup>Flannery 1998: 45.

considerable number of so-called funerary monuments, with some 70 carved stelae.<sup>907</sup> The main core of these stelae were erected during the ninth through first half of the eighth century B.C., and they were thought to constitute metaphorical places of worship or devotion to the dead. Mazzoni notes that at Karkemish the replanning of the ceremonial and public unit included the decoration of gates and façades of the main building.<sup>908</sup> She believes that Karkemish was the center of a workshop that introduced in the region an artistic language of “great visual effect and ideological impact” which became imitated and spread through the area, and were aimed to accentuate royal propaganda and dynastic legitimization.<sup>909</sup> In much the same way, Routledge noted a rich tradition of monumental artwork in the Transjordan as an “obvious media for constituting and representing state hegemony.”<sup>910</sup>

Perhaps the so-called cult corner at Bethsaida should be placed in the above discussion of ritual space, ideology, and dynastic legitimization. In 1997 at the entrance of the Iron II four chambered gate there was revealed a 1.53 x 1.53 m platform raised 80 cm above the paved exterior plaza in a L-shaped niche.<sup>911</sup> The platform was accessed by two steps. At the top was found a stone basin that appears to have been part of the installation. At the foot of the platform was found a stele *in situ* made from local basalt. It was carved in relief with a front facing bull with long crescent-shaped horns standing

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<sup>907</sup>See Bonatz, D. 2000. “Syro-Hittite Funerary Monuments: A Phenomenon of Traditions or Innovations?” Pp. 189-210 in Bunnens, G. (ed.) *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age*. Louvain: Peeters.

<sup>908</sup>Mazzoni, S. 2000. “Syria and the Periodization of the Iron Age.” Pp. 31-59 in Bunnens, G. (ed.) *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age*. Louvain: Peeters.

<sup>909</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>910</sup>Routledge 2004: 178.

<sup>911</sup>Keel, O. 1998. *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God in Ancient Israel*. Edinburgh: T& T Clark, here p. 115.

on his feet with a dagger on his left thigh and a rosette-like object above the dagger. The stele was found face down and cracked in four places. This stele, the so-called Bethsaida stele, is the fourth stele known with this similar carved impression and the first to be found in a sealed archaeological context, thus securing a preliminary date for the stelae. Two were found in the Hauran, one at Tell el-Ash'ari (§ 6.7.2) and the other at Tell 'Awas Salhad, and the fourth is in the Gaziantep museum, in southern Turkey.<sup>912</sup> Bennett and Keel proposed that the relief was composed of figurative and non-figurative elements. While the interpretation of the engraved figure is still debated, i.e., who is depicted?, it appears that with three similar stelae found in the same area that there is at minimum a common way of expressing what may be some form of religious homage.

A similar stele in size and construct, though not engraved, was found on the south-side of the Bethsaida gate. Currently, seven stelae have been found in relation to the gate, and five so-called high-places. If indeed the stelae point toward a religious sphere, then this would be another strand of information that reveals the extent that one group of people invested a large measure of wealth and energy in shaping the order of the polity. The coupling of religion and power are common in early civilizations with rulers in early civilizations embedding their authority in a divine order in order to validate their authority.<sup>913</sup> It seems that public religion was used as a means to justify and promote the activities of an upper class, and perhaps the evidence at Bethsaida may point to a religious strand as part of the fabric of the people who had the site constructed.

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<sup>912</sup>See Bennett and Keel 1998: 8-11, see Abb. 11a-b, 12.

<sup>913</sup>Trigger 2003: 410.

Chart 6.4 Iron Age Sites: Sizes and Features

Iron Age Sites: Sizes and Features				
Site	Size	“Buildings”	“Walls”	Temple(?)
‘Ein Gev	1.5 ha	citadel tripartite	yes	“cultic room”
Tell Soreg	<.40 ha	silos	yes	--
Tell Hadar	1.6 ha	silos storehouses tripartite granary	yes circular	--
Bethsaida	8 ha	palace gate (s) towers plaza granary road	yes	cultic corner
Kinrot	10 ha	fortress gate towers tripartite palace	yes	--
Horvat Kanaf	1.5	--	yes	--

### 6.8.1.7 Settlement hierarchy

Evidence of settlement hierarchies might serve as an indicator into the nature of people, and possible place in social history. Flannery believes that archaic states were centralized systems with an administrative hierarchy from which commands traveled downward while tribute and information traveled upward.<sup>914</sup> An analysis of the settlement size and number of tiers, including the possible footprints of identifiable administrative buildings in each tier, may help to measure complexity of a people or

<sup>914</sup>Flannery 1998: 16.

polity. In brief, an archaic state would have evidence of a four-tier settlement hierarchy with administrative buildings in the top two tiers minimum, though Flannery is the first to admit that there are no “hard-and-fast laws” regarding the analysis of settlement hierarchies.

One should note that there is a lack of site size, and nature of the site, to fully analyze the possible settlement pattern east of the Sea of Galilee and the Golan with any rigor. With that caveat, it seems that sites of any size, perhaps better to say sites of any so-called promise, have been at least initially and partially excavated. The remaining sites may range from one of the many dolmen sites, perhaps associated with burial practices, to possibly small so-called forts.

In a general way, possibly, the site distribution reveals a general pattern for sites located in the southern portion of the Golan from MB IIB to Iron Age. The data for the LBA is vague at best, both Epstein and Ma'oz state that the site count decreases by half in the LBA with over 50% of the sites in the southern Golan.<sup>915</sup> At the beginning of the Iron Age the Golan plateau sees an increase in the number of sites comparable to the MB II B period, but there is no attempt to distinguish the broad Iron Age period. The striking observation that comes from the data is the increase in sites in the northern part of the Golan with an overall increase of 50% from their MB IIB level. During the Iron Age there was not an abandonment of site settlements in the southern parts, at the same time there was an increase in the northern part. Moshe Hartal in his 1983-1987 survey of the northern Golan classified twenty sites as Iron I and nine as Iron II, with five sites identified for both periods.<sup>916</sup> The data would then beg the question why there was an

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<sup>915</sup>See Epstein 1993a: 533-34 and Ma'oz 1997: 417-24.

<sup>916</sup>Hartal 1989.



increase in sites in the northern part of the Golan in Iron I, while no dramatic increase in the south for the same period.<sup>917</sup>

Chart 6.5 Site tallies by period for the Golan

Site tallies by period for the Golan			
	Northern Golan	Central Golan	Southern Golan
MB IIB	11	4	25
LBA	5	2	12
Iron	22	10	20

Constructing a histogram on the currently available survey and excavation data is precarious; however, when one studies the histograms of archaic states there may be some appropriate information that can be teased out for the present study. Many anthropologists working in discovering dynamics of archaic states note the presence of a three or four tiered hierarchy as a possible indication of urbanization, or an archaic state.<sup>918</sup> Wright and Johnson in their work in southeast Iran noted that chiefdoms tended to have two or three tiers of settlement, but states had at least four tiers: cities, towns, larger villages, and smaller villages.<sup>919</sup> For the present study, suppressing the terms given for each tier, it becomes clear that many archaic states had one “Tier 1” site that was considerably larger than its “Tier 2” counterpart. Tier 1 sites are not only larger, but they have a number of archaeological clues, e.g., palaces, ceremonial plazas, tombs, and

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<sup>917</sup>See table: Site tallies by period for the Golan Heights, based on the survey work of Epstein and Gutman (1972) and Hartal (1989).

<sup>918</sup>Flannery 1998: 16-21.

<sup>919</sup>Wright, H. and Johnson, G. 1975. “Population, Exchange, and Early State Formation in Southwestern Iran.” *American Anthropologist* 77: 267-89.

temples, that help in possibly understanding its place in the area. Tier 2 sites would still have public architecture related to the region, but generally the remains would be smaller and fewer. Tier 3 sites would have evidence of architectural remains, e.g., a temple, but no palace or place for elites, and Tier 4 sites would have no evidence of public structures at all. The greater preponderance of the people in any archaic state are thought to have lived in the Tier 4 sites. Tier 4 sites are more numerous, but much smaller in size, than either of the top two tiers. Thus the bulk of the population in Tier 4 sites support the smaller but “more elite” top two tiers.

The Tier 1 site often carries the label as the “capital” of an early state, and has become somewhat accepted that the relationship between the capital and the Tier 2 sites may change with the shifting of power, or the establishing of power. This is best seen in that some of the rulers of early states founded their Tier 1 site not to gain better access to natural resources, but to separate from local elites of Tier 2 sites, e.g., the Neo-Assyrian kings founded new “capitals” to break from previous land elites.<sup>920</sup> This is the initial impression that one can infer from the sites on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, especially if one asks: Why was Bethsaida seemingly founded in an area that was further from the abundance of natural resources? Was this to further separate the current elite from a secondary social elite?

When the site tallies for the Golan are combined with the preliminary excavation reports from the area a possible four tier hierarchy is emerging, granted, with many assumptions that remain to be probed. The picture for the Iron Age seems to be a bit clearer than the Late Bronze Age. The LBA sites in the area are primarily in the southern Golan, but this changes in the Iron Age. The evidence from the survey work

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<sup>920</sup>See Mazzoni 1995: 181-191.

indicates that the number of identifiable sites increases greatly in the northern Golan in the Iron Age. This seems to harmonize with the excavation data: where time and resources have centered on excavations at Bethsaida and Tell Hadar, both in the north with key Iron Age levels. As shown above from the material culture, the Bethsaida site is by far larger and has clues that it was constructed for an elite group from resources and external force greater than itself. Hence, though Bethsaida is only some 8 ha, which is small when compared to other Tier 1 sites, e.g., Susa in the Middle Uruk period, it seems to have many of the remains of what is often referred to as clues for a “capital city.” South of Bethsaida along the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee are two other sites, Tell Hadar and ‘Ein Gev which are considerably smaller than Bethsaida, that have large public buildings. As discussed above, these buildings may indicate that the sites were primarily administrative in nature, and were centers that controlled the resources of the region. If this theory holds, then one may suggest that these two sites may be classified as Tier 2 sites. On the western shore of the Sea of Galilee is Kinrot, which remains problematic for interpreters. If one were to solely consider Kinrot’s archaeological footprint with its tripartite building and two-chambered gate it seems to be in the same general administrative category as either Tell Hadar or ‘Ein Gev. Thus, Kinrot, perhaps, may have been part of an administrative hierarchy, at least in its early Iron Age phase. If the greater preponderance of the sites for the Golan area are presumed to be smaller sites, with no public structures, then they would be categorized as the Tier 4 sites, if there are four tiers and not three. As argued to this point, it seems that one can find sufficient, granted problematic, evidence for a minimum of three tiers for the Golan in the Iron Age.

Could there have been Tier 3 sites? A number of sites have some discernable

architectural feature, that may preliminarily allow one to say, perhaps. There may be several examples of Tier 3 sites:

- 1) Tell Abu Zeitun lies on the upper plain of the Golan plateau to the east and was described as having an oval stone-built fort some 70 m in diameter.
- 2) Site 152 of the Golan Survey was interpreted as a small fort (20 x 24m) just north of the strategic route that descended the Samakh tributary to Tell Hadar.
- 3) The small site of Tel Soreg lies on the strategic eastern portion of the 'Ein Gev river course. It was found to have been occupied from the Intermediate Bronze age continually till the Hellenistic period. The site has revealed a possible casemate wall fort and what are being interpreted as silos.
- 4) Clustered at the southern Golan plateau some 7 km east of the Sea of Galilee and north of the Yarmuk are five sites ('Uyun, site #206, Tell eth-Thuraya, Tel Hamat Gader, Tel Dover), that are in both a strategic location and an area with key resources.<sup>921</sup>

Thus it seems that with further study these sites may be identified as Tier 3 sites.

Going beyond a possible identification of the presence of a four-tiered hierarchy is the question of the spatial relationship between the Tier 1 settlement and the remaining Tier 2-4 sites. Expanding on the four-tiered system, Marcus demonstrated that the Maya city of Calakmul was the Tier 1 settlement at the head of a "central-place hierarchy."<sup>922</sup> This phrase in essence places the Tier 1 settlement spatially in the midst of the Tier 2-4 sites, in other words, it is a hub or the center of the polity. At first glance the above discussion of the possible four tiers present in the area of the Golan would

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<sup>921</sup>See map 2.4.

<sup>922</sup>See Marcus, J. 1973. "Territorial Organization of the Lowland Classic Maya." *Science* 180: 911-16.

indicate that the above four-tiered hypothesis is not evenly distributed with a central-place lattice dynamic, especially if one discounts the topography. If Bethsaida is the Iron IIb Tier 1 settlement, then it is not surrounded by Tier 2 sites, let alone by Tier 3-4 sites. However, if one explores the environment and topography of the region as a contributing factor in the spatial distribution of the tiers, then there may be the possibility that the central-place lattice dynamic may be somewhat skewed, but still visible, if seen through the fabric of the environment. Simply put, one should not expect to see a Tier 2 site to the west and north of Bethsaida, due to the topographical features, i.e., a lake and a mountainous area. If one accepts that the environment may alter the relations of the sites in a central-place lattice dynamic, then the nearest Tier 2 sites, Tell Hadar followed by 'Ein Gev, are positioned in what would be expected in the central-place dynamic lattice. From these sites the Tier 3 sites in essence may have served their interests, in what appears an equal distance. Then in a somewhat modified manner there may be an argument that the essence of a central-place lattice can be seen in the Golan during the Iron Age, if one gauges the findings with the environment and topography as disjunctive elements to the theory. In essence, the dynamics of the central-place hierarchy then does not resemble Marcus' Calakmul model, but rather the model Johnson constructed, based on R.M. Adams survey work, of Eshnunna in the Early Dynastic I period where a central-place lattice was formed to the east of Eshnunna.<sup>923</sup>

While the evidence is problematic, there does seem to be movement toward the possibility that there is the necessary settlement dynamics that could view the area of the Golan with a four-tiered settlement hierarchy. Furthermore, it seems that the spirit of

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<sup>923</sup>Johnson, G. 1972. "A Test of the Utility of the Central Place Theory in Archaeology." Pp. 769-85 in Ucko, P., Tringham, R., and Dimbleby, G. (eds.) *Man, Settlement and Urbanism*. London: Duckworth. See also Flannery 1998: 16-21.

the central-place lattice system is also able to be read from the sites and settlements of the area, i.e., the centrality of the Tier 1 site with the outworking of administrative centers, Tier 2, and the protection of these sites, Tier 3.

#### **6.8.1.8 Conclusion**

Since many early archaic states lack written sources, one may turn to the data from various archaeological surveys and excavations to better understand a people. Due to the absence of writing one may ask if there might exist certain archaeological clues embedded in a site, or area of sites, that may help in defining a state? The assumption being is if one finds a healthy material culture with several layers of building structures patterned in an identifiable way, then there is some sort of central hierarchy in the society. Admittedly, one building or structure may not warrant an interpretation as a state or non-state, especially if studied in isolation. But when a cluster of buildings, structures, or markers are found, then, perhaps, one may proceed with one possible interpretation. In the end, this chapter has attempted to read the excavation and survey reports conducted, at various levels, with a “ground plan perspective” asking the question concerning possible clues in the material culture that may give insight into social complexity. The remains that have been read were: 1) monumental buildings, 2) administrative buildings, 3) temples, and 4) stelae. It has been shown that the area in question has a healthy quantity of clues to move towards a definition of an archaic state, in the Iron Age.

Since evidence was found in the material remains of the Iron Age that pointed towards an archaic state, then it was possible to engage concepts of settlement hierarchy and possible central-lattice theory dynamics. There appears to be emerging a possible four-tiered hierarchy in the Golan area during the Iron Age. The excavations at

Bethsaida seem to have the necessary features to distinguish it as a Tier 1 site, with Tier 2 sites, Tell Hadar and 'Ein Gev, revealing, perhaps, an administrative role. The evidence does not harmonize with the ideal central-lattice theory, where the Tier 1 site is the hub of the polity; however, once the environmental features are factored into the study, it appears that the Tier 1 site sits in a strategic place in the area.

While Flannery does not believe that it is the place of the archaeologist to define the nature of the polity, i.e., is there a state or non-state, what seems to be emerging is that at the beginning of the Iron II period the area of the Golan had a variety of material traits that would argue that there was a polity that many anthropologists would call an archaic state. The indicators of the material remains seem to harmonize with the excavation surveys that show a growth in the number of sites in Iron I toward Iron II. However, the conundrum of the archaeologist is the nature of the evidence and ability to know through the material culture, who commissioned the building of any specific part of the archaeological foot-print. Admittedly, one assumes that in the above framework that the proximity of a Tier 1 and Tier 2 sites is equated with both tiers belonging together in the same complex society, this may or may not be the case.

Also of note was the lack of material clues for the LBA. The working hypothesis would be that the majority of the social dynamic of the area during the LBA was concentrated toward the southern Golan and western Yarmuk area. This is the reflection that stems from the survey work, and through possibly the limited excavations at Tel el-Fukhar. Ideally, one would like to argue for a socio-historical process from the LBA to Iron age in the area, but connecting these with the current archaeological remains is beyond reach.

## Chapter 7

### Geshur: Concluding Discussion

#### 7.1 Geshur: the two narratives

At the beginning this thesis set out to explore the problem of Geshur in two archaeological horizons, asking the question: How does one study the history of any place, people or polity that is named in a textual source? The answer was to use the varied available data in the areas of topography, environmental or political landscape, textual sources, and archaeology to see how these may contribute to the problem of Geshur as a historical entity in the Late Bronze and Iron Age periods. This endeavor is especially difficult given the limited and type of textual source. However, now that this narrative has woven through these various areas, the question becomes: So what? Can these various strands of information culled from several areas find a relationship that may help probe Geshur in these horizons? Perhaps they may help move toward a synthesis that can argue for a place or polity that goes beyond a toponym in one source?

Granted, the task of delineating the process by which any ancient people may have emerged, changed, or evolved into an entity that can loosely be identified as a “chiefdom” or “state” is arduous. A cursory read of the articles in the volume, *Archaic States*, edited by Feinman and Marcus, reveal that even for areas of the world where there is a long history of study that there exists a lively debate concerning the social history of many early complex societies. For the area east of the Sea of Galilee this research has explored two horizons: the LBA and Iron Age. In many ways there are two narratives, or histories, with different arenas and audiences, to the problem of Geshur. The first is the Geshur that becomes part of the narrative in the Bible, it is local and embedded in the DH. With the first narrative one may ask: Is Geshur merely an actor? Perhaps more to the point, a



theatre polity, a symbol created to serve the purpose of the Dtr. In this type of narrative one finds events that are largely descriptive, presumed to be factual though selective and driven perhaps by ideology, with little pretense to be explanatory. Here we find Geshur woven into the narrative of the main events of the local protagonist. This narrative winds through tension towards resolution, but this is elusive. The other narrative finds a voice, its tension, in the strewn set of archaeological clues that may dot its landscape. This is the narrative that searches for the universal and cross-cultural as it probes for clues that places it on a slippery evolutionary continuum, at times based on an evolutionary taxonomic checklist. This socio-historical narrative attempts to probe the problem of social and economic institutions with a view toward exploring the family, kin, class structure, ethnicity, modes of production, and perhaps the state. It looks at the history of “things” as it seeks to correlate human thought and behavior based on possible material footprints.

The first narrative in many ways limits the reader to a specific actor at a specific time to serve the purpose of the Dtr’s narrative, then it comes to an end. The second narrative requires the reader to engage the material culture, evaluating the story, perhaps editing the conclusions in order to (re) write the narrative. The nagging question is which narrative does the researcher privilege in the problem of Geshur? The answer developed by this thesis was to privilege both, then search for the possible connections.

## **7.2 Geshur: as a “named” place**

It is almost a given that throughout history people and regions have been given names other than those that they and people in that region would have used. In North America, the Inuit, which means “the people” in their indigenous language, of northern Canada have often and popularly been referred to as “Eskimo,” a European label for

“eaters of raw flesh.” In antiquity, as well, people and polities were given differing names depending on various factors according to time, place, and point of origin. As noted previously, Mitanni was also called Hanigalbat, Nahrina, or “the land of the Hurrians” depending on the point of origin, e.g., Assyria or Egypt, and whether the reference was to the polity, the location, or the people.

In the Iron Age Levant polities were named based on three currently discernable criteria: 1) on the founding or dominant figure in their history (e.g., Bit-Agusi, Bit-Haza’il), 2) on an eponymous figure of a kin-based lineage (e.g., Bit-Adini, Ammon), and 3) a tradition related to place (e.g., Hamath, Moab, Tyre, Sidon). The question that needs to be probed is to what degree one of these may reflect on the nature of the polity, i.e., on a polity continuum can one find any embedded indicators of so-called socio-political complexity? If Geshur was an artificial construct of the Dtr, one may ask: why was it given its name? Did the Dtr label Geshur, a common noun for bridge in Hebrew, due to its geographical position as a place that one must cross or bridge to connect the narrative characters, namely biblical Israel with other entities to the north thought to be evolving in the Neo-Hittite and Aramean realms of the Iron II period? The toponym does not reflect the two names that are provided by the Dtr for rulers of the place, i.e., Ammihud and Talmai. Thus it seems possible that the Dtr did not name Geshur after a dominant figure or person, granted one can not build an argument on two names. However, the name does have a known meaning, and the identities of two so-called kings and the conventions of naming polities after a prominent figure are not followed. Admittedly, it is beyond the current available data to reach a conclusion.

What about “Geshur” in the LBA? The name does not appear in any extant extra-biblical texts. Due to the popularization of Mazar’s 1961 article, “Geshur and Maacah,”

Geshur has been linked with KUR *ga-ri* mentioned in El Amarna letter 256, line 23; here the Akkadian form, KUR, is the determinative used that may help to see a naming related to a place, i.e., a land or region, and not a person or tribe. Mazar's suggestion that a scribal omission of the middle syllable, *šu*, thus emending the reading in EA 256 to KUR *ga-<šu>-ri* to read Geshur, has been widely accepted and circulated, with Garu and Geshur being accepted as the same polity. But, are they the same? While it is possible that a scribal error may have caused the omission of the middle syllable, this seems incongruous with even a casual read of EA 256 where the scribe seemingly intentionally lists seven sites in Garu. The other damaging argument against accepting an emendation are found in basic canons of hermeneutics: Why would one seek to emend an older textual attestation with a later one? In essence, Mazar decided that he was going to privilege the one literary source, the Bible, over the other, EA 256. However, it is basic to hermeneutical exploration of texts that: 1) the older reading should be preferred, and 2) the harder reading should be preferred. These two hermeneutical "canons" have been largely ignored in order to make Garu harmonize with the Geshur.

If one proceeds in questioning the emendation of EA 256, then there is no attestation of Geshur in a textual source from the LBA. This creates a conundrum in the study of Geshur in the LBA and Iron Age periods as there is no reliable mention of a LBA Geshur. That being stated, it was instructive to explore a LBA Garu and Iron Age Geshur to see if, perhaps, Mazar's hypothesis may eventually reveal that LBA Garu and Iron Age Geshur were the same, but perhaps known by different names.

### **7.3 Geshur: on the environment**

It is critical in any regional historical or archaeological study to have an appreciation of the climate, environment, land-use potential, and natural resources of that

region for the given period and area of interest. This forces many research projects of an ancient people or polity in any given area to give basic, most-often, “contemporary” data on rainfall and temperature in the region being studied. Then follows almost as certainly the caveat invariably about the lack of adequate research for the given period, and the caution that climactical information extrapolated from one period to another should be done with caution.

The basic question on the environment and the so-called social complexity of a people or place is whether there were conditions built into the environmental landscape for the appearance of differentiation or stratification. In large measure the environment either aided in the process of defining a people, or restricted it. If one accepts the general land area of Geshur to roughly the area east of the Sea of Galilee in the Golan region and the Yarmuk river region, then the area benefitted from three natural topographic features: the Yarmuk river and its basin in the south, the sea of Galilee to the west, and the Mount Hermon range to the north. All of these would have impacted the way people organized their society and moved resources in and out of the area, and very well could have served as natural barriers in order to allow the preservation of resources for the development of the society. This is not to say that these topographical features were impermeable; there may have been the presence of non-settled pastoralists in the area.

The evidence from the environmental studies would indicate that the area east of the Sea of Galilee is productive and capable of sustaining people. There is an ample availability to water and cultivatable land as a resource. Based on the availability of resources one can assume that sites and settlements may have arisen: 1) near the lake, i.e., the Sea of Galilee, and 2) in the central Golan plateau region, where soil and rainfall conditions are indicators of greater productivity. This observation harmonizes with the

biblical view of the area as a fertile zone, and the ethnographic observations as a fertile area for grain production. The literary and ethnographic observations find support in the material remains of structures, or parts therein, commonly associated with grain storage that have been excavated. These symbols, i.e., the so-called granaries, give credence to the environmental and textual data, and solidify the view that the environment was productive. There seems to have existed the means to store resources and control wealth in the region, as seen in both the Tier 1 site and Tier 2 Iron II sites. It is through these symbols, that reflect on the production, the storage, and distribution of resources, that one can reflect on the possibility of economic power, and an elite that controlled power, at least in the Iron II period. Without the fertility of the environment, i.e., agriculture and food production, any possibility of movement toward complexity is restricted. If one accepts the current hypothesis that the presence of granaries and the distribution of the tripartite buildings in the area are symbols of a productive area, then this allows one to minimally postulate that power is evidenced through some form of exchange, i.e., mercantile activity. The production of goods and their distribution, as seen archaeologically, reveal that there may have been another level of complexity to the people where the economic status of the control of the commodity was supervised by other agents within the area.

In peeling open and probing the spatial landscape suggested for Geshur, one may arrive at another possible hypothesis that may be examined and compared with both the textual and archaeological data. While social scientists have long held to a relationship between societal size and complexity, i.e., population growth and or population pressure as a means to measure social complexity, there is little agreement on the size and scale of archaic states. Demography is often cited as an indicator of social-organizational

change, with population size as an implicit indicator of varying levels of social complexity.<sup>924</sup> If the evidence limits the hypothesis that Geshur “occupied” principally the area of the Golan, then Geshur would have occupied some 1,200 km sq. If a general demographic estimate of minimal population density is 4 people/km sq, then there would have been a population of some 4,800 inhabitants, which is above Renfrew’s threshold of the size of a small state.<sup>925</sup> This figure falls well above the target figure of 2,500 plus/minus 500 for intersocietal interaction and intrasocietal integration, i.e., the maximum threshold figure where information can be disseminated to everyone. Societies with estimated populations above the 2000-3000 inhabitant threshold had two or more decision making tiers.<sup>926</sup> Thus, from a very rigid perspective, it would seem that Geshur, if it indeed occupied the area of the Golan, would have the necessary land area to support an expanding population that would require a multi-tier communications network. It seems possible to postulate that the Dtr understood at least two tiers: the elite who ruled and those ruled. But, perhaps it will be the material remains that may shed light on the possibility of a society of two or three tiers (see below).

#### **7.4 Geshur: on the LBA periphery**

In the world of core and periphery in the LBA, one finds a region in the Levant that became in many ways a transitional zone between the major geopolitical interests of the time. During the reign of Thutmose III Egypt shifts from a “policy” of “Levant as a corridor” to more of a hegemonic occupier, or controller, of the southern Levant. But,

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<sup>924</sup>Feinman, G. 1998. “Scale and Social Organization.” Pp. 95-133 in Feinman, G. and Marcus, J. (eds.) *Archaic States*. Sante Fe: School of American Research Press.

<sup>925</sup>Renfrew, C. 1982. “Polity and Power: Interaction, Intensification and Exploitation.” Pp. 264-90 in Renfrew, C. and Wagstaff, M. (eds.) *An Island Polity: The Archaeology of Exploitation in Melos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>926</sup>Feinman 1998: 107-09.

in the LBA chess game of geopolitical powers in the Levant Egypt's interests were checked by the geopolitical interests of Mitanni, followed by Hatti, in the area of southern Syria. This struggle, possibly for trade corridors and resources, led to an escalation of involvement of Egypt in the southern Levant in the 13<sup>th</sup> century; however, even in this, it may be better to see Egypt's interest in the area not as an occupier of a contiguous area, as much as occupier of what appears to be key positions in an area. It is in this geopolitical drama that the area east of the Sea of Galilee occupies during the LBA, it seems to be on the periphery of the geopolitical powers of the north and the south.

It is the Amarna Letters that allows a window to open to view this area from a distinct perspective of several localized polities that have a long tradition of being labeled as city-states or kingdoms, both labels inadequate and debated.<sup>927</sup> To the south of the area east of the Sea of Galilee was Pella (ca. 10 ha.), which was positioned strategically across the Jordan river opposite of Beth Shean, an Egyptian center. EA 255 and 256 seem to reveal that Pella was viewed as somewhat independent and outside of Egyptian dominance. The named ruler of Pella, Mut-Bahlu, defended his ongoing fidelity to Egypt, and clearly stated that he was not hiding the ruler of Ashtaroth (Aštartu, EA 197, 256), a place to the east of the Sea of Galilee, perhaps Tell Ashtara. From an archaeological ground plan approach, Pella seems to have had the basic monumental structures, i.e., a palace and temple, to point toward a people in the process of evolving toward being an independent polity on the periphery of Egyptian dominance.<sup>928</sup> Hazor

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<sup>927</sup>For the latest defense of a complex society identified as a "city-state" see, Yoffee, N. 2005. *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>928</sup>See Knapp, A.B. 1993. *Society and Polity at Bronze Age Pella: Annals Perspective*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

(ca. 12 ha. at the upper mound) was another site some 14 km to the north and west of the Sea of Galilee. Like Pella, it is mentioned in several Amarna letters (EA 148, 227, 228, 364). It has, as well, significant archaeological material remains to reveal that it was moving toward a greater social complexity. The material culture seems to reveal a continuity with the MBA with the architectural monuments (the earthen rampart, city gates, and area H temple) continuing into the LBA. Perhaps aiding one to understand Hazor's place in the LBA was the idea of stratification and complexity viewed by the presence of various temples and cultic material associated with the LBA level. In the end, one picture that emerges from the Amarna texts is two places that appear to have some archaeological footprint that illuminate their position in the region.

From this limited perspective one can begin to explore the place of Garu (EA 256) in the text and the landscape, i.e., the archaeological sphere. The Amarna letters reveal a general unrest in the Egyptian sphere of regions to the north of Pella, the south of Damascus, and the west of Hazor. In the midst of this area, roughly the area east of the Sea of Galilee, one possibly can place the location of Garu. From a close-reading of the textual sources, the Amarna letters and biblical texts, Garu appears to be in the same general geographical space as that of biblical Geshur. If Garu and Geshur can be connected through a common geographical area, then it is, perhaps, more productive to explore this through their respective place spatially emerging from the literary maps, than to argue from the position of an orthographic slip as noted above concerning the accepted position since Mazar's 1961 article on Geshur. Having moved the discussion slightly away from finding a linguistic one-to-one correlation between Garu and Geshur, one can ask: So what? In essence, from the literary maps of the two textual traditions, they appear to be occupying the same space, but what does this reveal of the people or place? In



other words, since Mazar's 1961 article LBA Garu and biblical Geshur were considered one and the same, but were they? Even if they appear to occupy the same landscape does the literary texts allow us to conclude that they were one and the same?

If one accepts the hypothesis that Garu occupied the landscape to the area of east of the Sea of Galilee, the problem then becomes if the researcher can move the discussion beyond "Garu as a named place in the Amarna corpus" to explore the social history of the area through the archaeological footprint, i.e., the ground plan approach. EA 256 portrays Garu as an aggressor and an obstacle to the Egyptian interests of trade and power in the region. Garu had taken settlements, often called "cities," from other polities in the area, and is portrayed as further deteriorating the Egyptian periphery. EA 256 seems to be exact in the intent and power of Garu, it is the only extant Amarna letter that names a list of settlements/sites/cities associated with a toponym. This has engaged a few archaeologists to find these so-called cities, with at best a resulting conjecture of their location. In a word, there has been in the past the assumption that the cities of EA 256 existed and could be identified in the landscape, even though their names were associated with topographical features commonly found in landscape. This is illustrated with the reference to Magdalu, which carries the idea of mound or fortress and can be used in reference to an agricultural building near cultivated land,<sup>929</sup> as one of the sites of Garu, and also a designation as possibly a place in Amqu (EA 185:29,34) and a place in and near Egypt (EA 69:20; 234:29). However, after examining the sites, surveys, and the limited excavation details from the region, another picture seems to be evolving. From the survey reports it appears that there were less than 20 sites in the Golan during the

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<sup>929</sup>See discussion in Routledge 2004: 192-201.

LBA with 12 sites located in the southern area. This harmonizes with the portrait of Garu in EA 256 as an expansionist power near the Yarmuk region. While Epstein theorized locations to all the “cities” of EA 256, there have been no substantial LBA levels found in excavated sites in the Golan area. Thus, according to Flannery’s “clues” of an archaic state, there is no basis, i.e., no settlement hierarchy, palaces, temples, etc., to understand the area on an evolutionary continuum moving toward a more complex polity, i.e., something like a chiefdom evolving, or not, towards an archaic state.

This provokes one to explore the question: why would a scribe represent Pella and Garu this way in EA 256? Pella has the LBA archaeological footprint of a more complex polity, which would assume comes with greater degrees of power and resources, than Garu, which lacks the clues for power, yet seemed concerned with Garu. Perhaps this has more to do with the local drama and the perceived amount of rhetoric to: 1) remove all culpability concerning the charges leveled against Mut-Bahlu, and 2) divert attention to a place that is outside of Egyptian control and threatens its interests. This would account for the precision of the naming of the cities in EA 256, there is a certain drama that heightens the need for action in the text.

The question remains: what was Garu in the LBA? Was it simply an invention of the local scribe in Pella to serve the interests of a polity on the periphery of a waning Egyptian domain? The surface surveys at least allow us to say that perhaps there was more than this. On the negative side of the question, it seems that one can propose what it was not. Based on the current evidence, it was not a polity that would carry the label of an archaic state. There is no site of the same size, or with comparable material remains, as Pella or Hazor that is currently known in the area. This is yet another indication that the assumption that Garu and Geshur were the same can no longer be

accepted without criticism, and may need to be modified.

However, before totally discounting the two names as possibly connected, it is generally accepted that warfare was one precursor to state formation in preindustrial polities.<sup>930</sup> The LBA Amarna texts seem to indicate that there was the presence of regional disputes in this area. Furthermore peoples who organized as states were generally able to expand through military conquest. This is the portrait of Garu in EA 256: a place able to take sites away from the Egyptian political sphere. The difficulty in accepting warfare as a precursor in an early state is localizing it in the archaeological record. For LBA Garu the archaeological clues for warfare are not found; however, in the same region in the Iron Age, there is the presence of fortification systems, at a time that is earlier than commonly associated with state formation in the southern Levant. Furthermore, there is the disruption of the settlement pattern from the region in the southern Golan/Yarmuk area to a more northerly settlement pattern. One possible hypothesis is that the material indicators and the disruption to the north may be a residual marker of a state formation process associated with LBA Garu. This leaves the possibility that Garu was a territory, a region, perhaps with the resources of evolving towards a complex society, outside of the influence of Hazor, Ashtaroth, and Pella, and was portrayed as a threat to Egyptian hegemonic interests in the region.

A possible way forward to exploring Garu in the LBA is to go beyond modern political borders, and include the immediate area south of the Yarmuk into the data. EA 256 indicates that Garu had taken two cities from the Egyptian periphery, namely

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<sup>930</sup>For a current introduction, see Webster, D. 1998. "Warfare and Status Rivalry: Lowland Maya and Polynesian Comparisons." Pp. 311-351 in Feinman, G. and Marcus, J. (eds.) *Archaic States*. Sante Fe: School of American Research Press.

Hayyuna and Yabiluma. If one accepts that Yabiluma is Tell Abil, then it seems that the Garu was able to conduct campaigns in the arena south of the Yarmuk. This raises the possibility that Garu may have been an “entity” situated to the south of the Yarmuk. This geographical area has had at least two partial excavations that may illuminate the problem of Garu, both remain to be explored further, namely, where did sites such as el-Fukhar and Irbid fit into the social history of the region? These sites have evidence of occupation in the LBA, and have evidence of monumental building activity, cultic finds, and tombs. Furthermore there are a number of partially excavated sites that initially may resemble Tell Hadar and Bethsaida, Iron Age sites east of the Sea of Galilee. The similarities are noted by: 1) the building techniques at sites south of the Yarmuk, notably el-Baider, Aideun, Khanasiri, and el-Feiden, with Tell Hadar, north of the Yarmuk, and 2) the architecture at el-Fukhar and Bethsaida. These sites have LBA levels, and some “clues” to a more complex social history. Were these sites, perhaps, Tier 2 sites associated with Pella, or possibly Ashtaroth, or could one of them have been a Tier 1 site in a two tiered chiefdom for Garu? This question, at present, does not have an answer from the current archaeological data, but acts as a catalyst to reveal that the dynamics in the area were more complex than simply drawing lines on a map, whether a function of modern politics or ancient, and outlining LBA polities reflected in the Amarna Letters. Furthermore, if these sites, generally south of the Yarmuk, are viewed as part of Garu, then this may validate the rhetoric in EA 256 that there was an actual people that may have been seeking to expand against the Egyptian interests in the region.

At the end of the LBA with the so-called collapse of the Near East’s political systems and the transition to the Iron Age, the surveys and excavations are revealing that their was possible movement away from the Yarmuk river region to areas further to the

north – of course, the Iron II period is widely regarded as the birth-period of many of the polities in southern Transjordan. Whether this is a continuation of the same LBA society of the Yarmuk region, that leveraged the possible chaos and conflict of the end of the LBA thus providing the fertile ground for a people to evolve into an archaic state, or a completely different people is still not discernable with the available data. There are only a few strewn sets of clues that subsequent inferences may point of a continuation of the same people. Perhaps most likely is the advantage offered by the collapse of the LBA hegemonic powers and possible power vacuum created resulting in the possibility of any people who had the available resources to embark on new building campaigns. In the region east of the Sea of Galilee and the Yarmuk river this may have been to areas that may have been viewed as more secure, firstly at Tell Hadar followed by Bethsaida. However, further research will need to take place in both the area of the Yarmuk river region and the sites east of the Sea of Galilee to further this hypothesis of a continuation between the LBA and Iron Age periods.

### **7.5 Geshur: on the use of the Hebrew Bible as a source**

The use of the Bible in understanding polities embedded in it has a long history of its possible part, or not, in understanding them. Since no other textual source mentions the toponym Geshur, it is evident that this discussion is framed with a certain positivist attitude toward the feasibility of teasing out at least minimum historical information from the Bible concerning Geshur. Of course this is done with full acceptance that the Bible, and by and large the so-called Deuteronomistic tradition, functions in no way as what most scholars in the social sciences would consider a primary witness. The DH is generally, and conservatively, regarded as a composition formed sometime after the seventh century B.C. – hence, problematic for a reflection of a people or polity that may

pre-date this. Naturally, if the source originates in the seventh century, or later, then the perspective of the source may have, and most-likely does, certain strands of information that are more of a reflection of the contemporary setting of the writing. This naturally will impact whatever sources may exist for the composition. In this sense, Geshur may be an artificial construct, perhaps nothing more than a toponymic name written by an ideologically motivated scribe seeking to construct a polity that would serve the scribe's purpose (s), an invention in many ways. If we begin with this as a starting premise, then it is possible to probe whether there are any episodes, characters, traditions which are based or have embedded in them some historical event, people, or place in relation to biblical Geshur. It seems that when the Bible mentions foreign polities, it does so with a modicum of accuracy. It does not minimize or grossly misrepresent larger polities that are well documented from other sources: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia all existed, and at a minimum left a mark on the Levant. Furthermore, the Bible does not misrepresent, or possibly invent, rulers of these polities, as they seemingly are ordered in their appearance on the world stage from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C., e.g., Shishaq, Tiglath-pileser III, Nebuchadrezzar, and Cyrus.<sup>931</sup> For smaller polities it has not misrepresented or invented them: Damascus, Tyre, Arabia, Elam, Moab, and Philistia all existed, at least in varying degrees of reality. They were not created out of nothing, as foils in the deuteronomistic narrative. Naturally there are ongoing debates about chronology and social history of many of these smaller polities, which may be misrepresented and completely static or ideologically driven in the DH, but at a minimum

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<sup>931</sup>See Halpern, B. 2005. "David Did It, Others Did Not: The creation of Ancient Israel." Pp. 422-438 in Levy, T. and Higham, T. (eds.) *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text and Science*. London: Equinox Publishing Ltd.

the reader understands that the Bible reflects actual polities that existed, either at the time of the writing or known at the time of the writing. The legend of many of the biblical polities is their theological part they play as the divine bearer of wrath. If the reader moves away from a purely theological reading of the Bible, and asks a more profane question of the greater geopolitical currents of X period, it seems that embedded in the DH is the idea that the Bible bears witness to a time in conflict, in an area of the world that became a stage for the interests of greater powers. It is in periods of chaos and conflict, characterized by the movement of communities that archaic states have the climate to originate.<sup>932</sup> They intersect with the main plot of the story when the story requires a foil to the protagonist.

In some way then, for the reader interested in biblical Geshur, this research will serve as a study, one that has not been explored, to see if the biblical, extra-biblical, and archaeological material harmonize, are indifferent, or stand in contradiction. In other words, was Geshur nothing more than a literary construct or was it a localized place, people or polity, as the Dtr recorded?

The DH portrays David as a new king of an emerging kingdom entering into a political relationship through marriage with Maacah, the daughter of a so-called king of Geshur, sometime in the tenth century B.C. In the account of David's rise to power, it seems that his marriage to Maacah provided him with a beneficial ally in the region. This union provides a possible strand of data in the limited onomastica the Dtr used for the ascribed royalty of Geshur. There are three names embedded in the DH for three

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<sup>932</sup>See Wright, H. 1998. "Uruk States in Southwestern Iran." Pp. 173-197 in Feinman, G. and Marcus, J. (eds.) *Archaic States*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

generations from Geshur: Ammihud, Talmai, and Maacah. The point of discovery and interest is the recognition that the first and third generation have West Semitic names, but the second generation has a well-attested Hurrian name. This may be further illuminated from the evidence from the Late Bronze Age Amarna texts where Hurrian names appear in entities generally in the northern parts of the southern Levant, with the exception of rulers with West Semitic names on the littoral from Ugarit to Tyre, but West Semitic names are attested generally to areas of the southern parts of the southern Levant.<sup>933</sup> In other words, the mention of Talmai, a Hurrian name, in a geographical sphere associated with Hurrian names either reflects on a tradition known by the Dtr or is a coincidence. By the beginning of the first millennium B.C. Hurrian names in the Levant are on the wane and one finds West Semitic names for the Iron II period, as witnessed by the three names that have been found engraved on pottery at Bethsaida. Due to the limited nature of the onomastica evidence, one should not try to tease more information from it than is there; however, it is one reflection that may suggest the Dtr revealed that the area of Geshur at the turn of the first millennium was part of cultural change in the southern Levant.

Geshur it seems would serve as a buffer between David's kingdom and the newly forming Neo-Hittite and Aramean kingdoms further north, that often were the antagonists in the David story. The Bible portrays David in a series of battles with so-called kingdoms to his east and further to the north, but does not mention any interaction on the part of Geshur, either with a northern Aramean coalition or with David. In one sense, this is what one would expect given the nature of the source material: the DH existed to

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<sup>933</sup>See Na'aman 1994a: 178.



construct the Davidic kingdom and not another. One could probe and ask the question why Geshur is afforded the freedom of not involving itself in the regional geopolitical maneuvering? Was Geshur merely a fabrication of the Dtr, or did it, in some spatial realm, occupy some form of landscape? This seems to be minimally a legitimate query. It seems problematic to comprehend Geshur's absence from the battle descriptions, since it reappears in the story of Absalom, this time, regarding an internal problem threatening David's reign. Yet even here Geshur was not part of the narrative tension, even though Absalom, the son of David and Maacah, had familial connections to Geshur and had found refuge there for three years. One strand of data that is curious was Absalom's announcement that it would have been better for him to have remained at Geshur than return to Jerusalem (2 Sam 14:32). From a literary perspective it is possible to read issues of power and conflict between father and son, as well as king and heir, though perhaps there is more to this textual strand than simply a statement of Absalom's desire to reign. Perhaps, this statement is a socio-cultural reflection that Geshur was a more desirable place to live, perhaps a real place to rule? Perhaps Geshur moved beyond an artificial construct of the Dtr and was an actual place that was part of a tradition received by the Dtr? A question that the text raises, but does not resolve.

Even after David's struggle with Absalom, and the wars that David had with regional powers that would have been conducted at least in part to Geshur's east, Geshur remained unnamed in the battles. Naturally, one could conclude that the absence was due to the notion that Geshur was an artificial construct, i.e., it did not exist as a place, people or polity, therefore one should not expect to have a citation to it. Or, perhaps, this may speak to how the Dtr constructed Geshur's ability to remain independent of the geopolitical maneuvering at the time. Geshur may have been afforded this position due

to its geographical location and ability to sustain life internally, or simply because it was not viewed as an important element in the tension of the power struggle within the DH. The confusion over Geshur in the narrative is a natural part of dealing with a text that has a distinctly different perspective and reason(s) for existence.

The textual references to Geshur end with the Absalom narratives. The administrative lists of Solomon's kingdom seem to have reverted to a pre-Davidic land distribution, where the portrayal of biblical Israel no longer extends to the north and east of the Sea of Galilee. Thus Geshur may have not been needed as a geographical referent. At this point in the DH it is, again, difficult to interpret the absence of Geshur in the literary construction. Naturally one could conclude that Geshur no longer existed, if it ever did outside of the Geshur of David's period. Possibly arguing that Geshur may have been a phenomenon of the Dtr for the construction of the Davidic realm. Later in the DH there are recorded battles between Israel and Aramean kingdoms to the north, with the boundary seemingly between them being the strategic corridor east of the Sea of Galilee. This region appears to vacillate from one power to another, and in many ways coincided with the boundary which existed between Hatti and Egypt during the Late Bronze Age. The lack of textual data makes identifying the controlling entity of this area difficult, if there was one. The literary texts do however reveal an area that seems to know the presence of ongoing military skirmishes, albeit on a localized level and wrapped in the ideology of the Dtr. As stated above, it is well accepted that warfare and military conquest are associated with the formation of early states. If one accepts the presence of Geshur as a place, people or polity at this time, though absent from the perspective of the Dtr after the Absalom narratives, then it may be the archaeological evidence that may enlighten a region in a period of ongoing local conflict. While not wanting to get ahead

of the evidence, the absence of Geshur from the DH at this period is problematic when one views the current hypothesis from the excavations at Bethsaida. The excavations at Bethsaida are preliminarily revealing a continued settlement occupation there, of some entity, at least until the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III in 733/32 B.C., if one accepts the current chronology of the Bethsaida excavations. If Bethsaida was part of the space of Geshur, and did indeed at some level exist until the Neo-Assyrian campaigns of Tiglath-pileser, then there is a nearly two hundred year period where Geshur is not seemingly mentioned in the DH. Naturally, since the DH is about biblical Israel and not Geshur then its absence from the literary material is to be processed as one possible expectation.

Still another somewhat related problem is the Deuteronomistic phraseology of the marker: until this day (Joshua 13). If this phrase is a reflection of a current condition known at the time of writing or editing the DH and the DH was written or composed sometime after the seventh century B.C., then this would, at a minimum it seems, allow the perspective that Geshur was a known polity at the time. In other words, if it existed at all as a polity outside of the DH it did not seemingly dissolve after the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III.

In the end, what does the biblical material provide for possible insight into Geshur? It may help to localize Geshur to a geographical space, albeit not drawn with carefully delineated boundaries, east of the Sea of Galilee at the beginning of the Iron II period. It provides a limited onomastic list of so-called kings associated with the people, and seems to indicate that a known practice of dynastic relations based on marriage relations was practiced with other groups. It may hint that the place was desirable as a possible location to seek to rule. After the Dtr moves from David to other portions of the DH, Geshur is absent from the writings. Though absent from the writings, there is the

portrayal of the presence of ongoing localized conflicts. If these are accepted as possible historical strands embedded in the DH, then they may speak to the emerging of early states in the region.

## **7.6 Geshur: on the material culture**

The textual material from the Amarna Letters and the Bible do not harmonize as neatly as Mazar believed. The question remains concerning the methodology of emending EA 256 to harmonize with biblical Geshur. It was suggested above that Garu and Geshur are represented as occupying the same general landscape, but that does not equate the literary picture of LBA Garu with Iron Age Geshur. The same landscape does not mean the same people, especially given the social history of the region over a few hundreds of years. From the beginning of this study it was stressed that the textual and archaeological data should be studied independently. Since the textual data led to a problematic outcome regarding Garu being Geshur, perhaps the archaeological data may either confirm, deny, or be indifferent to the social history of the area in the LBA and Iron Age periods. Beyond seeking to probe these two horizons, there is the opportunity to let the archaeological data be a contributor to the above literary discussion of the nature of Garu and biblical Geshur, i.e., are we dealing with literary constructs or was there the archaeological footprint for these toponyms? As seen in chapter 4, the Dtr was not precise in delineating the limits of Geshur, nor was the LBA Amarna scribe in delineating the limits of Garu. But, both are portrayed, it seems, to have occupied the landscape east of the Sea of Galilee north of the Yarmuk rivers basin, to perhaps the Mt. Hermon range – naturally this is broad and should not give the understanding that these filled the space on their map as hegemonic occupiers. If one accepts this general landscape for Geshur, then this is the appropriate archaeological sphere to probe through survey and excavation

work for the LBA and Iron Age periods.

It is generally well accepted that many early archaic states lack indigenous writing, as currently the case with Geshur. To date there is no attested seal with its name and both possible extra-biblical textual sources have to be emended to arrive at the name Geshur. Therefore archaeologists have turned to the material remains of a site or region to ascertain if there are possibly any clues embedded in the surface surveys and excavations that may help in understanding the social history of the area. Chapter 6 of this thesis, after surveying the excavations of the region, engages Kent Flannery's ground plan approach to understand pre-historic areas. It explored the question of what the surveys and excavations revealed about the targeted people/society – with the seemingly furtive query being: Can Geshur be found in the material culture, and if so can it be labeled as a chiefdom or archaic state?

In essence, the material remains for the area east of the Sea of Galilee spoke loudly during the Iron Age, Iron IIA specifically, where archaeologists have found the remains of monumental buildings, administrative buildings, and stelae. During the Iron IIA period it was discernable that there was not just one building or structure that could be associated with an archaic state, but several buildings and structures. Furthermore, in the target region, the buildings were not isolated to one site, but seem to have covered the key resource areas of the region, in a possibly three to four tier hierarchy. What is critical at this juncture in the research is to underscore that the archaeological research of the area was conducted under different entities. Bethsaida is being excavated by R. Arav under the auspices of the Bethsaida Excavation Project at the University of Nebraska Omaha, and Tell Hadar and 'Ein Gev and other sites were excavated under the auspices of the Land of Geshur Project under the direction of M. Kochavi and the University of Tel

Aviv. Why is this important? Because Arav excavated what he considers a *bit-hilani*, and at a minimum this is a large monumental building that would require several sources of resources to build for an elite group in the society. Whereas Kochavi uncovered several building structures that are not identified as palaces, but as administrative buildings. What now is being done is to make a hypothesis that Bethsaida may have been a Tier 1 site and Tell Hadar and 'Ein Gev may have been Tier 2 sites of a possible four tier society. It was already suggested in Chapter 6 that the surveys indicate a growth in the number of Iron Age sites, and if one understands these to be primarily Tier 4 sites, then all that is missing is what Flannery would call Tier 3 sites. However, there have been revealed a at least eight sites that seem to be of the size and nature, i.e., a fort constructed in strategic positions vis-à-vis the Tier 2 sites, that possibly could be classified as Tier 3 sites.

Flannery does not believe that it is the place of the archaeologist to define the nature of the polity. However, what seems to be emerging is that at the beginning of the Iron IIa period the area of the Golan had a variety evidence of material remains that would argue that there was a polity that many anthropologists would call an archaic state. The material remains as presented in chapter 6 suggest that in the Iron II period in the area there was evidence to suggest the possibility of internal differentiation with an elite localized in one area, and perhaps controlling resources in another area. The indicators of the material remains seem to harmonize with the excavation surveys that show a growth in the number of sites in Iron I toward Iron II. However, the conundrum of the archaeologist is the nature of the evidence and ability to know through the material culture who commissioned the building of any specific part of the archaeological footprint. It is an assumption to hold that the proximity of a Tier 1 and Tier 2 sites is

equated with both tiers belonging socially together and were part of the same entity, this may or may not be the case. Thus, it is very difficult to discern whether the people who had the monumental building at Bethsaida constructed were the same who had the administrative buildings constructed at Tell Hadar and 'Ein Gev.

At present, the Bethsaida site is thought to have been continually inhabited from the beginning of the Iron IIa period until the Neo-Assyrian campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III in 733/32 B.C. However, caution is needed in bringing the social history curtain down too quickly on the people who were the occupiers of Bethsaida at the end of the eighth century B.C., as this destruction date derives from the appearance of destruction of the monumental gate structure at Bethsaida, solely. The data does not reveal whether the Neo-Assyrian campaigns disassembled the possible society at Bethsaida so that it dissolved abruptly after this, or whether the society continued – the Dtr phraseology of “until this day” in relation to Geshur may help understand that a polity continued after the Neo-Assyrian campaigns. In any case, it remains an assumption that the people could not have continued living in the area even after a possible military skirmish.

Also of note was the lack of material clues for the LBA. The working hypothesis would be that the majority of the social dynamic of the area during the LBA was concentrated toward the southern Golan and Yarmuk area. This is the reflection that stems from the survey work, and through possibly the limited excavations at Tel el-Fukhar. Ideally, one would like to argue for a socio-historical process from the LBA to Iron Age in the area, but connecting these with the current archaeological remains is beyond reach. Even with that said, one must not be too quick to see rigid chronological demarcations between the

LBA and the Iron Age in regards to Geshur. If one accepts the theory that in many ancient complex societies there was a time lag between the first evidence of statehood and the first unmistakable palace<sup>934</sup>, then the chronological window for LBA Garu and biblical Geshur narrows and becomes a closer possibility. As highlighted above, both the Amarna Letters and the Bible reveal a geographic arena that is characterized by localized military conflicts, hence there is a textual continuity of conflict. When the material remains for the Iron Age are studied they seem to suggest that the people who had the fortification structures built in the proposed area of Geshur did so with the intention to protect their resources.

### **7.7 Geshur: does this toponym have a future?**

What progress can be made in assigning any people with a designation among one of the various evolutionary trajectories? Is the goal the identification and declaration that a certain people or polity was a tribe, chiefdom, or state? That one somehow is more complex than another or one needs to be rescued from being viewed as a “step” in a possible long unilinear process? The research should not end with a statement that any polity based on “clues” should merit a typological name, often the study ends at classification, but unless the typological classification moves beyond itself and serves to enhance the next stage in research it serves no purpose. The early state, or archaic state, was able to manage the distribution of resources in a way that allowed social groups to develop within, and perhaps from outside, the polity. As has been highlighted, there seems to be a coalescing of some of the evidence that may reveal that Geshur was a localized polity east of the Sea of Galilee in the Iron Age. Geshur as polity in the Iron Age constructed and displayed symbols that

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<sup>934</sup>See Flannery 1998: 21-22.



emerge on a cross-cultural spectrum indicating the arena of royal power and prestige, albeit on a smaller scale, at an earlier time than many other Iron II southern Levantine polities. It is not surprising that states became part of the Iron Age social fabric in the southern Levant, but is Geshur an example of one that seemingly predates many of the other states? If so, then it is unique and deserves further examination. Furthermore, it seems possible that one can argue for the evolution of a LBA society to an Iron Age society, i.e., the emergence of Geshur from Garu; however, caution, as well as more data, is needed to advance this hypothesis. This may be a step forward in understanding Geshur. The present study, reveals that while the Iron II material remains for the area east of the Sea of Galilee are helpful in discovering the social history, there have been more questions raised than problems solved. The previous theory built on textual emendation of the LBA Amarna texts has been reevaluated, and the continuity of the same peoples in the LBA and Iron Age social history of the area questioned, but not discounted. It appears that whatever sources and reflections from a past social history of the area the Dtr utilized to construct the DH that another polity may possibly be added as a place localized as expected in the DH. Was the toponym Geshur an invention of the Dtr? This still is open to speculation, as no evidence has been found bearing this name. However, if the name was an invention, the landscape where the Dtr placed Geshur certainly was appropriate for the purposes of the biblical narrative. The biblical narrative portrays a place that had already had a two-generation rule by the time it placed David as trying to establish his rule. This narrative seems to parallel the narrative in the material remains of the targeted area. As previously stated, the biblical narrative only can take the reader so far, and it appears that Geshur at times was used with

a specific literary purpose, then it no longer appeared in the narrative. At present, it seems that the material remains reveal that it may have continued as a place until the beginning of the Neo-Assyrian campaigns in the area. What happens to the landscape or place Geshur occupies after that is not known, with the current evidence.

Naturally, this is an initial proposal, which is unique to the current scholarly discussion about the nature of the emergence of the state as a new phenomenon in the southern Levant in the Iron Age, in understanding a much neglected area in the southern Levant. It is axiomatic in almost all studies of this nature, which seek the integration of environmental, historical, textual, and archaeological data, that every conclusion is little more than a postulation, which raises further questions. Due to the meagerness and nature of the sources, it is difficult to arrive at any solid conclusions. The way forward to a better understanding of the social history of the area thought to be occupied by Garu or Geshur in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age periods will be through ongoing excavation at sites east of the Sea of Galilee, and with any good fortune some additional written sources may materialize.

## Abbreviations

AAAS	Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes.
AB	Anchor Bible Commentaries
ABD	Freedman, D.N. (ed.) 1992. <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , 5 vols. Garden City: Doubleday.
ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquities Jordan
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
ANET	Pritchard, J.B. 1969. <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament</i> . Princeton.
AOS	American Oriental Society
APN	Tallqvist, K.L. 1914. <i>Assyrian Personal Names</i> . Helsingfors
ArOr	Archív Orientální
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BDB	Brown, F., Driver, S.R., and Briggs, C.A. 1907. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford.
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BN	Biblische Notizen
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CANE	Sasson, J. (ed.) 1995. <i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, I-IV</i> . New York: Scribners.
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
COS	Hallo, W. and Younger, K.L. (eds.) 1997. <i>The Context of Scripture, vols. 1-3</i> . Leiden: Brill.
CTA	Herdner, A. 1963. <i>Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939</i> . Paris.
DCH	Clines, D. (ed.) 1993- <i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Sheffield.
EA	Moran, W. 1992. <i>The Amarna Letters</i> . (ed. and trans.) Baltimore.
EI	Eretz-Israel
HDT	Beckman, G. (ed.) 1999. <i>Hittite Diplomatic Texts</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.) Atlanta.
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
IES	Israel Exploration Society
IOS	Israel Oriental Studies
ITP	Tadmor, H. 1994. <i>The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III King of Assyria: Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translations and Commentary</i> . Jerusalem.
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JARCE	Journal of the American Research Center Egypt

JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JHUP	Johns Hopkins University Press
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSSEA	Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquity
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
KRI	Kitchen, K.A. 1969-1990. <i>Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical</i> . Oxford.
NAC	New American Commentary
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology
NEAEHL	Stern, E. 1993. <i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, vol 1-4</i> . New York: Simon and Schuster.
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	VanGemeren, W. (ed.) 1997. <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, vols. 1-5</i> . Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
OA	Oriens Antiquus
OEANE	Meyers, E. (ed.) 1997. <i>The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East</i> . 5 vols. New York: Oxford University Press.
Or	Orientalia
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
RA	Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie orientale
RB	Revue Biblique
RdÉ	Revue d'égyptologie
RIMA	Grayson, A.K. 1987-1996. <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Assyrian Periods, vols. 1-3</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
RITA	Kitchen, K.A. 1993-2003. <i>Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated, vols. 1-4</i> . Oxford: Blackwell.
RITANC	Kitchen, K.A. 1993/1999. <i>Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Notes and Comments, vols. 1-2</i> . Oxford: Blackwell.
RLA	Ebeling, G. et al. (eds.) <i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i> . Berlin.
RSO	Rivista degli studi orientali
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SHAJ	Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan
TA	Tel Aviv
TB	Tyndale Bulletin
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
VT	Vetus Testamentum
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements

WBC	Word Bible Commentary
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZfÄS	Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins

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