Introduction

1.1. General Introduction

The Middle Bronze Age (henceforth, MBA) was a period of true urban culture in the southern Levant. New cities, featuring massive fortifications, large temples, cult places, and impressive palaces, were built. The material culture of the period, including, among other objects, fine pottery vessels, gold and silver jewelry, bronze objects, and bone and ivory inlays and scarabs, is rich and well executed, produced using sophisticated technology, and at times imported from other regions. This period can be (and has been) regarded to as the heyday of Canaan.

The beginning of the MBA in the southern Levant is dated to circa 2000/1950 BCE, contemporary with the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty in Egypt. This period is marked by the reestablishment of urban institutions, following the five centuries of the Intermediate Bronze Age characterized by small rural villages and more modest material culture (Greenberg 2002, 105–9; Cohen 2015). The origin of this renewed urbanization, as well as the significant transformation, has been ascribed by some scholars to the arrival of newcomers from the north (Na'aman 1982, 132–34) or a cultural diffusion from the northern to the southern Levant (Dever 1987). Other scholars see the new urban culture of the southern Levant as part of the long process that took place during the MBIIa,[1] beginning in the coastal area and slowly infiltrating to the interior of the country until it became fully urbanized during the MBIIa–MBIIb transition (Cohen 2002).

The end of the MBA and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (henceforth, LBA) are traditionally dated to the Hyksos expulsion from Egypt and the rise of the New Kingdom in Egypt (e.g., Weinstein 1981, 1; A. Mazar 1992, 226–27; Dever 1992). The Hyksos, a group of west-Asiatic origin, of which most scholars assume a Canaanite origin, took over Lower Egypt around 1650 BCE and

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1. I discuss the terminology of the period below.

ruled from the city of Avaris (identified at Tell ed-Dabʿa in the Nile Delta) during the Fifteenth Dynasty. Their reign ended around 1530 BCE, an event documented in the Egyptian sources of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

However, several scholars argued in favor of a later date for the MBA–LBA transition, based on architectural and ceramic finds, as well as scarabs. According to these scholars, the transition between these two periods should be dated after Thutmose III's 1457/6 BCE military campaign to the Southern Levant and his conquest of this region (discussed below).

This chronological debate introduces the question of the degree of influence of the Egyptian historical events on the inner development of the southern Levant, more specifically in northern Canaan, and how these are reflected in the material culture. The transition between the material culture of the MBA and the LBA is characterized by its continuity, which makes it difficult to suggest a precise date for it. Consequently, it is also the first transitional period whose definition is based on historical events rather than on changes in the material culture.

1.2. Research Questions and Aims of Study

The research questions of this study are twofold. First, it aims to identify when the changes in the material horizons of the MBA and the LBA take place. Second, this study seeks to examine how the political changes that occurred in this region affect the material culture and this transition. Each of these questions will be elaborated below.

1.2.1. The Transition Between the MBA and the LBA

The first question refers to the material culture—when did significant changes in the material culture take place during the transition from the MBA to the LBA? Traditionally, this transition is defined based on the historical events that occurred in this region—the expulsion of the Hyksos and the destruction of many cities in southern Canaan.

Several scholars have already stated that the examination of historical and archaeological evidence is crucial for the explanation of cultural processes and change. Bunimovitz (1995, 320) noted that, by using the archaeological and textual evidence in the examination of cultural changes in Canaan during the LBA, he was able to identify sociocultural changes at the end of the MBA. These changes, according to him, would reshape the social and cultural landscape of the country and have a long-term and profound impact on local society. The question that remains to be answered is whether the changes identified by

Bunimovitz should indeed be attributed to the end of the MBA or perhaps occur only in the LBI. In the present study, it will be shown that, in contrast to previous scholarly work and based on architectural and ceramic changes, the most significant changes occurred between the LBI and the LBII.

1.2.2. Do Political Changes Affect Material Culture?

The second research question deals with the historical aspect of the changes identified in the analysis of the material culture. This question aims at examining the historical processes that occurred at the time of the defined geographical and chronological frameworks to determine whether any of the political changes could be the culprits in the changes in the material culture. If so, what are the implications thereof?

The changes in the material culture identified in the transition from the LBI to the LBII will be attributed to the conquest of Canaan by the Egyptian Empire. I will discuss and deal with the economic and social implications of this conquest. The Egyptian conquest opens another question—was this conquest the result of a single event (the Battle of Megiddo), or was it the result of a long process that enabled the conquest? Based on the material culture and textual evidence, I will argue that Canaan witnessed an economic decline during the LBIa, in the period after the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt and before the conquest of southern Levant by Thutmose III. Consequently, I will maintain that the conquest was ultimately enabled by this long economic decline, which began with the expulsion of the Hyksos and the fall of some important Syrian cities to the north of Canaan.

1.3. Geographical Framework

The focal point of this research is the city of Hazor. This is due to the extensive excavations and publications that this site has witnessed since the first excavations in the 1950s as well as to my personal connection to the site, as a team member and codirector of the Hazor excavations. Thus, this research was conducted with full access to the material of the largest MBA and LBA cities of southern Levant, including the unpublished material from Areas M and S.

Consequently, the geographic framework of the present study is defined in light of Hazor and includes its realm and the sites in its vicinity, comprising also the northern part of the Cisjordan (from Beth-Shean in the south to Hazor in the north), Lebanon, and southern Syria (see the map in fig. 1.1).

According to several sources, Hazor is considered the southernmost Syrian city of the Mesopotamian world. One of these sources is the Mari archive,

where Hazor is the only southern Levantine site mentioned. One of the tablets found in the archive is referred to as a dream-book. In this Middle Babylonian document, the dreamer lists the cities he traveled to in his dream. His departure is probably from the city of Babylon, and his final point is Hazor. The city mentioned before Hazor (that is, the next large kingdom to the north of Hazor) is Qatna (Oppenheim 1956, 260, 268). Therefore, based on the literary evidence, it seems logical to place Qatna as the northernmost limit of the geographical framework of this study, the assumption being that any site to the north of Qatna must have been part of its realm and not of Hazor's. Since Hazor probably controlled the Jordan Valley road, it is safe to locate its southern border in Beth-Shean, where a large settlement dated to the second millennium was found (which I discuss in chapter 3). Similarly to the area north of Qatna, any sites to the south of Beth-Shean would probably be in the latter's realm. The western border of this study is the Mediterranean Sea, and the eastern border is the Jordan River and the Lebanese Biqʿa.[2]

1.4. Chronological Framework

"One of the longest and most obscure eras in the history and culture of Palestine is the Middle Bronze Age. Not without reason, the opinions of scholars have been divided on its nature and character, on its beginning and end, and on its breakdown into periods and phases; even up to this very day it is one of the most controversial topics in historical and archaeological research." These words were written by B. Mazar in his 1968 publication, but they could have been easily written today, as they are still very relevant, especially in light of the ongoing heated debate on the MBA chronology. Therefore, it is crucial to define the subphases of the MBA and present the debate on MBA chronology.

1.4.1. MBA Terminology

The MBA was initially divided into two phases by Albright, the MBI and MBII, the latter further subdivided into three subphases—MBIIa, MBIIb, and MBIIc. Albright's MBI is today referred to by Israeli archaeologists as the Intermediate Bronze Age (some refer to it as the Early Bronze IV), leading scholars to term the three MBA subphases MBI, MBII, and MBIII (Dever 1980, 1987). However, Albright's terminology is still in use (see, for example, A. Ben-Tor et al. 2017a),

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2. One site, Tell Sakka is located to the east of the Lebanese Biqʿa but was added to the study because it is the only site in southern Syria that yielded both MBA and LBA remains.

and there are virtually no differences between the different terminologies. Albright's terminology will be used here for reasons of personal convenience.

1.4.2. Traditional Dates for the Second Millennium

Dever has rightfully argued that "all chronological arguments for the ancient Near East begin with relative sequences, based on exceedingly complex chains of evidence that are largely circumstantial; with even one piece of new data, one link may break, and the chain will fall apart. Moreover, the attempt to move from relative to absolute chronology often results in a classic circular argument, in which appeal is made to one unspecified variable to explain another" (Dever 1992, 1).

Traditionally, the MBIIa is dated to 2000/1950–1750 BCE, the MBIIb to 1750–1650 BCE, and the MBIIc to 1650–1550/1500 BCE, the latter marked by the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt (Ilan 2003, 332). However, these dates are still in debate (see D. Ben-Tor 2018 for a summary of the different suggested dates for the MBA).

In the northern Levant, the MBA is divided into two phases, based on the chronology of Ebla. The MBI, dated to 2000–1800/1770 BCE, is equivalent to Mardikh IIIA, and the MBII, dated to 1800/1770–1600 BCE, is equivalent to Mardikh IIIB. The end of the MBA in the northern Levant is marked by the destruction of Ebla around 1600 BCE. However, some suggest a later date (ca. 1560/1500 BCE) based on the ultra-low chronology (discussed below; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 291; Morandi-Bonacossi 2014, 414–15; Charaf 2014, 434–37).

As for the LBA, all dates rely on Egyptian historical events. Thus, the LBI is traditionally divided into the LBIa and the LBIb, separated by the date of the Battle of Megiddo (1457/6 BCE). The LBIIa begins after Thutmose IV reign, circa 1390 BCE, and the LBIIb begins with the Nineteenth Dynasty, around 1300 BCE (Weinstein 1982, 12–15; Panitz-Cohen 2014, 542–43; Morris 2015, 140).

In the northern Levant, the LBA is divided into two phases, the LBI and the LBII, separated by the conquests of Suppiluliuma I's under the Hittite New Kingdom and the end of the Mitanni kingdom, circa 1340 BCE (Luciani 2014, 509–10).

1.4.3. C14 and Absolute Dating

The absolute date of the expulsion of the Hyksos is still debated, as is the entire chronological framework of the MBA. The traditional date of the Hyksos expulsion and the beginning of the New Kingdom is 1550 BCE (Shaw 2000).

Radiocarbon analyses have supplied earlier (older) dates pointing to the first half of the century, circa 1570 BCE (Bronk Ramsey et al. 2010, table 1). However, the stratigraphy of Tell ed-Dabʻa does not fit well with this picture, and the results from the excavations at the site indicate a date of 1530 BCE for the beginning of the New Kingdom (Bietak 2013). An even later date, 1524 BCE, was suggested for the beginning of the New Kingdom, based on the synchronism between lunar data, archaeological evidence, and king lists (Krauss and Warburton 2009, table 1). Still, C14 dates from this site indicate a date that is 120 years earlier (Kuschera et al. 2012), resulting in a severe discrepancy between the radiocarbon dates and the archaeological remains and their interpretation, a conundrum that has not yet been solved. The 120-year difference between the archaeological evidence and the radiocarbon dates has led to a much-heated debate. Recently, C14 dates have placed the beginning of the MBA at 2000/1900 BCE; the transition from the MBIIa to the MBIIb at 1850/1800 BCE; the transition from the MBIIb to the MBIIc at 1700 BCE and the beginning of the LBA at 1600 BCE (Höflmayer 2017). In my opinion, these dates are problematic, as they leave about 250 years for the MBIIc–LBIa, a period considered as transitional. As will be shown, the LBIa is considered here a period of decline. If this period lasted indeed circa 150 years, as indicated by the radiocarbon-based chronology, a comprehensive explanation is needed by the advocates of these higher dates—could a 150-year decline period persevere after the flourishing MBIIb–c, which lasted approximately 200 years?

Scholars who adhere to radiocarbon dates and find them more reliable point to flaws in the archaeological-historical dating of the material from Tell ed-Dabʻa (e.g., Höflmayer et al. 2016; Höflmayer and Cohen 2017, 3–4). Scholars who rely on the archaeological evidence have pointed out the numerous problems relating to the historical implications of the early dates and call for a more cautious use of radiocarbon dates. These are supported by further evidence from several sites in Egypt and the Levant (e.g., Beitak 2013; D. Ben-Tor 2018).

The present study does not rely on absolute dating but rather on relative dating, and thus cannot contribute to this argument, aiming to remain outside of it. However, I believe that there is, undoubtedly, a problem to be solved and that neither side can ignore the results and conclusions of the opposing scholars. With that, a recent study by Manning et al. (2018) has identified fluctuations within radiocarbon dates based on the growing season of the organic material examined as well as differences between central and northern European C14 offsets. This find leads to an undisputed conclusion: radiocarbon dates should be used with caution (see also Finkelstein 2016) and, in my opinion, should never disregard the archaeological evidence. The results from radiocarbon analysis are a dating tool with its caveats, as are also imported and local pottery, historical events, glyptic objects, and stratigraphy. Radiocarbon dates should never be considered on their own and should be viewed as a part of the whole picture.

In the present study, I will argue that the LBIa cultural horizon still forms part of the MBA cultural horizon. Thus, returning to Dever's argument quoted above, since this study is based not on absolute dates but on relative dates, it can remain outside the heated debate on MBA chronology. Its contribution to this debate is in showing that the end of the MBA should actually be dated later, as the MBA material culture shows no break at the traditional beginning point of the LBA.

1.4.4. The Periodization of the Transition

"A 'period' of history is an arbitrary fabrication, a mere part torn from its context, given a fictitious unity, and set in fictitious isolation, yet by being so treated, it acquires a beginning, and a middle and an end" (Collingwood 1927, 324).

Beginning in the nineteenth century CE, and up to 1922, the periodization of Palestine was based on "ethnic periods" (for example, the Amorite period, the Jewish period, the Israelite period, the Semitic period, and so forth). These terms were very different from each other and therefore did not allow for a consensus among scholars (Finkelstein 1996, 104). It was only in 1922 that a widely accepted terminology was created. In an article named "A New Chronological Classification of Palestinian Archaeology," scholars were, for the first time, presented with a table that was set up by four representatives of the three schools of archaeology in Jerusalem (the American, British, and French schools). However, this was simply a chronological table with no explanation as to how it came to be. This system includes both technological-evolutionary terms (Stone, Bronze, Iron, and Modern Ages) and ethnic-racial terms (Canaanite, Palestinian, Jewish, Philistine, and so forth; Garstang et al. 1922).

In a letter to Fischer, written the evening of the aforementioned meeting, Albright states that the division and nomenclature of the Bronze Age were his responsibility, while the corresponding treatment of the Iron Age should be ascribed to Garstang and Phythian-Adams (W. F. Albright, letter to Fischer, July 12, 1922, TS).[3] Since the periodization of Palestinian archaeology in general and the Bronze Age in particular was led by W. F. Albright, let us focus on his notions.

Based on an earlier article by Albright, we know that the division between the MBA and the LBA is based on the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt and the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Albright dated these events to circa 1580 BCE (Albright 1920, 79), a date rounded to 1600 BCE in the chronological table of Garstang et al. (1922).

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3. I examined Albright's personal letters during a visit to the American Philosophical Society's Library, within the framework of an International Graduate Research Fellowship at the University of Maryland during the months of January–April 2015. This was made possible by a joint grant of the University of Maryland and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Albright identified the Hyksos's invasion of Egypt[4] with the Israelites' entrance into Goshen (Albright 1920, 65) and concluded that the Israelite era in Egypt was identical with the Hyksos's ruling era of Egypt (Albright 1920, 65–66). However, Albright dates the Exodus to approximately 1260 BCE (Albright 1920, 66), which means that he did not identify the Hyksos's expulsion from Egypt with the Exodus, contrary to Josephus, who identified the two events as one (*Against Apion* 1.26–31). This creates a conundrum concerning Albright's view of the relationship between the Hyksos and the Exodus—on the one hand, he explicitly tells us that the Hyksos and the Israelites are one and the same, and on the other hand he dates the Exodus to approximately 350 years after the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt. This disparity cannot be solved. However, as stated above, we must consider 1600 BCE as the date he attributed to the Hyksos expulsion from Egypt.

Because there is no clear cultural break between the MBA and the LBA, it is not clear why the Hyksos expulsion was chosen as the significant historical event to mark the transition between the two periods. The conquest of Canaan by the Egyptian Empire at around 1457/6 BCE could just as easily have been chosen as the date of transition. Alternatively, the two periods could have been conglomerated into one period (Finkelstein 1996, 116). The latter suggestion would probably not have been well accepted in Albright's time, since archaeological research and scholarly work was influenced by work done in Greece, where the tripartite periodization was adopted. Albright aimed at keeping the terminology of Palestinian archaeology in harmony with the Greek terminology (Wright 1961, 87; Finkelstein 1996, 104–5).

1.5. Historical Background: The Sixteenth–Fourteenth Centuries BCE in the Ancient Near East

As noted above, the geographical area under discussion is sandwiched between competing territorial states—Egypt and Mitanni in the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries and Egypt and Hatti in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries (see fig. 1). The area under discussion in general, and Hazor in particular, is part of the Syrian world and is involved in the palace economies of the region. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the historical and political context of these regions—Egypt and the northern Levant—during this time, as well as their economic influence and their chronological significance (see table 1.1).

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4. Today it is accepted that the Canaanite settlement of northern Egypt was part of a gradual process and not an invasion (Dever 1992).

1.5.1. The Southern Levant

1.5.1.1. Canaan in the MBA

The MBA is characterized by a prominent change from the Intermediate Bronze Age. This change is attributed by most scholars to the arrival of newcomers from the north, based on new architectural features and techniques found in newly founded cities, on studies conducted on human skeletons, and on the appearance of Hurrian names in tablets found in the southern Levant (Ilan 2003, 332; Na'aman 1994, 183).

In the MBIIa, and more so in the MBIIb, urban centers were built throughout the country. The city of Hazor is one of these new urban centers, and its establishment, according to many scholars, changed the social and political fabric of Canaan. In addition to urban, fortified centers, small and rural settlements
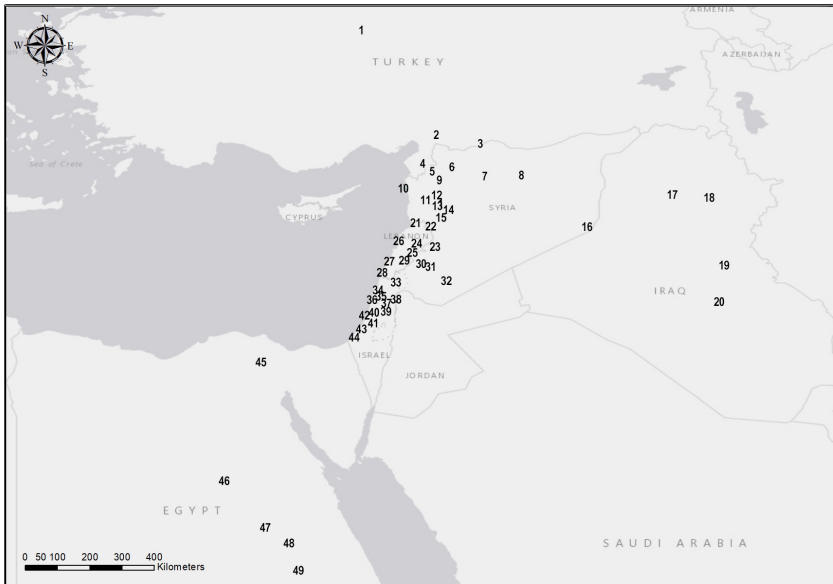

FIGURE 1.1 Map of the Levant, with sites mentioned in this study: (1) Hattusa (2) Zincirli (3) Carchemish (4) Alalakh (5) Tell Afis (6) Aleppo (7) Emar (8) Tuttul (9) Ebla (10) Ugarit (11) Tell 'As (12) Khan Shaykhun (13) Hama (14) Dnebi (15) Qatna (16) Mari (17) Assur (18) Nuzi (19) Eshnuna (20) Babylon (21) Tell Arqa (22) Kadesh (Tell Nebi Mend) (23) Yabrud (24) Tell Hizin (25) Tell el-Ghassil (26) Byblos (27) Sidon (28) Tyre (29) Kamid el-Loz (30) Damascus (31) Tell Sakka (32) Khirbet Umbashi (33) Hazor (34) Tel Qashish (35) Yoqne'am (36) Tel Mevorach (37) Megiddo (38) Beth Shean (39) Shechem (40) Aphek (41) Gezer (42) Jaffa (43) Ashkelon (44) Tell el-Ajjul (45) Tell ed-Dab'a (46) Cusae (47) Abydos (48) Thebes (49) Edfu.

were also recorded in several surveys conducted across the country, later abandoned in the LBA. During the MBA, trade relations with Cyprus began, focusing mainly on copper ingots, but imported Cypriot pottery also appears in the southern Levant, as well as Minoan pottery from Crete (I discuss this in chapter 5). A relationship between the local population and the Hyksos rulers is evidenced by the appearance of Egyptian goods and their imitations in many sites (A. Mazar 1992, 197–218; Burke 2014, 408–11).

Apart from Hazor and Ashkelon, two of the largest sites in the country, which probably functioned as royal capitals, the remaining sites are much smaller. All were defined on a seven-tiered settlement hierarchy (defined for both the northern and the southern Levant). These include the large fortified political centers (the two mentioned above), secondary fortified provincial centers (such as Megiddo and Beth-Shean), smaller fortified towns (such as Timnah and Tel Qashish), unfortified villages, fortresses (such as Tel Mevorakh), watchtowers, and farmsteads (Burke 2008).

Sometime in the middle of the sixteenth century BCE, many sites in southern Canaan (the Negev and Shephelah), in the central hill region, and in the Jordan Valley were destroyed, and some were also abandoned. The northern part of Canaan did not suffer such devastating endings, and a continuation is evident in them (Weinsterin 1981, 10; Bunimovitz 1989, 11–34; Bietak 1991, 58; A. Mazar 1992, 226–27).[5] Many scholars have attributed these destructions to the Eighteenth Dynasty (e.g., Albright 1949, 96, 101; Dever 1987; A. Mazar 1992; Ilan 1995), at times in an arbitrary manner (Bunimovitz 1989, 10).[6] It has also been suggested that internal instability and conflicts, natural disasters, nomadic incursions, and migrations of the Hurrians are to be blamed for these destructions (see Bunimovitz 1995, 322–23; Panitz-Cohen 2014, 541–42; and further references in both). Thus, it could be suggested that, due to the lack of destruction levels at the northern sites, the processes that were identified in southern Canaan did not necessarily affect the sites in northern Canaan in the same way.

1.5.1.2. Canaan in the LBA

In the past, scholars did not agree on whether the southern Levantine LBA was a period of decline (e.g., Albright 1949, 101; Knapp 1987) or a period of rich material culture (e.g., Liebowitz 1987). However, it seems that the current scholarly

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5. Noteworthy and exceptional in this regard is the large city at Kabri, which was abandoned at the end of the MBIIb (Yassur-Landau et al. 2015)

6. It is interesting to note that in his discussion of the end of the MBA A. Mazar refers to the Hittite destructions in Syria but suggests that the only influence of these destructions on the southern Levant is the thin stream of Hurrian people fleeing Syria that appear in the southern Levant (A. Mazar 1992, 226).

work has agreed that the southern Levant was both prosperous and in decline, as there are technological advances juxtaposing the domination and exploitation of the country by the Egyptian Empire (e.g., Bienkowski 1989; A. Mazar 1992, 232; Bunimovitz 1995, 320; Panitz-Cohen 2014, 541).

Following the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt, it was believed that the kings of the New Kingdom, the first kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty, battled against some Canaanite rulers, mainly those in the south. These battles continued until Thutmose III's campaign to Canaan in 1457/6 BCE (discussed further below). This campaign brought the southern Levant under Egyptian rule. This also led to administrative changes that would remain until the end of the Bronze Age (Weinstein 1981, 10–12).

As for the settlement pattern, many of the southern sites were abandoned at the end of the MBA and were not resettled in the LBA. Actually, the entire arid area of the country—the Jordan Valley, the Negev and the central hill—are very sparsely populated in the LBA. The settlements are concentrated in the coastal area, the Shephelah, and the northern valleys. Compared to the MBA, the overall settlement is much more sparse, with fewer settlements in the whole country (a decrease in the number of settlements) and a population reduction. Some scholars have argued that, during the LBIIb, a gradual increase in settlements is evident (e.g., Bunimovitz 1995, 320–24), though others suggest that this is only due to the establishment of the Egyptian posts, whereas the Canaanite settlement sites still remained abandoned (Gonen 1984, 69). Another change is reflected in the increase in the nomadic population, which includes the Shasu and ʿApiru (or Habiru). In other words, the LBA political-territorial organization is much more diverse and much less integrated than that of the MBA. Based on the documents found in the country, it seems that the population of the southern Levant was mostly West Semitic, mixed with a non-Semitic population, mostly of Hurrian origin (Mitannian, discussed below), though migration of people from Anatolia, Syria, and the Aegean must have also influenced the local population at the end of the LBIIb (A. Mazar 1992, 236–41; Naʾaman 1994; Bunimovitz 1996; Panitz-Cohen 2014, 543–47).

Based on the el-Amarna letters, scholars have tried to reconstruct the number of city-states, especially their areas of control and borders, leading to between thirteen and twenty-four different cities (e.g., Finkelstein 1996; Naʾaman 1997; Savage and Falconer 2003). The letters dealing with local Canaanite rulers document their petty bickering and requests to the Egyptian king.

1.5.2. Egypt

It should be mentioned that the absolute dates provided here are based on the Egyptian low chronology, accepted today by most scholars (Beitak 1991, 27;

Dever 1992, 13; Kitchen 2000, 43–44; Zeeb 2004, 83; D. Ben-Tor 2011, 203). In other words, as far as the Egyptian chronology is concerned, there is almost a consensus among the scholars (contra Mesopotamian chronology).

1.5.2.1. Historical and Political Context

1.5.2.1.1. EGYPT IN THE SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

During the Second Intermediate Period, Egypt was divided into two kingdoms: one in Lower Egypt, ruled by the Hyksos or "rulers of foreign lands," with their capital in Avaris, identified in Tell ed-Dabʻa; the other in Upper Egypt, ruled by the Egyptians, with their capital in Thebes.

The Egyptian rule of Upper Egypt is attributed to the 16th and 17th dynasties, whose kings ruled from Thebes. The Sixteenth Dynasty had both kings and local rulers who ruled from cities other than Thebes, such as Abydos and Edfu. Fortresses were built in Lower Nubia, which was under Egyptian rule during the late Middle Kingdom. The Egyptian fortresses in Nubia were abandoned most likely toward the end of the Thirteenth Dynasty. Some Egyptian commanders of these fortresses transferred their alliance to Nubia, and others merely abandoned their garrisons. These commanders came under the control of the ruler of Kush, which was the Nubian king of Upper Nubia, their capital located at Kerma. The Nubians were cattle breeders and warriors who also benefited from their proximity to gold-mining regions. The Kushite kingdom and the Hyksos had close trade relations, which eventually resulted in allied military ties (O'Connor 1997, 48; Quirke 2001, 263; Bourriau 2003, 195–97).

At the end of the Seventeenth Dynasty, probably for a period of about thirty years, the Egyptians and the Hyksos were in constant battle until the Hyksos were finally expelled from Egypt. These battles were probably fueled by the economic inferiority the Egyptians experienced due to their position between the Hyksos and the Nubians (O'Connor 1997, 62–63). The Egyptian king Kamose recaptured the gold mining region of Buhen in Nubia, thus driving the Nubians further to the south. Kamose also carried out a military expedition against Avaris. These two battles are known from two "Kamose Stelae," on which a great deal of our knowledge is based (Redford 1997, 13–15). Kamose's campaign to Avaris, probably a raid against the city, did not succeed. Following the deaths of Kamose and Apophis, his Hyksos counterpart and foe, new kings reigned in both kingdoms—Ahmose, the first king in the Eighteenth Dynasty in Upper Egypt, and possibly Khamudi, the last king of the Hyksos kingdom in Lower Egypt according to the Turin king list. Textual evidence of Ahmose's campaign against the Hyksos is recorded in the biography of "Ahmose, son of Ibana," who was an officer in the Egyptian army, serving in the military campaigns of the pharaoh Ahmose. This biography was found on a relief in his tomb in El-Kab.

TABLE 1.1 List of Kings Mentioned in the Text

Date[a]	Egypt	Mitanni	Hatti	Northern Levant and Upper Mesopotamia	
Eighteenth century	Second Intermediate Period			Shamshi Adad Ishme-Dagan Zimri Lim Hamurabbi Samsuiluna	Naram Sin Yasmah Addu
Seventeenth century			Hattusili Mursili I		
Sixteenth century	Kamose Apophis Ahmose Khamudi		decline		
Fifteenth century	Thutmose I Thutmose II Hatshepsut Thutmose III Amenhotep II	Parrattarna	decline	Idrimi	
Fourteenth century	Thutmose IV Amenhotep III Akhenaten	Artashumara Tushratta / Artatama Kili Teshub	Suppiluliuma I Mursili II		
Thirteenth century	Seti I Ramses II				

[a]Kings are placed in chronological order in the different regions, but no absolute dates were used. In addition, it was not attempted to synchronize the different kings. In order to avoid confusion, kings that are not mentioned in the text were not incorporated in this table. The dates used are based on the middle chronology

Records of the battle at Avaris are also known from the reliefs in Ahmose's mortuary temple in Abydos and in Josephus's account of these events. These sources describe the fall of Avaris and the expulsion of the Hyksos by Ahmose (Bourriau 2003, 197–203; Morris 2005, 27–28).

The Hyksos's rule of Lower Egypt is attributed to the Fifteenth Dynasty. The textual evidence from the Second Intermediate Period Lower Egypt is scarce, and most of our knowledge is based on the material culture (D. Ben-Tor 2009, 1). There is evidence for trade between the Hyksos and Canaan, Cyprus, and the Minoan palaces, as well as the Kushite kingdom, as evidenced by the material culture found in Tell ed-Dabʿa, and the literary evidence referring to the materials they imported (based on the Kamose stele). However, it is not clear what they provided in exchange (Bourriau 2003, 182). The Kamose stele also mention the taxes that the Hyksos imposed on all Nile traffic and their control over Cusae (about forty kilometers south of Hermopolis and the administrative center of this region during the Middle Kingdom), indicating this is one of the ways they earned their income. This Hyksos control over Cusae and the taxes imposed by them are also evident from a papyrus dated to the days of Merneptah (end of the thirteenth century BCE) referring to a quarrel between Seqenerna and Apophis, one of the latest Hyksos kings (Bourriau 2003, 183, 188, 198).

Though it is commonly agreed that the Hyksos had some type of relationship with the inhabitants of the Canaanite city-states during the MBA, it is not clear whether these were blood ties, trade relationships, or marital connections (Redford 1992, 119–22; Bietak 2010; D. Ben-Tor 2009, 2011). The "Hyksos" scarabs found all over the southern Levant were mostly locally made. Not only was scarab production not found in the northern Levant, but Second Intermediate Period scarabs, in general, are absent from this area. According to D. Ben-Tor, this suggests a hiatus in trade relations between the northern Levant and Egypt during this period (D. Ben-Tor 2009, 3; 2011, 28–30).

We do know that during its ruling days of Lower Egypt, the city of Avaris imported large amounts of pottery vessels, some probably containing liquids from the central and southern Levant (Beitak 1991; Maeir 2010, 113; D. Ben-Tor 2018, 46). The material culture identified in Tel a-Dabʿa comprises both Egyptian and Canaanite shapes and some Cypriot imports. The number of Canaanite shapes increased in time—from 18% in the late Twelfth Dynasty to 40% during the Hyksos period (Beitak 1991, 31–47; 2010, 151–52, 163). It is interesting to note that even after Ahmose's conquest of the site, an apparent continuation is seen in the ceramic traditions (Egyptian shapes as well as Canaanite types), at least until the reign of Thutmose III (Beitak 2010, 170).

The conquest of Avaris by Ahmose, the first king of the Eighteenth Dynasty and the founder of the New Kingdom, marks the end of this period. According to Egyptian texts and chronology, this conquest and the reunification of Egypt

are dated to 1532–1528 BCE (Bourriau 2003, 172; Bard 2008, 195–97). It is note-worthy that even more than sixty years after the expulsion, during the days of Queen Hatshepsut, the rulers of Egypt were still boasting this expulsion (Bour-riau 2003, 188).

1.5.2.1.2. THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY

As stated above, Ahmose, the first Pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, is also the founder of the New Kingdom. Following the removal of the Hyksos, he sets sail down to Nubia to regain Egyptian control over the region. After his tri-umphs, Ahmose began rebuilding Egypt and its monuments (Bourriau 2003, 203–4). Ahmose not only defeated the Hyksos in Avaris but continued to attack Sharuhen, the Hyksos stronghold in southern Canaan, as well as the city of Kerma, the capital of the Kushite kingdom (Bryan 2003, 207–8). The first kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty mainly focused on extending Egyptian control south-ward for this region's material rewards (that is, gold; Bryan 2003, 214). This is also evident from the Kamose stela, where Nubia is considered part of Egypt, but not so with the southern Levant.

The constant trade relationship between Canaan and Egypt is manifested beginning with the first dynasties of Egypt. After a long hiatus, these trade rela-tionships began again in the Middle Kingdom and continued up to the MBII Hyksos. It is only in the LBII that we find an actual Egyptian presence north of the Negev[7]—Beth-Shean being the northernmost stronghold (A. Mazar and Mullins 2007), although Jaffa (Burke et al. 2017) and Aphek (Gadot 2010) should also be mentioned. It is also apparent from the Egyptian and Egyptian-ized ceramic assemblages. These vessels become more common in the southern Levant only during the reign of Thutmose III, and even more so during the Nineteenth Dynasty. According to Martin, this indicates that the early pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty did not aim at establishing a permanent military or political presence in Canaan, evident only after Thutmose III's campaign (Martin 2011, 273–74). However, it should also be noted that some scholars ques-tion whether these so-called Egyptian fortresses actually housed Egyptians and suggest they should be considered an "elite emulation" of the local population. Higginbotham suggested that these were used by Egyptianized Canaanite rul-ers or officials in the Ramesside period (Higginbotham 2000), though this has been widely criticized (e.g., Hoffmeier 2004; Koch 2014, 167, and see further references there).

It seems that until the LBIb, during the Old and Middle Kingdoms, the Egyp-tian policy was not to conquer Canaan, but to secure their economic interests in

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7. Evidence for Egyptian presence was noted in the EBI in the Negev region, though its nature is still debated (Rowan and Golden 2009, 71)

the region. Consequently, Egyptian presence in Canaan was only accomplished in the New Kingdom, during the days of Thutmose III (Redford 1979, 274; Hoffmeier 2004, 133; Martin 2011, 273–74). Nevertheless, the Egyptian annals indicate an Egyptian military presence before the Battle of Megiddo, possibly in the city of Megiddo itself (Hoffmeier 2004, 134).

As for the Egyptian relations with Syria, Thutmose I was the first pharaoh to battle with Mitanni, a north-Syrian kingdom located to the east of the Euphrates. He emerges triumphant from this battle and subsequently conducts an elephant hunt. His son, Thutmose II, also battles with the northern kingdom, but contrary to his father, he takes Shasu prisoners.[8] After his victory, Thutmose II focuses his efforts on restraining and managing the Shasu threats, aiming at securing safety along the roads. Following Thutmose II's death, his wife, Hatshepsut, acted as ward and regent of her nephew, Thutmose III. Under her rule, mining activities in Sinai as well as trade with Lebanon, Punt, and Libya were resumed (Morris 2005, 31–34). It is not clear whether Hatshepsut campaigned in Canaan (Morris 2005, 34) or refrained from it (Redford 1992, 151).

During the days of Thutmose III's sole reign, he led several campaigns to the Levant (Redford 2003). The most relevant to our discussion here is his Battle of Megiddo, launched during his 23rd year of reign. This battle is well known for Thutmose III's deceitful actions against the Canaanite kings, choosing the least expected road. After his surprise attack and seven months of siege against the Canaanite kings assembled at Megiddo, Thutmose won the battle, and the Canaanite kings took an oath of loyalty to Egypt and returned to their homes in Canaan. Consequently, the Canaanite cities became vassal cities, and sons or brothers of the vassal kings were held at the Egyptian court until the death of the vassal, in order to educate or rather indoctrinate them into Egyptian culture. These were also highly valuable hostages. In some cases the Pharaoh would also replace the local kings, creating new dynasties. Following the Battle of Megiddo, Thutmose engaged in expeditions to the north almost annually to retain his control.

Thutmose's eighth battle, in his 33rd year of reign, was a great victory against the kingdom of Mitanni. This battle extended further north than Carchemish and into the Mitannian heartland, finding the king of Mitanni unprepared. This battle is well known due to Thutmose's crossing of the (Euphrates) river, after which he set up a stela. On his return home, via the land route and not the sea route, Thutmose engages in an elephant hunt and passes through Qatna, where he examines the bow-manufacture industry and participates in a marksmanship show. In his 35th year of reign, Thutmose III campaigned against the kingdom of

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8. Shasu are seminomadic people known in Sinai, Transjordan, the central hills, and Syria (Morris 2005, 33, and see references there).

Mitanni again, but this time the battle ends at a draw and probably not in a great victory as he prided himself. The last recorded battle is dated to his 42nd year of reign. This battle was due to an uprising in the Akkar plains (the region of Tell Arqa), probably led by the king of Kadesh. Thutmose reaches the region by the *via maris*, passing through the southern Levant, until he finally captures and destroys the city of Tunip (but not Kadesh), though the city quickly returned to Mitannian hands (Redford 1992, 156–60; Redford 2003, 222–25, 229–30, 238–40; Bryan 2003, 237–39; Morris 2005, 115–26).

Amenhotep II (or Amenophis II), Thutmose III's son, was the next ruler. He carried out two campaigns in the Levant aimed at expanding Egypt's boundaries. The first was against Syria and the second against rebelling kings in the southern Levant. This is also the first time that we hear of peace with Mitanni, Hattusa, and Babylon, as the kings of these kingdoms brought gifts to Amenhotep II following his battles in the Levant. As part of this peace, Amenhotep II's son, Thutmose IV, married the daughter of the Mitannian king Artatama I.[9] We know that, in some cases, Amenhotep II ordered the mass deportation of the local population and that following his seventh-year campaign he left Canaan and brought with him 2,214 people as well as several hundred children and wives of Canaanite rulers. It is not clear how many prisoners he took following his ninth-year campaign set against rebelling rulers in the southern Levant. The numbers range from about 1,000 prisoners to 85,000 or 101,000 prisoners, as documented in the different texts recording this campaign. Even though these numbers are still debated, it is clear that either mass deportations were carried out during this campaign (in which case the numbers might be exaggerated) or that these people came under Egyptian rule, in which case the numbers reflect a census of the area. Thutmose IV continued these mass deportations. In his mortuary temple in Thebes, it is noted that he deported the population of Gezer (though this is also in debate). However, the marriage between Thutmose IV and the Mitannian princess and the continuation of the peace between the sides was beneficial to both and brought peace to the region. There may have also been a dynastic marriage between Egypt and Babylon, and there is also evidence for possible relations between Egypt and Assur as well as a peace treaty with Hatti. This period of peace affected Egypt's foreign policy during the remainder of the Eighteenth Dynasty (Redford 1992, 163–69; Bryan 2003, 244–45; Morris 2005, 127–35).

1.5.2.1.3. THE AMARNA PERIOD: THE LATE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY
Egypt enjoyed a period of peace, stability, and great wealth during the days of Amenhotep III. Surrounding states were seen as partners in foreign trade, and

9. The marriage was arranged between Amenhotep II and the father of Artatama I, Saussatar, who was the reigning king. Artatama was his successor (Redford 1992, 165).

Amenhotep III's court was an international diplomatic center where several diplomatic marriages took place (Redford 1992, 269; van Dijk 2003, 265). However, during his days, Amenhotep III also faced conflicts in the Lebanese mountains as well as the Central Hills of the southern Levant. These conflicts merited direct Egyptian intervention in the local internecine wars leading to the removal of the Ammuru king Abdi-Ashirta and the king of Shechem, Laba'yu, the former probably killed by his own countrymen and the latter by people from the neighboring town of Gina (Redford 1992, 170–71; Morris 2005, 223–27).

His son, Amenhotep IV or Akhenaten, was the next ruler of Egypt. Akhenaten transformed the Egyptian religion, changing the focus from the god Amun, as the primary god, to Aten, and moving the capital from Thebes to Amarna (van Dijk 2003, 267–70).

Akhenaten led his main military campaign, during his 12th year of reign, against Nubia, at the same time when the Hittite kingdom defeated the Mitannian kingdom, Egypt's ally (van Dirjk 2003, 270). During the time of Akhenaten's reign, and probably also his father's, the tradition of annual campaigns to Canaan, which began in the days of Thutmose III, were no longer upheld, and Egyptian troops arrived in the region only when necessary (Morris 2005, 233). During this period, the Egyptian administrative system in the Levant consisted of three provinces: Canaan, governed from Gaza; Phoenicia and Ammuru, governed from Sumur; and Upe, governed from Kamid el-Loz and perhaps later from Damascus (Morris 2005, 239–40).

In the days of the last rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty, evidence for Egyptian campaigns in Canaan are rare, and it seems that Egypt mainly focused on keeping its influence in the area while still battling the Hittites. A peace treaty between the two sides may have existed after these conflicts, during the days of Horemheb, as recorded in the later peace treaty signed between Ramses II and Hattusili III. In general, it seems that the administration system that was laid after Thutmose III's campaign continued to exist in the Amarna days, the only main difference being that the pharaoh did not send annual campaigns to collect tribute and taxes and to display his strength (van Dijk 2003, 284; Morris 2005, 265–70). It also seems that the area of southern Syria, between Hazor and Qatna (including the latter), changed hands several times between the Egyptian, Mitannian, and Hittite kingdoms (Redford 1992, 166–67).

1.5.2.2. Economic Influence of Egypt

According to Egyptian records, following the Hyksos expulsion, the Egyptians focused on recolonizing Nubia and apparently had little economic interest in Canaan (Aḥituv 1978; Redford 1979, 273–74; 1992, 149; Bourriau 2003, 203–4;

Hoffmeier 2004). It has also been suggested that during the fifteenth century BCE the primary efforts of the Egyptians in the Jordan Valley and the Jezreel Valley were to control or limit the access of Canaanite cities to an inter-regional trade system and economically exploit the southern Levant (Knapp 1992, 89–90).

It seems that in the days of Hatshepsut, the queen was interested in rebuilding Egypt and keeping peace and not in military campaigns against Canaan. In fact, between Thutmose I's campaign in northern Syria and Thutmose III's Megiddo battle, Egypt seems to have "withdrawn" from Canaan. The impression is that, during this time, most of the territory in northern Canaan was under Mitanni influence, as evidenced in the king of Kadesh's statement that the cities of the Galilee were loyal to him. This influence ultimately led to the Battle of Megiddo in 1457/6 BCE (Redford 1992, 151–56). Sometime after the battle and the conquest of the southern Levant, Amenophis II (son of Thutmose III), and his son, Thutmose IV, each carried out mass deportations from Canaanite cities (especially in the hill country and the Shephela) and Syrian cities (Redford 1992, 208–9). As noted above, following his campaign, Thutmose III appointed new vassal kings in the rebellious cities in order to ensure their loyalty to the Egyptian Empire. Moreover, the sons, princes of these vassal kings, were brought to Egypt for indoctrination (Hoffmeier 2004, 134–35). These mass deportations not only resulted in changes in the physical and spatial organization of cities, their environs, and their hinterland but probably also affected the subsistence strategies of Canaanite society (Buminovitz 1996).

It was only after Thutmose III's campaign that Egypt sought to secure the agricultural resources and its permanent control over interregional trade routes, thus creating a system of domination and exploitation that, according to Knapp, resulted in the vassal city-states of the LBA (Knapp 1992, 92). These city-states were partially independent and partially incorporated under Egyptian rule. Na'aman states that, based on the textual evidence, these cities did not send agricultural goods to Egypt but mainly silver, cattle, and personnel. However, he suggests that the agricultural goods, such as grain, wine, and honey, were indeed sent to Egypt, but that the texts do not mention them since they were sent either as trade goods or tribute (Na'aman 1981, 184; Morris 2005, 124).

As for the economic relationship between Canaan and Egypt following this campaign, it seems that, according to Egyptian records, the Egyptians utilized agents in order to oversee the harvest and the storage of grains in Canaan. It has been suggested that these grains were not primarily transferred to Egypt but were rather used by the Egyptian troops when campaigning in the region or destined for the local population (Hoffmeier 2004, 135), a suggestion that has recently acquired some support (Finkelstein et al. 2017).

1.5.3. Northern Levant

1.5.3.1. Historical and Political Context

Between the sixteenth and fourteenth centuries BCE, a number of forces acted in the northern Levant: the Amorites, the Hurrians, the Hittites, and the Egyptians, with political power changing hands frequently. The struggle for control is reflected in an earlier letter dated to the eighteenth century BCE, stating the five kingdoms in Mesopotamia and northern Levant that were constantly in a battle for power: Babylon, Larsa, Eshnunna, Qatna, and Yamhad (Roaf 1990, 108–10; Van De Mieroop 2007, 85–86). In the sixteenth century, following the defeat of Yamhad (Aleppo), as well as the defeat of Hammurabi's Babylonian Empire by the Hittite king Mursili, the Near East was divided into new kingdoms: Egypt, Mitanni and the Hittites in the Levant, and the Kassites and Elamites in Mesopotamia (Roaf 1990, 132). The Syro-Levantine city-states were located between these great powers, always depending on either the Egyptians, the Mitannians, or the Hittites. At the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth century, Mitanni grew stronger and was able to conquer the whole northern Levant—from Nuzi in the east to Alalakh in the west—and was even able to take over some cities in the southern Levant (though the extent of this is yet unknown). This expansion threatened Egyptian power and control over the southern Levant, bringing about military struggles between these two empires (Novak 2013, 340, Na'aman 1982, 183). These struggles enable us to synchronize between the Egyptian chronology and that of the northern Levant and Mesopotamia.

1.5.3.2. Chronology

The period under discussion, the sixteenth–fifteenth centuries BCE, is known as the Ancient Near East's "Dark Age" (Van de Mieroop 2007, 117, 121). In contrast to Egypt, the chronological schemes for the northern Levant and Mesopotamia are much more speculative and are mainly based on astronomical observations of Venus recorded in the Venus tablet of Ammisaduqa (Enuma Anu Enlil Tablet 63). These astronomical observations were preserved in a few tablets dating to the first millennium BCE. However, the astronomical observations probably derived from the Babylonian Hammurabi dynasty, dating to around the seventeenth century BCE (Cryer 1995, 658). These observations, based on celestial cycles repeated every sixty-four years, have created a debate among scholars regarding Mesopotamian chronology, divided between ultra-high chronology, high chronology, middle chronology (with a division between a high and low middle chronology, separated by eight years), low chronology (with low and

lower chronologies again separated by eight years), new chronology, and ultra-low chronology (Schwartz 2008, 450; Manning et al. 2016, 1).

The absolute dates for this period in the northern Levant are based on Egyptian and Hittite dates (Van de Mieroop 2007, 122). However, the Hittite chronology is in many cases very hard to anchor since Hittite kings bearing the same name have no sequential numbers (Cryer 1995, 658; Schwartz 2008, 450). There is also no kings' list providing their reign lengths. In addition, there are several suggestions for the length of Suppuluiluma I's reign, the establisher of the Hittite New Kingdom, ranging between twenty and forty years (Van De Mieroop 2007, 156).

Two large archives were discovered in Alalakh, one in Stratum VII and the other in Stratum IV, both dated to the second millennium BCE. These archives, together with the biography of King Idrimi (inscribed on his statute), who ruled Alalakh probably around the middle of the fifteenth century (Zeeb 2004, 87–88), add information regarding the period but also create many puzzles. Some attempts have been undertaken to give absolute and relative dates to these archives. Zeeb (2004) has shown that they support the ultra-low chronology, whereas Na'aman (1976 and 1979) has shown that they fit well with the middle chronology. With that, recent dendrochronological studies, combined with C14 analysis, have supported the middle chronology or the low-middle chronology, based on material from the Anatolian sites of Acemhöyük and Kültepe, placing the death of Shamshi-Adad I at approximately 1776 BCE or 1768 BCE (Manning et al. 2016, 20–21; 2018).

Bietak (1991, 27), Cryer (1995, 659) and Zeeb (2004, 83) already pointed out that the second millennium should be dated based on Egyptian chronology, which is more secure than the Mesopotamian chronology that has two-hundred-year differences between the high, middle, low, or ultra-low chronologies. In fact, Hittite history cannot be dated without Egyptian, Assyrian, or Babylonian chronology (Van De Mieroop 2007, 156). Therefore, when discussing the history of the northern Levant, no absolute dates will be given.

1.5.3.3. The Kingdom of Mitanni

The kingdom of Mitanni is located in northern Syria, between the Euphrates bend and the Tigris. In its heyday, Mitanni controlled territories to the east of the Tigris, on the southern coast of Anatolia, and it probably controlled or exerted an influence on city centers in the southern Levant. Though known from written records as Washukanni, the capital of Mitanni has not been identified archaeologically.[10] The ethnicity of the Mitannians is still debated—whether it was of

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10. One common suggestion for its identification is Tall Fakhariyah on the Habur River in modern Syria (Wilhelm 2013, 7062)

Hurrian or Indo-European origin—based on the languages and names appearing in Mitannian texts. It has also been suggested that, based on the West Semitic names and language (Akkadian) in use in cities in Mitanni's control (such as Qatna and Tell Hadidi), there was a process of acculturation undergone by the Mitannians and of emulation by the Semitic population. The Mitannians refer to themselves (as do the Assyrians) as Hanigalbat.

It is not clear how the Mitannian kingdom was exactly established. It has been suggested that, following the Hittite destruction of Aleppo, a power vacuum may have enabled this new state to develop.

By the first half of the fifteenth century, the Mitannian king Parrattarna controlled an area that included Kizzuwatna on the west, Nuzi on the east and Kadesh on the south. This was the most powerful kingdom in western Asia and the main impediment to Egypt's expansion during its Eighteenth Dynasty. This kingdom consisted of regions ruled by local rulers, both loyal and vassal to the Mitannian king, evident, for example, in the biography of Idrimi, the ruler of Alalakh, who was Parrattarna's vassal. Idrimi fled from Aleppo to Emar, becoming thereafter a leader of the Habiru. With their support and strength, he captured the city of Alalakh and its surroundings and became loyal to Parrattarna. As mentioned above, the Mitannian rulers backed up rebellions of Egyptian vassals both in the southern Levant (Thutmose III's campaign was discussed above) and in the northern Levantine coast, leading to animosity between these two great powers.

In the days of Amenhotep II, the Egyptian king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, peace was established between Mitanni and Egypt. During this time, and after a quiet period in the region, the Hittites and Mitannian kingdoms were at war again, seemingly since Mitanni aimed to protect, among other things, Egyptian interests in the area. This war ended in Mitanni becoming a vassal of the Hittite kingdom.

Things worsened for the Mitannian kingdom in the Amarna period when it suffered both internal and external difficulties leading to the end of its prosperous period. The internal problems originated in a feud between two branches of the royal family who competed for the throne, trying to overthrow the other by seeking support from outside powers.

Tushratta was placed on the throne by the murderer of his older brother Artashumara. This battle of powers was frowned upon by Egypt, and it was only after Tushratta executed his brother's murderer that Egypt resumed its diplomatic ties with Mitanni, as evidenced in the Amarna letters, since Tushratta corresponded with Amenhotep III, planning a diplomatic marriage between his daughter and Amenhotep. However, at the same time, Artatama, Tushratta's brother established a rival kingship, which was initially supported by Hatti. As mentioned above, it is Artatama's daughter who married Amenhotep II's son,

Thutmose IV, in a diplomatic marriage. After this, Artatama's son, Shuttarna III, probably murdered his uncle Tushratta and shifted Mitanni's alliance from Hatti to Assyria.

The Hittite king Suppiluliuma, in response, took the side of the exiled son of Tushratta, Kili-Teshub, and helped defeat Shuttarna III. Kili-Teshub was placed on the throne by Suppiluliuma I as his vassal.

Consequently, the west of the Mitanni kingdom was now under Hittite domination while the east was under Assyrian control. With claims to the Mitannian throne by those backed up by both Hatti and Assyria, the area of the Mitanni kingdom became a buffer zone between these two empires until the end of the LBA.

Following Suppiluliuma's death (at the end of the fourteenth century BCE), Hatti weakened, and the Assyrians gradually took over the Mitannian territory, though the Mitannians usually resisted, helped either by the Hittites or the Arameans, a new entity in northern Syria at this time. Eventually, however, the Assyrians established several administrative centers in the region as far as the Euphrates River on the border of the Hittite kingdom (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 327–29; Morris 2005, 234–37; Van De Mieroop 2007, 143, 150–54, 165).

1.5.3.4. The Hittite Kingdom

The Hittite Kingdom was most probably established by a ruler called Hattusili sometime in the seventeenth or sixteenth century BCE, a period also known as the Hittite Old Kingdom. It was situated in central Anatolia, and its capital was the city of Hattusa.

Hattusili expanded his kingdom to the south (that is, northern Syria), where he conquered the kingdom of Yamhad, including the city of Alalakh, but not the city of Aleppo itself. At the end of his days, his sons and nephew rebelled against him, and he appointed his grandson, Mursili I, as his heir. Though Mursili I's reign is not well known, there are records of his sacking of Babylon and Aleppo, thus disrupting the power balance in northwest Syria, leaving the entire region in political fragmentation, without a set of strong rulers to dominate the area. Mursili I was murdered by his brother-in-law, in turn later murdered as well. These internal instabilities prevented the Hittites from further expanding their kingdom, remaining in the heartland of Anatolia, becoming a major player again only in the fourteenth century BCE (Van De Mieroop 2007, 121).

Somewhere at the end of the seventeenth century or the beginning of the sixteenth century, Hatti entered a period of decline, also known as the Hittite Middle Kingdom. During this time, its two major rivals were Mitanni and Egypt, which were now allies, pulling forces together against Hatti. Its other rivals were the Gasga, a people from the southern coast of the Black Sea, perhaps

responsible for the later destruction of Hattusa. Another rival was the vassal state of Arzawa, ruled by Madduwatta who conquered southwestern Anatolia and Cyprus in the mid-fourteenth century BCE.

However, in the fourteenth century BCE, Suppiluliuma I established the New Kingdom of Hatti, dominating the Anatolian regions to the south and east of Hattusa. He was also able to conquer all of western Mitanni, making it his vassal. The Hittite kingdom extended south as far as Damascus. Aleppo, Ugarit, Kadesh, and Amurru also became his vassals. In its heyday, Hatti's borders might have extended as far as the Black and Aegean seas. Suppiluliuma and his son both died of a plague brought by his soldiers, probably from campaigns in Syria. Mursili II, another son of Suppiluliuma, became the new king and was able to defeat Hatti's rivals: the Gasga in the north and Arzawa in the west.

In Akhenaten's days, in the fourteenth century BCE, there is evidence a peace treaty was in place between the Hittites and the Amurru led by Abdi-Ashirta, the ruler who led the conflict in the Lebanese mountains, sabotaging Egyptian interests there. However, the wars between Mitanni and Hatti were at full scale, ending in the demise of the Mitannian kingdom, sometime around 1340 BCE.

In the days of the Nineteenth Dynasty, during the thirteenth century BCE, Egypt emerged again as Hatti's rival. This rivalry culminated in the Battle of Kadesh, fought between Ramses II and Muwatalli, leading to the first ever known peace treaty (Van De Mieroop 2007, 156–59; Morris 2005, 236–37).

1.5.3.5. The Northern Levant

1.5.3.5.1. THE PERIOD BEFORE MARI'S DESTRUCTION

Shamshi-Adad, the first king of the discussed period, began his rule in the city of Ekallatum. Approximately ten years after he began his reign, Naram-Sin of Eshnunna captured Ekallatum, and Shamshi-Adad had to flee to Babylon. When Naram-Sin died, Shamshi-Adad returned to Ekallatum and later conquered Assur, extending his kingdom. This "Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia" comprised the area extending from Assur in the east to Tuttul in the west and from the Habur Valley in the north to Babylon in the south, where the local conquered rulers became Shamshi-Adad's vassals. Among these, Qatna is worth mentioning as one of Shamshi-Adad's allied cities. Since the area of Shamshi-Adad's kingdom was very large, he placed his sons in strategic cities: His eldest, Ishme-Dagan, in Ekallatum, and his younger son, Yasmah-Addu, in Mari. Yasmah-Addu was reprimanded both by his father and by his brother for being weak and lazy. He was originally married to the daughter of the previous ruler of Mari (Yahdum-Lim), and later took another wife—the daughter of the king of Qatna, a marriage arranged by his father. Following Shamshi-Adad's death (the circumstances of which are unclear), local powers tried to take over the kingdom. Recently, it has

been suggested that the death of Shamshi-Adad I should be placed at approximately 1776 BCE or 1768 BCE (Manning et al. 2016, 20–21; 2018).

Zimri-Lim, a previously unknown Amorite, took over Mari. Ishme-Dagan lost most of the kingdom except for Ekallatum and Assur, and northern Syria became an accumulation of small independent states. Their palaces were centralized establishments and became the dominant forces.

Hammurabi was an Amorite king who ruled Babylon, a kingdom to the south of the Upper Mesopotamia Kingdom. His reign began after his father's death, in the last decades of Shamshi-Adad's life. Following the death of Shamshi-Adad, Hammurabi was able to conquer the entire area of southern Mesopotamia, including Elam, Larsa, Eshnunna, and Mari, which were all incorporated in his kingdom. A vast archive was found in Zimri-Lim's palace, comprising approximately twenty thousand tablets and documenting internal and international affairs of the palace and kingdom. Hammurabi's destruction of Mari ended its role as a great power and political force in the region.

Hammurabi was succeeded by his son Samsuiluna, who had to face a great rebellion in the south. By the end of his reign, many of the southern cities were abandoned but the northern Babylonian kingdom continued to flourish for decades later. However, this kingdom was surrounded by sparsely inhabited regions. The cities of Babylon, Aleppo, and Alalakh were finally conquered by the Hittite king Mursili I, sometime in the sixteenth century BCE (1595 BCE according to the middle chronology or 1531 BCE according to the low chronology), who probably also destroyed other allied Syrian cities in the west.

The cities of western Syria flourished during the seventeenth century BCE, based on their trade ties (and possibly also blood ties) with the Hyksos in Egypt. Several Egyptian objects were found in the cities of Byblos, Ugarit, and Qatna, pointing to the existence of such relationships (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 308–26; Van De Mieroop 2007, 106–19).

As noted above, Mursili I most probably also conquered the cities allied with Aleppo; among these, Ebla is noteworthy due to its key role in Syrian chronology (mentioned above). This city was destroyed sometime around 1600 BCE, according to the middle chronology, a destruction dated on the base of historical events. Following this destruction, the city never fully resumed its role as a major power as it was in the MBA and was considered a small town in the LBA (Matthiae 2009, 169; Pinnock 2014, 234–35).

Though the Mesopotamian chronological conundrum described above is beyond the scope of the present research, it does have implications on southern Levantine chronology, due to the role of Hazor in this discussion. Hazor is the only southern Levantine site mentioned in the Mari archive of Zimri-Lim, and thus must have existed before Mari's destruction. It has therefore been argued that the material from Hazor supports the new chronology (A. Ben-Tor 2005).

As will be described in chapter 2, Hazor was established in the transition from the MBIIa to the MBIIb (Maeir 2000; A. Ben-Tor and Bechar 2017). Therefore, if we accept the traditional date of this transition at 1750 BCE (Sharon 2014)[11] and allow for a more flexible date for Shamshi Adad I's death (dated to 1776/1768 based on C14), after which Zimri-Lim becomes the ruler of Mari and corresponds with Hazor, then it seems that the debate could be reduced to a few years and not centuries.

1.5.3.5.2. THE POST-MARI PERIOD

Following the sacking of Mari, Babylon, and Aleppo, the Near East is considered to have been in a "dark age," when urbanism was at an all-time low. Several cities were destroyed or abandoned, and thus very few texts survived from this period. This is also when the Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni in northern Syria and the Kassite kingdom in the region of southern Babylonia were established. During these "Dark Ages," Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Syria saw a sharp reduction in the inhabited area and an increase in seminomadic groups (Van De Mieroop 2007, 123–24; 133).

At the end of the sixteenth century and during the fifteenth century BCE, this picture changed, as several equivalently powered territorial states arose again—Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria, all regional powers or empires. Mitanni now ruled the region of northern Syria, whereas Hatti controlled the region of central Anatolia and northwestern Syria. Egypt controlled parts of the region as well, especially the northern Levantine coast and the region south of Qatna, establishing two provinces in the northern Levant—Upe and Amurru—with an administrative center ruled by an Egyptian official. Both Mitanni and Egypt had a system of local rulers who were their vassals—they kept their power but were expected to send tribute to the ruler of the kingdom (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 329; Van De Mieroop 2007, 133).

1.5.3.5.3. THE NORTHERN LEVANT IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

During this period, which is parallel to the Amarna period discussed above, the kings of the Near East correspond with each other, showing respect to their equals. The exchange of gifts between kings and courts was a significant aspect in maintaining these good relations, and some complaints were professed by the kings regarding the quality and quantity of these gifts.

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11. However, consider an earlier suggestion for this transition, based on C14 dates (Höflmayer et al. 2016, Tell el-Burak, Tell el-Dab'a, and Tell Ifshar). In my opinion, the date the authors suggest (the beginning of the eighteenth century) is too early, as is the date suggested for the transition from the MBIIb to the MBIIc (Höflmayer et al. 2016, Tel Kabri), circa 1700 BCE. These dates would create a very long timespan for the MBIIc and the LBIa, a period of about 250 years, which was previously considered to be only about 100 years.

However, there were also rivalries and conflicts between these regional states, especially border wars when one side was trying to expand its territory, or wars aimed at readjusting the power relations between the powers (Van De Mieroop 2007, 136, 143–44). Following Hatti's sacking of Mitanni, sometime around 1340 BCE, the latter's vassal cities, such as Ugarit, Kadesh, Amurru, and all the northern Syrian cities (e.g., Aleppo, Emar), became Hittite vassals. The Akkar Plain was the base for Egyptian military campaigns in Syria but later was the heartland of the Amurru kingdom, which acted as a buffer zone between the Hittite and Egyptian Empires. The cities of the middle Euphrates (for example, Ekallatum and Emar) remained in Mitannian control until Suppuliliuma I's campaign against the Mitanni kingdom. Following this campaign, the region of the middle Euphrates became the eastern border of the Hittite kingdom.[12]

The division of control over the Levant between Egypt and Hatti was clear, until the beginning of the Nineteenth Dynasty, when the Egyptian kings Seti I and Ramses II tried to expand their domination further north, ending in the Battle of Kadesh between the Hittite king Muwatalli and Ramses II (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 329, 335–51; Van De Mieroop 2007, 165).

It is interesting to note that Aegean pottery was only found in coastal sites of the northern Levant and not in sites of the Middle Euphrates or the Habur region (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 352–53). This stands in sharp contrast to their prevalence in southern Levantine inland sites and emphasizes the Southern Levant's commercial links with the Aegean.

1.6. State of Research

The transition between the MBA and the LBA is marked by a clear continuation in the material culture (Sharon 2014, 50). This is also apparent in different excavation reports that incorporate a grouped discussion of the ceramic assemblages of these periods (e.g., Yoqneʿam, Lachish, and the recently published Hazor volume). However, some sites do include separate typological schemes for each period (e.g., Tel Dan, Beth-Shean, and Tel Mevorakh). A comprehensive definition of the transitional aspects of the LBI at several sites has not been attempted yet, except in Kassis's 1964 Ph.D. dissertation. His thorough work is focused around Megiddo, since many other sites, one of them also Hazor, were not published at the time. Another exceptional work is Bonfil's typological scheme of Tel Qashish (2003). The continuation between these two periods was pointed out by a number of scholars.

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12. The LBA city of Carchemish was most probably the main center of the middle Euphrates, of which very little is known (Akkermans and Schwartz 203, 344).

Based on her research on the stratigraphy and pottery of Tel Qashish and her reexamination of Megiddo's stratigraphy, Bonfil has argued that there is a correlation between changes in the material culture (architecture and pottery) at the end of the MBII and the beginning of the LBI and the military campaign of Thutmose III (Bonfil 2012). According to her, this change is apparent in the transitions between Strata X and IX at Megiddo, Strata XXI and XXb at Yoqneʿam, Strata VIII and VIIb at Qashish, and Strata XII and XI at Tel Mevorakh (Bonfil 2012, 138, 140). Bonfil argues, in fact, that contrary to the previous notion it was not Megiddo's Stratum IX that was destroyed by Thutmose III but rather Stratum X. She attributes Stratum X to the last phase of the MBII and Stratum IX to the first LBA level (Bonfil 2012, 139).

She notes that a marked continuity is present in Hazor between the MBII and the LBI and suggests that this might be due to Hazor's political status, which perhaps gave the city independence from Egypt's direct rule during these periods (Bonfil 2012, 139–40). It should be mentioned that the lack of a destruction level between Strata 3 and 2 and Strata XVI and XV at Hazor does not necessarily indicate that Hazor did not take part in the Canaanite campaign against Egypt. According to Egyptian textual evidence, Megiddo was the gathering point of the Canaanite princes. Consequently, Thutmose III and his forces had no need to conquer all the cities in the southern Levant in order to ensure his victory (Weinstein 1981, 11).

Bonfil's suggestion regarding Yoqneʿam stands in contrast to A. Ben-Tor and Ben-Ami's (who have presented the relevant data from Yoqneʿam) interpretation of the finds that testify to the material continuity between Strata XXI and XXb, albeit an occupational gap (A. Ben-Tor and Ben-Ami 2005, 241), and between Stratum XXb and Stratum XXa, which was then destroyed by Thutmose III (A. Ben-Tor and Ben-Ami 2005, 242). Thus, it seems then that Bonfil's argument needs to be reexamined.[13]

This continuation was also evident from a thorough examination of the scarabs found in the southern Levant. D. Ben-Tor has shown that most of the Eighteenth Dynasty scarabs found in LBI contexts in Canaan are dated to the days of Thutmose III and that the locally produced scarabs of the MBII continue to be produced through the LBIa, pointing to cultural continuity until the Egyptian conquest of the southern Levant (2011, 32).

Na'aman has also argued for a continuation from the end of the MBII to the LBI but suggested to lower this transition. By identifying northern names in

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13. The present study concludes that the most significant changes in the architecture of the city occurred between Strata XXa and XIX, whereas the most significant ceramic changes occurred between Strata XXb and XXa. In other words, Bonfil's conclusions do not correspond with these changes.

cuneiform tablets found in the southern Levant, he was able to show that the Hurrian infiltration to Canaan began in the seventeenth century BCE. Na'aman argued that "the infiltration of northern groups . . . was a major factor in the collapse of the Canaanite urban system" (Na'aman 1994, 183). Regarding terminology, he claims that the end of the MBII, the MBIIc, defined by urban deterioration, should be attributed to the LBI (1994, 184).

Other scholars have suggested that the transition from the MBA to the LBA should be dated to after Thutmose III's conquest, based on the continuity in the material culture (e.g., Dever 1987; Finkelstein 1996, 116–17).

In summary, there is a growing tendency to link the last phase of the MBA (the MBIIc) with the beginning of the LBI (the LBIa). The questions still standing are what is the ceramic evidence for linking them and, based on that, whether it is actually justified to link them together.

1.7. Economic Models and Pottery Production: Theoretical Framework

The current study will have repercussions on economic aspects and conclusions, and thus the discussion's theoretical framework should be outlined. Most of this outline is based on the comprehensive study by Timothy Earle on Bronze Age economic systems in Denmark, Hawaii, and the Mayan Empire (Earle 2002).

1.7.1. Economic Types of Specialization

Specialization, standardization, and pottery production are widely discussed in the literature (e.g., Rice 1984; Brumfiel and Earle 1987; Costin 1991; Arnold 2000). In the present study, the economic aspects of two types of specialization are discussed:

Independent specialists: Goods and services are made for unspecified people—anyone who wants to purchase these goods and services has access to them through an exchange. Production by these type of specialists is motivated by two factors. The first is efficiency, which lowers the production costs and thus the cost of the product itself. By doing so, the demand for the product may increase, which is essentially the goal of the producers. The second is standardization, which typically characterizes large-scale independent-specialists' production. Standardization creates efficient production since tasks become routine, reducing the cost of production.

Attached specialists: goods and services are provided to a patron, usually an individual member of the elite or institution. This relationship is based on the patron's need for secure and reliable access to the goods or services provided by

the specialists. The secure access is translated into control over the distribution of the goods and services, usually including luxury goods as well as weapons. Efficiency and standardization are not an issue in this type of specialized production. On the contrary, objects tend to be highly elaborated and individualized. Consequently, only a few specialized craftspersons can make the objects, and imitations can easily be detected. The status of attached specialists can vary widely, and usually the individuals' profession does not set their social status (see also Schloen 2001, 304). In other words, the attached specialist can bear a status anywhere between elite and slave (Earle 2002, 128–29).

1.7.2. Models of Economic Development and Political Evolution

There are three models of economic development that also affect the political evolution of a society:

The Commercial Development Model. According to this model, based on the works of Smith (2007 [1776]) and early Marxists (e.g., Engels 1972 [1884]), the division of labor creates an efficient economic system and low-cost products. Therefore, the development of complex societies is dependent on independent specialized production and self-regulated markets. According to Earle, the problem with this model is that it explains rapid technological or economic development of societies but not noncapitalist economies. As evidence, in the economies Earle studied in the Hawaiian islands and the Andes, complex political systems developed without a wide-scale system of independent specialization (Earle 2002, 130–31).

The Adaptionist Model. This model, based on the works of new or processual archaeologists (e.g., Binford 1962), posits that society adapts itself to the environment by creating solutions to the local challenges of survival. These solutions include new technologies or new social organizations that result in the evolution into more complex societies. Earle argues that this model is also problematic since it assumes an evolutionary development where an increase in specialization results in an increase of exchange and correlates with developing complexity. He claims that these assumptions, again, do not fit the evidence from the Hawaiian islands and the Andes (Earle 2002, 137–39). According to him, these economies were not dependent on specialization. The specialization and exchange that did exist in these societies were not dependent on a central management (Earle 2002, 144).

The Political Model. According to this model, specialization is not the result of environmental or demographic conditions, and it is also not the primary factor that contributes to political and social complexity. This model posits that specialization is a key element for rulers, and their institutions might use

specialization in order to strengthen their political and economic control. Based on this model, specialists were attached to a patron or to governing institutions to produce special products or provide special services. Thus, the specialists supply more control and power for their patrons—the patrons are the ones who decide how to distribute the specialized products and to whom. These goods are inalienable—their value and distribution are set by the social and political relationships within which they are produced. On the other hand, when production is carried out by independent specialists, they can decide to whom their products will be distributed. In this case, the goods are alienable—a social or political relationship between the producer, the distributer and the consumer does not necessarily exist (Earle 2002, 144).

1.8. Economic Model for the Southern Levant

Schloen, following Regner and Polanyi, all agree that the economic system of the Bronze Age was not a market exchange system, where products are uniformly traded based on their agreed value, disembedded from the social relations between the parties. Schloen argues that the economic system was rather one of redistribution or reciprocity. These modes of exchange consider the identity and status of both parties and their social relations. These modes are common, according to Schloen, in all patrimonial societies, where the social relations dictate and mediate most economic activities. Only the long-distance trade was somehow based on market exchange.[14] He maintains that the long-distance trade is conducted between strangers, the merchant and the consumer, but that this was marginal in the broader and local agrarian economic systems of the Bronze Age. In any case, Schloen claims that long-distance trade was not a significant element in the local economy and in social changes (this is also based on Stein's study; see Stein 1998). The long-distance trade was a symbolic means to legitimizing political dominance and relations (Schloen 2001, 80–88).

With Earle's political model in mind, it seems that Schloen's model could be easily accepted for inalienable goods; in other words, luxury goods and goods produced by attached specialists. It seems that Schloen would argue that alienable goods, such as flint tools or pottery vessels, also have an inalienable element to them as they are exchanged based on the identity and status of both consumer and distributor. However, Earle would argue that these types of goods would have been made by independent specialists, and, therefore, their distribution

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14. Schloen claims that these long-distance exchanges were also based on personal social relations between contemporary kings (2001, 83–84).

would not be based on social or political relationships. Pottery distribution in the MBA and the LBA will be discussed in chapter 5, showing that MBA pottery was probably produced by attached specialists and therefore fits nicely in Schloen's model. The LBA pottery was most likely produced by independent specialists, making them alienable goods, therefore fitting Earle's political model.

1.9. Methodology

Architecture and ceramic assemblages are the bread and butter of "biblical archaeologists." Their changes may reflect political shifts, changes in the local population, changes in the modes of production and trade, and so forth.

When trying to identify changes in the material culture, an absolute chronology cannot be used, and we must deal with the relative chronology to try to point to the relative time when we can identify a change in the material culture. This can be achieved by examining the architectural and ceramic evidence of different sites that share a common feature.

1.9.1. Architecture

Architecture is a material means for nonverbal communication (Rapoport 1990). Due to its visibility and durability, it often serves as a medium of political, social, ideological, and symbolic expression (Abrams 1989, 48). By examining the ways by which the architecture of a built space communicates meaning and social practices, scholars can describe, to a certain degree, the sociopolitical processes that produced and were reproduced by that architecture (Pantou 2014, 369). Therefore, alterations in built structures have been used to identify social, political or economic changes within a given society (e.g., Abrams 1989; Liebmann et al. 2005; Maran 2006; Pantou 2014; and the numerous examples within these). Some modifications to the architecture can indicate a crisis in the society (Driessen 1995, 63–66).

This study will first investigate the architectural changes from the MBIIb to the LBIIa at Tel Hazor in order to pinpoint the stratigraphic changes that occurred at the site. The premise of the present study is that major architectural changes will also enable defining the transition from the MBA material horizon to that of the LBA at Hazor. Following the study of Hazor's architectural changes, these will be also examined at other sites located within this study's geographical framework. Similar to the study of Hazor, the examination will span the sixteenth–fourteenth centuries—that is, the MBIIb–LBIIa. Only sites where both MBA and LBA architecture was uncovered have been included in this study (and I will present additional caveats in chapter 3).

1.9.2. *Ceramic Assemblages*

In a general description of the changes in settlement patterns in the southern Levant, Na'aman argues that the deep change seen in this period (a wave of destruction and abandonment in every region in Canaan) is contemporaneous with the historical events (the Egyptian conquest of the region at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty). According to him, this justifies a new name for the period—the LBA. He indicated that, in contrast to this deep change, there is an eminent continuation in the ceramic remains throughout the sixteenth century BCE. Na'aman states that this may indicate that the ceramic evidence is not always a criterion for historical changes. According to him, settlement patterns are more sensitive to historical changes than the ceramic scheme (Na'aman 1982, 175). This statement will be examined here—since mostly southern sites were destroyed and abandoned, and not the northern states, does this assertion hold also for the northern sites? In his dissertation, Bunimovitz stated that, in order to understand the transition between the MBA and the LBA, a thorough comparison between the different ceramic assemblages should be undertaken. However, he quotes and agrees with Kempinski in that regional differences are present in the ceramic remains during this period and, therefore, such a comparison should be made cautiously (Bunimovitz 1989, 36–37).

This study will include a comprehensive analysis of all assemblages from the sites located within the geographic framework. Published ceramic assemblages dated to MBA and LBA and their subperiods were found only at five sites—Beth-Shean, Tel Qashish, Yoqne'am, Tel Hazor, and Tell Arqa. These assemblages were examined using a macrotypology, which comprises a minimal number of general types (36), and not a by microtypology commonly used today (Karasik and Smilansky 2008). Using a macrotypology enabled me to track the pace of the change in the assemblages and examine whether social, economic, or political processes took place. In other words, analyzing the pace of change in low resolution (macrotypology) will enable identification of the apparatus of change before discussing the change's cause. This analysis will therefore examine what changed, at what pace, and which characteristics in the material assemblage changed before others. This sort of examination allows for discussing possible processes that might have enabled the occurrence of a historical event to take place, bringing the start of a new period. It will also allow examining whether processes highlighted in the material culture could have enabled the conquest of Canaan by Egypt or if this conquest is what led, in fact, to changes in the material culture.

Adams conducted a comprehensive study on changes in Nubian ceramic traditions from 200 to 1550 CE when Nubia changed its religious ideology from Egyptian religion through Christianity and finally to Islam. In this thorough

research, he has shown that the most abrupt changes in the ceramic assemblages identified by him did not always go hand in hand with social changes. However, he also noticed that the introduction of Christianity to the Nubian region in the sixth century CE led to architectural, artistic, and literary changes, while the ceramic *traditions* only altered about 250 years later. On the other hand, he did notice changes in the forms of the vessels when the religious beliefs transformed from paganism to Christianity but also that changes in *forms* occur, nevertheless, every two to three centuries (throughout the historical times), not accompanying political changes (Adams 1979, 732).

Thus, changes in ceramic traditions do not always reflect socioeconomic or historical events. However, Adams claims that in nonindustrial societies, arguments based on "from pottery to history" are safer (Adams 1979, 733). Since the present study clearly deals with nonindustrial societies, interpreting changes in the ceramic assemblages in light of historical events will be attempted, though cautiously.

1.9.3. Imported Ware: Why Should It Be Considered?

In his comprehensive study of pottery assemblages from Nubia, one of the families that Adams examined was manufactured in Aswan, which is considered imported pottery. He noted that the different families that he examined evolved with very little influence on each other. Each family evolved at its own pace. He also posits that, if each family were considered by itself in the historical and political reconstruction, a different conclusion would be reached, and none of these conclusions would be accurate (Adams 1979, 733). It is therefore important to examine the development of the local pottery in light of the imported Aegean pottery. In chapter 5, I will show how this pottery had a great influence not only on the local assemblages but especially on the production systems of the local plain ware.

1.10. Research Outline

The following chapters of this research will deal with architectural and ceramic changes, throughout the MBA and LBA, in the geographical area described above.

Chapter 2 will describe the architectural changes that took place at Hazor, the focal site of this study. The architecture and the city plan of almost all excavated areas will be studied, of both the acropolis and the lower city. It will be shown that the most significant changes occurred between the strata dated to the LBI and the LBIIa. The architectural fabric of Hazor and the changes within the city

plan and use of the areas will be examined, showing that profound changes took place in the function of specific areas in the lower city of Hazor. Finally, it will also be suggested that a crisis occurred at Hazor during the LBI, most probably in the LBIa.

Chapter 3 will deal with sites within the described geographical framework and will examine the architectural changes that took place in these sites. In most of them, the major changes are reflected between the LBI and the LBII or between the LBIa and the LBIb, supporting and strengthening the evidence noted at Hazor in chapter 2.

Chapter 4 will examine the ceramic changes in assemblages from five sites within the geographical framework of this study dating to the MBA and the LBA. The ceramic assemblages will be analyzed based on macrotypology. This method is unique and seldom used by others. It also stands in sharp contrast to the very popular microtypology used today. It will be shown that, again, the most significant ceramic changes occurred between the LBI and the LBII, or between the LBIa and the LBIb, when pottery became less varied, more regular, and more mass-produced.

Chapter 5 will discuss the results of the previous chapters. It will be argued that the historical event that led to the changes in the material culture is the conquest of the southern Levant by the Egyptian Empire, following Thutmose III's campaign. It will also be suggested that the local economic decline following the expulsion of the Hyksos and the fall of the Syrian cities in the north enabled this conquest. It will be argued that the influx of Aegean imports (which included mainly closed but also open shapes) contributed to the lack of variety in shapes and decorations noted in the LBA local assemblages. It will also be suggested that the MBA ceramic production was based on attached specialists, which are less efficient, investing vast energy and resources in the production of vessels, while the LBA ceramic production was based on independent specialists, who promote efficiency and standardization. The general conclusion of this study is that the new administrative system, created following Thutmose III's campaign, led to significant changes in the ceramic production system as well as to architectural changes probably needed due to the decrease in the size of the local population.