

## The Northern Plateau During the Thirteenth Century-Eleventh Century BC

### I. Introduction

This paper incorporates most of the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age archaeological evidence from the northern plateau of Jordan in an explanatory framework that attempts to explain and understand the changes in settlements during the last phase of the LB II and the early Iron Age I on the northern plateau, *ca.* late 13th century – 11th century BC.

The archaeological excavations at Tall Irbid (Lenzen, Gordon, McQuitty 1985: 155; Lenzen 1988: 32) and Tall al-Fukhār (Strange 1996, 2001) imply that occupation at these sites seems to have flourished during the LBII B *ca.* 13th century BC; although at the end of the 13th century BC, that is in LB II – early Iron Age, these sites were destroyed and underwent considerable changes. At Tall Ya'mūn the architectural remains related to the end of the 13th century and the 11th century BC exposed in the excavations imply changes in functional use of the site (Hindawi 2006: 91-103). The archaeological surveys conducted in this region show an increase in the density of Iron Age I sites throughout the northern plateau, especially in the mountainous region (Mittmann 1970). The archaeological evidence thus seems to indicate that major changes occurred during the Iron Age I period in this region. The available archaeological data, at least from the excavations, may allow us to deduce the causes of such changes and it is these that we will be looking at in this paper. The starting point for this analysis is a brief historical and archaeological background of the LB in the southern Levant in general and in Jordan with special emphasize on the northern plateau in particular. Next, the main LB sites (*ca.* 1550-1200BC) that have been excavated on the northern plateau will be presented, focusing on the LB IIB (1300-1200BC), which contains the major archaeological

discoveries from this region. The main focus will be on the architecture remains, international trade and political organization.

### II. Definition of the Term Northern Plateau and its Geographical Location

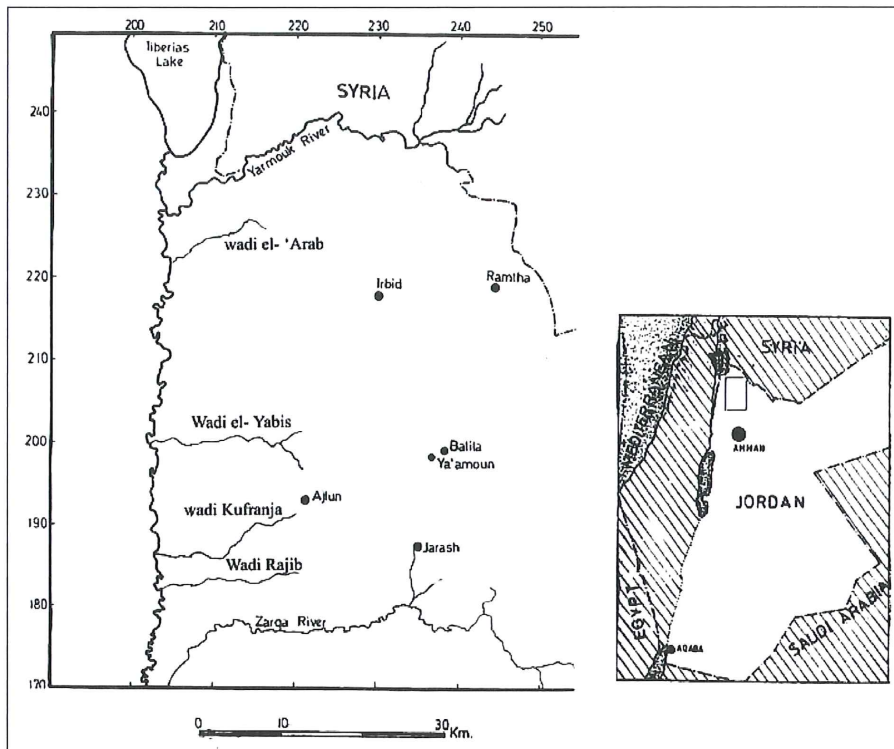
The northern plateau encompasses different geographical zones and ecological niches, though for the sake of this study and for ease of reference, the term northern plateau will be used to denote the whole region located between the az-Zarqā' River in the south and the Yarmouk River in the north (FIG. 1). The Jordan Valley is not included here, since it has already been well-studied.

### III. The Southern Levant and the Egyptian New Kingdom During the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200BC): an Overview

This period is linked with the era of the New Kingdom in Egypt, moreover, the political and economical structure and even the chronological order of the southern Levant during this period are interrelated with this power (Gonen 1992: 216; Strange 2004: 428; van der Steen 2004; Kafafi 2005). Therefore, it is essential to present a brief background of the relationship that existed during this period between the Egyptian New Kingdom and the southern Levant (Palestine and Jordan), in which it had both a military and economic interest (see for example Weinstein 1981: 1-28; Na'aman 1981: 172- 85; Bienkowski 1986: 144-146 ; 1987: 50-61; 1989: 59-61; Redford 1992).

#### III.1. Military Dimension

The military dimension is reflected through the numerous military expeditions conducted by the Egyptian Pharaohs in the southern Levant (Weinstein 1981: 14-18; Bienkowski 1986: 137-143, van



1. The geographical location of the study area.

der Steen 2004). These campaigns aimed:

1. To put down the rebellions of the city-states in the southern Levant and to maintain their loyalty to Egypt; these city-states tried on many occasions to rise up against the Egyptian hegemony.
2. To keep the northern Egyptian border safe from Mitanni and Hatti threats (Redford 1992: 152-166).
3. To maintain the trade routes that connected Egypt with the southern and northern Levant, and to keep them safe from any dangers. The value of these trade routes dictated the type of relationship between Egypt and the city-states in the southern Levant (Bienkowski 1989: 60; Strange 2001: 294; McGovern 2004: 291; van der Steen 2004).

### III.2. Economic Dimension

Many scholars have pointed out that the economic relationship of the Egyptian New Kingdom with Syria-Palestine was intense (Dever 1992: 105). Egypt demanded that the city-states pay a regular tribute of different kinds of commodities such as silver, copper, bronze, glass, wood, manufactured goods, cattle and slaves (Na'aman 1981: 174-177). The explanation of the purpose of the Egyptian presence in the southern Levant is a matter of controversy between scholars. While some suggest that the economic exploitation of Palestine's natural re-

sources was the main reason for the Egyptian presence (Knapp 1987), others, such as Bienkowski (1986:145-146; 1989: 61), argue that it was more politically motivated. By politically motivated he meant that the various tributes extracted from the city-states were not usually sent to Egypt but mainly used to supply the Egyptian administration centres in Palestine as well as the Egyptian army when it passed through the lands. Bienkowski asserts that the Egyptian empire's main interest was focused on the densely populated and key strategic areas, while the marginal areas, especially the hill regions in Palestine and Transjordan, received less attention (Bienkowski 1989: 59-62). Van der Steen indicates that during the thirteenth century BC the Egyptian empire become interested in Moab; an interest reflected in two of Ramses II's topographical lists, in which captured towns in Moab are mentioned (van der Steen 2004: 302-305).

### IV. The Late Bronze Age and the Egyptian Presence and Influence in Jordan

The archaeological discoveries related to the LB in Jordan highlighted several socio-economic aspects of this era. They show that this period was an international age and that many regions in Jordan flourished (see Strange 2001: 294; Homès-FredERICQ and Franken 1986: 133). The trade is attested



by the discovery of an enormous amount imported material from Mycenae, Cyprus, and Egyptian-influenced objects discovered in the Jordan Valley and in the 'Ammān region (Homès-Fredericq and Franken 1986: 133; McGovern 1986; Ibrahim 1987). The thriving of the LB settlements in Jordan is reflected through the discovery of large public buildings that have been designated as temples or palaces (Franken 1992; Bourk *et al.* 2003: 346-53; Tubb 1997: 453-54; McGovern 1986; McGovern 1994; Ibrahim 1987; Herr 1997). This prosperity coincided with the presence of Egyptian power in different parts of Jordan during this period (Strange 2004: 328-429). The advantage of the presence of such a power is represented mainly by providing a safe milieu in which the economy could prosper (van der Steen 2004).

Several studies have indicated the role of the Egyptian power in Jordan at this time (Kitchen 1992; Franken 1992; Strange 2001, 2004; van der Steen 2004). One of the most extensive was by van der Steen in her study of the LB and Early Iron Age periods in the central 'Ammān region in general and in the Jordan Valley in particular. She looked at Egyptian influence on the socio-economic situation in these two regions and evaluated its influence in relation to trade there. She did this by evaluating the LB and Early Iron Age material and the architecture remains that were excavated on several main sites in the Jordan Valley and in 'Ammān region. In the Jordan Valley these sites are: Pella, Tall as-Sa'idiyya and Dayr 'Allā. She assessed their roles in trade, their rise and their decline in relation to the Egyptian presence. In the 'Ammān region she evaluated the archaeological results from several sites, with special emphasis on the role of Saḥāb as a key site which dominated the 'Ammān plateau and had a role in trade between the 'Ammān region, the Jordan Valley and the north (van der Steen 2004: 276-283). She recognized two main market areas. The first is the Jordan Valley and the second is the 'Ammān region. The first market was controlled by Egypt, where Pella initially played the major role, followed later by Tall as-Sa'idiyya and Dayr 'Allā. The second market area was independent and was not subjected to direct Egyptian control. One important insight of van der Steen's study was the existence of a sort of a government (either remote or local), which would have been of great importance for providing security, allowing agriculture and trade to be carried out.

## V. The Collapse of Late Bronze Age System in 'Ammān and the Jordan Valley, and the Withdrawal of the Egyptian Power: an Overview

This period is characterized by the collapse of the LBA empires in different parts of the Ancient Near East (in Anatolia, the Aegean, northern Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt), the collapse of the world market, and a massive population movement (McGovern 1986: 340, with references). The study of this period is a very wide topic and has received the attention of many scholars (see for example Ward and Joukowsky 1992).

These changes also affected the eastern part of Jordan, represented by the collapse of the 'Ammān region and the Jordan Valley (van der Steen 2004: 284; see also Strange 2004: 429). At the end of the 13th century the main settlements in the 'Ammān region were either deserted or underwent considerable changes. These changes were interpreted in relation to the events at the end of the LBA and the collapse of trade. The main income of the 'Ammān region was based on trade: the more trade in this region flourished, the more this region prospered. As the trading market collapsed in the 'Ammān region van der Steen suggested several ways that the people may have reacted, although, according to her, in time of turmoil, the search for food and protection would be people's priority (van der Steen 2004: 285-288).

The previous discussion has paved the way for better understanding of the 13th-11th century on the northern plateau, but before we approach our topic it is first necessary to view the LBA archaeological material from this area within a framework, which depends to large extent on the study developed by van der Steen. This framework can be summarized as follows:

1. One factor allowing settlements, trade and agriculture to thrive is the existence of some sort of authority. The flourishing of settlements should be reflected in their architecture remains, the material culture and the increased density of settlements. Material from graves, tombs and burial caves are an indicator of economic circumstances.
2. Egyptian presence and interest in Jordan shifted from one area to another, this shift was motivated by economic concerns, characterized initially by interest in trade, as in the case of the Jordan Valley, and later on may be represented by exploiting new land resources, as in the case



- of Moab during the 13th century BC.
3. Trade was one of the major sources of income for various regions in Jordan during the LBA and therefore the collapse of trade would have affected the social, economic and political structures in these regions. This may coincide with the withdrawal or collapse of authority (either remote or local) that played an essential role in supervising the trade and other economic activities.

## VI. The Northern Plateau in the Scope of the Egyptian Interests

Several publications have indicated the Egyptian influence and presence in Jordan during the different phases of the LB (for more discussion see Kitchen 1992: 21-34; McGovern 2004: 291-294; van der Steen 2004: 298-302). However, few attempts have been made to consider this issue on the northern plateau. The discussion below will tackle this aspect by focusing on the assumption that the Egyptian New Kingdom was also interested in this region.

### VI.1. The Egyptian Evidence from the Northern Plateau

Egyptian textual sources related to the southern Levant were the main focus of several studies, (e.g. Simon 1937; Redford 1982; Weinstein 1981: 5-12; Kitchen 1992: 21-34; van der Steen 2004: 12-25). Seti I (Sethos I) and Ramesses II conducted several military expeditions in the Levant, aimed at facing the threat from the Hittite power and to stabilize the Egyptian presence in the southern Levant (Aharoni 1979: 181-183; Gonen 1992: 214). These two pharaohs were also interested in the northern plateau. This interest coincided with their expedition in the Jordan Valley and Moab region during the 13th century (see above) and is reflected in the discoveries of archaeological evidence of Egyptian presence from two sites located directly north of the Yarmouk River.

The first is Tall ash-Shihāb and the second is Shaykh Sa'ad (Weinstein 1981: 21; Kitchen 1992: 26; Knapp 1993: 48; Strange 2001: 295). At Tall ash-Shihāb a stele of Seti I (*ca.* 1294/90-1279) was found, of which only the top half has survived (Kitchen 1992: 26). Furthermore, Kitchen suggests that this site "*may have been the Kheni ('Ain?)-anab of EA256, and the Qiryath- 'Anab of Papyrus Anastasi under Ramesses II*" (*ca.* 1279-1213BC.)

(See also Simon 1937: 146; Aharoni 1979: 178). At Shaykh Sa'ad, located about 30km northwest of Dar'a, a stele with the cartouche of Ramses II was found. This stele and the one of Seti I indicate Egyptian presence and hint at the interest of the Egyptians in northern Transjordan and show Egyptian "*overlordship*" over this region. Weinstein stated that "*The stelae from Transjordan – those at Shaykh Sa'id and Tell ash-Shihab- are of great interest because they are the only true Egyptian stele ever found in this region*" (1981: 21).

Recently and in his toponymic study, Kafafi argued that the site of Ya'mūn (see below) may be identified with y-n-<w>-m (Yeno'am) mentioned in the topographical list of Seti I (Kafafi 2005: 63-65). The increased interest shown by Seti I and Ramses II in the Jordan Valley and Moab region, and the Seti I stele at Tall ash-Shihāb may support Kafafi's assumption. However, further research at Tall Ya'mūn may bring solid archaeological evidence to support his assumption that Tall Ya'mūn may be identified with Yeno'am mentioned in the Egyptian textual sources.

Other scholars proposed different identifications for y-n-<w>-m. Aharoni identified it with Tell el-'Abeidiyeh, located north of Beth-Shean (Aharoni 1979: 177-178), but Albright identified the same site as Tell en-Na'ameh (Albright 1926: 14). Tell en-Na'ameh (also known as Tell en-Na'am) is located about 8km to the south of Tiberias in the lower Galilee (Liebowitz 1981: 79). Knapp proposed that y-n< w>- -m might be identified with Tall ash-Shihāb (Knapp 1993: 48).

## VII. The Late Bronze Age Archaeological Evidence and the First Phase of the Iron Age from the Northern Plateau

### VII.1. LBI (1550-1400 BC)

Several LB archaeological sites have been excavated at the northern plateau (Strange 2001; Kafafi 2004: 5-7), including Tall al-Fukhār, Tall Irbid, Tall Jarash, Riḥāb and Dhahr al-Madīna. Pottery of LB IA-IIA was reported from Tall al-Fukhkhār and Tall Jarash. At Riḥāb<sup>1</sup> chocolate-on-white pottery and Tell el-Yahudiyyeh ware have recently been discovered. An assemblage of LBI and LBII II pottery was excavated at Quwayliba tomb and published by Kafafi (Kafafi 1984: 12-29).

<sup>1</sup> For the old excavation at the site see Piccirillo 1989: 488.



### VII.2. LBII A (1400-1300 BC)

LB II A pottery has mainly been discovered at tombs such as Quwayliba and the Irbid camp (Kafafi 2004:8).

### VII.3. LBII B (1300-1200 BC)

#### VII.3.1. Architectural Remains

LB II architectural remains have been reported from Tall al-Fukhār, Tall Irbid and Tall Ya'mūn.

At Tall al-Fukhār a large public building from the LBII A and LBII B was excavated (Strange 1997: 402, 2001: 307). This building was partially exposed, and was about 23m long but its width is still unknown. The outer walls of this building were *ca.* 1.5m thick. Successive floors were discerned, implying that the building went through several phases. Two partially exposed rooms were dug with entrances possibly leading to other, unexposed, rooms. The rooms were filled with a 2m-thick destruction layer, composed of burnt bricks, charred oak and roof beams. The nature of the debris implies that the building had an upper floor (Strange 1997: 402; 2001: 307). Different items were found inside this building (Strange 1997: 402) including a large pithos – a precursor of the collared-rim jar, Mycenaean and Cypriot sherds and a unique “Knob” of glazed pottery, possibly for a piece of furniture or wall decoration and probably belonging to the LB I period. The discovery of such items in this building “attest to its importance and international relations during this period”. This monumental building was interpreted as a temple or a palace, probably the latter according to the excavators.

At Tall Irbid the salvage excavation conducted at the site revealed partially exposed structures composed of several rooms, and several partially exposed walls. A group of cultic objects were found. The excavators interpreted this complex either as a sanctuary or as a major public building, dated to *ca.* 1300-1150BC or to *ca.* 1200-1100BC (Lenzen, Gordon, McQuitty 1985: 155; Lenzen 1988: 32).

At Rihāb and Dhahr al-Madīna pottery and architecture remains have been reported (Kafafi 2004: 5).

At Tall Ya'mūn, located approximately 25km south-east of Irbid and some 3km south-west of the modern town of an-Nu'ayma, a major building

complex was uncovered in area II and dated to the LB (Najjar *et al.* 2001; Hindawi 2006).

#### VII.3.2. International Trade

As mentioned above, several objects excavated from LBA sites in Jordan indicate intense contact with ancient cultural centers, for instance at Tall Dayr 'Allā objects from Mycenae, northern Syria and Egypt were found (Homès-Fredericq and Franken 1986: 140), and at Pella and Tall as-Sa'idiyya Egyptian objects and pottery were found (Homès-Fredericq and Franken 1986: 135). In the 'Ammān region, international contacts have been attested through the archaeological discoveries from several sites i.e. al-Baq'a valley (McGovern 1986), the 'Ammān Airport temple (Hennessy 1989); Sahāb (Ibrahim 1987). The following discussion will highlight the idea that the northern plateau was involved in that trade during the LB. This argument will be examined in the light of the archaeological discoveries from the Saḥam Tomb and Tall al-Fukhār.

At the Saḥam tomb a variety of rich burial goods were discovered. These comprised complete pottery vessels, beads, cultic figurines, metal objects including items of gold and silver, earrings, scarabs, daggers knives and other items (Fisher 1997: 13-14). Six scarabs of Egyptian origin were found in this tomb, one of them was dated to Middle Bronze (MB) IIA- early MB IIB, whereas the five others were ascribed to a possible date ranging from LB I to the beginning of Iron I. Fisher suggests that two of these scarabs may be dated to the reign of Ramesses II (1279-1213BC). The tomb was in use from the end of the 15th century to the beginning of the 12th century BC, i.e. LBA IB-Iron Age IA (Fisher 1997: 84-85). Fisher emphasizes the ecological location of the Saḥam area “*the Saḥam area is today a rich agricultural area, supported by a number of perennial springs from which agricultural products, mainly olives and cereals, are exported. It is hard to believe that the situation was different during the Late Bronze and the beginning of the Iron Age*” (Fisher 1997: 85-86). Further he comments that the occupants of the Saḥam area in the time periods “*who very likely belong to a specialized agricultural society, could afford to purchase valuable, imported jewellery of gold, silver, bronze*” and other valuable items.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, some of the goods from the Saḥam tomb reflect long-

2 For the drawing and the photographs of the items discovered in

the tomb see Fisher 1997: Figs. 5 - 40, and plates 1-56.



distance trade with Wādī ‘Araba, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and maybe Mycenae (Fisher 1997: 84-90).

At Tall al-Fukhār several items that were found in the public building indicated a trade contact with Mycenae and Cyprus in the LB IIB, and with northern Mesopotamia in the 15th century BC (see above) (Strange 1997: 402). This conclusion was confirmed through McGovern’s study at Tall al-Fukhār (McGovern 1997: 421-425) where 98 sherds dated to EB II-III, MB IIA, LB II, Iron IB, Iron IIC – Persian and Hellenistic have been examined by utilizing the neutron activation analysis (McGovern 1997: 424).

### VII.3.3. Political Organization

Strange pointed out that there is little evidence to shed light on the social and political organization in Jordan during the LBA (Strange 2001: 304), although it is true that the Amarna letters have enhanced our knowledge about the political organization that existed in the southern Levant, mainly in Palestine. This political organization is characterized by the existence of the city-state system, dominated by Egypt (For more discussion of this system see Finkelstein 1996: 221-55 with references; Savage and Falconer 2003: 31-45; van der Steen 2004). The only Egyptian textual indication of such a system in Jordan was obtained from Tell Amarna letters 255-256, which mentioned Pella located in the Jordan Valley, and its ruler Mut-Ba‘lu (man of Ba‘al) (Knapp 1993: 47-48).

It was stated above that during the LB the Egyptian New Kingdom may have been interested in the northern plateau, for economic and political reasons. Several scholars stress the fact that Egyptian presence existed in the area under study, a presence that coincided with the rise of Egyptian interest in the Jordan Valley, at Tall as-Sa‘īdiyya, and in the Moab region during the 13th century BC (van der Steen 2004). Van der Steen recognized two market areas during the LB, the Jordan Valley and the ‘Ammān region. The former was controlled directly by the Egyptians, whereas the latter was economically independent. But in which of these two areas can the northern plateau be assigned? Actually there are indications for Egyptian presence in this region, but how the Egyptian domination on the northern plateau was symbolized is still unclear, since there are no direct Egyptian textual sources related to the political organization that existed in the area under study. But who regulated the

economical relationship in this region during the LB II B?

The archaeological evidence from the northern plateau may support the idea that some kind of authority might have existed at the northern plateau during the LB IIB. However, the archaeological and textual data thus far collected can not tell what kind of authority it was, that is whether it was locally independent or controlled by a remote government such as Egypt. Several archaeological discoveries from the Saḥam tomb and Tall al-Fukhār show that international trade was carried out between this region and several main cultural centres in the ancient Near East such as Palestine, Egypt, Mycenae, Cyprus and northern Mesopotamia. Such trade contacts could not have been possible if the trade routes had not been secure. Major LB IIB public buildings have been uncovered from Tall al-Fukhār and Tall Irbid and such complexes could not have been maintained without the existence of some kind of authority. The excavation and survey data indicate that the LB II sites were mainly located in the Irbid Plain, which is well suited to cultivating different kinds of crops, mainly cereals, and most of them were large sites, such as Tall al-Fukhār, Tall Irbid, Tall Sāl, Tall al-Mu‘allaq, Tall al-Mughayyar and Tall Ya‘mūn. So, agriculture might have played a major role in the income of the LB people in this area. Agriculture also needs a high level of security to be successful. Several scholars have emphasized the ecological aspect of this region during the LB (i.e. see LaBianca and Younker 1995: 402-403; Fisher 1997: 85-86; Ji 1995: 131). In the light of his archaeological survey, Kamlah proposed different hypotheses regarding the pattern of the occupation during the LB and Iron Age in az-Ziraqūn area (Kamlah 2000: 195-197). He states that during the LB, it seems that there was a centralization of settlement, that is to say all the residents of this area settled in fortified towns, namely Tall Sāl, Tall al-Mu‘allaq, Tall al-Mughayyar and Tall al-Fukhār. Furthermore, Kamlah suggests that the populations of the LB in the Irbid Plain depended to a large extent on agriculture *Landwirtschaft* as a major source of income, and this was the reason why they were not deeply influenced by the collapse of regional trade at the end of the LB. However, the archaeological discoveries from Saḥam and Tall al-Fukhār show that this region was involved in trade during the LB II and it may be one of the major sources of income for the inhabitants of the northern pla-



teau at that time. Nevertheless, the role of agriculture as an important source of income cannot be overlooked.

### **VIII. The End of the 13th to 11th Century BC on the Northern Plateau**

#### *VIII.1. Excavation Results*

The archaeological data related to this time period from the area under study demonstrate that occupation declined between the end of the 13th and the 11th centuries BC. This theory is based on the discoveries from three main sites: Tall Irbid, Tall al-Fukhār and Tall Ya'mūn. At Tall Irbid the LB IIB sanctuary or major public building, was destroyed by an intense conflagration. In the following period, 1100-800 / 1150-800BC, the same building functioned as a domestic and industrial place. At Tall al-Fukhār the 'palace' or the major building of the LB IIB was destroyed at the end of the LB in the 13th century BC, and was then reused in the following period - LB / Early Iron Age transition and including Iron IA and Iron IB. This use was characterized by a number of floors, walls and ovens. Collared rim jars, which were used for domestic activities, were found (Strange 1997: 402). The architectural remains during the latter period hint that the nature of the occupation declined.

At Tall Ya'mūn (for more details see Hindawi 2006: 85-112) the period spanning the 13th-12th centuries BC was considered as the period between the LB and the Iron Age I period. The occupation in this period is represented by a compact layers in area II, and a single short wall in area III; associated pottery assemblages were designated as Phase I. Two occupational patterns were distinguished during the 11th century BC. The first is represented by the re-use of the LB complex in area II, by constructing one large silo and by using the same complex as dwelling rooms, while the second is characterized by construction two stone-lined pits in area III. The archaeological data of the 11th century BC, therefore, might suggest that the nature of the occupation during this period declined, especially if we note that only earth surfaces have thus far been discovered dated to this period at Tall Ya'mūn.

At Tall Jarash this period is represented by four successive floors, two of which were plastered and burnt (Braemer 1987). At Tall Juḥafīyyah (Lamprichs. pers. comm.) LB-Iron I occupation was also reported. The tomb discovered at Saḥam was

in use in the LB II/ Iron I. At the fringes of the eastern desert, in al-Mafraq region, this period is evidenced by a tomb as well as by pottery reported from Rihāb.

#### *VIII.2. The Archaeological Surveys Result*

The archaeological surveys conducted in this region have been discussed elsewhere (Hindawi 2007). However, we have to bear in mind that most of the archaeological data of these surveys have not yet been published and therefore, the many conclusions related to the LB II and the Iron I occupation pattern in this region that have been drawn from these unpublished data are tentative. One point, stressed by several scholars, is the increase in the density of the Iron Age I sites all through the northern plateau, especially in the mountain region. Some scholars, such as Braemer, interpreted the cause as the arrival of a new population group to that region (Braemer 1992: 192-198; see also Ji 1995: 134-137). Other scholars, such as Strange, see this increase in site numbers, in the northern plateau in general, as being the result of a movement of inhabitants from the large LB sites to smaller ones, and not due to an increase in population (Strange 2000: 297; Kafafi 2004: 9). The increase of the site density, especially in the mountain region, should be viewed in relation with collapse of the LBA systems which occurred not only on the northern plateau but also in 'Ammān region and the Jordan Valley. Ecological and technological factors are essential in any attempt to analyze the cause of such an increase. The survey data from Wādī al-Yābis reported two LB sites (one LB I and one LB II site), while Iron Age I and II witnessed an intensification of settlement in both the lowlands and the highlands of Wādī al-Yābis. Sixteen Iron I sites were reported, whereas 20 Iron II sites were defined. It has been suggested that, during the Iron I and II, a series of terraces were constructed along the hillsides of Wādī al-Yābis (Mabry and Palumbo 1988: 289-291; Mabry and Palumbo 1992: 69-70). The technological factor can be viewed in relation to Iron Age metallurgy. Preliminary investigation of several sites located in the 'Ajlūn area, such as Maghārat al-Wardah, and other sites suggests that smelting operations took place by the early Iron Age. Moreover, the fuel needs for the iron industry were available in the shape of large tracts of oak and conifer (McGovern 2004:297).



## Conclusion

The archaeology of the LB and the Iron Age on the northern plateau of Jordan needs further research to answer several unresolved questions, although the available archaeological data allow us to draw the following conclusions.

1. The architectural remains uncovered from several archaeological sites in the northern plateau, e.g. at Tall Irbid and Tall al-Fukhār indicate that these settlements flourished during the 13th century BC. This coincides with the increase of the Egypt interest in the Jordan Valley, Moab region and possibly the northern plateau.
2. The archaeological evidence suggests that the northern plateau was integrated into the economic systems in the southern Levant that was dominated by Egypt during the LB. Various archaeological material uncovered in some of the archaeological sites from the area under discussion indicate both long and short trade contacts with different regions during the Late Bronze and Iron Age.
3. The period that followed the 12th century BC marked significant changes in Jordan, which are represented by the collapse of Bronze Age society in the 'Ammān region and in the Jordan Valley. The northern plateau was influenced by such changes, which may be represented by the disintegration of the economic system in this region. Such changes are reflected by the changes of the functional use of the LB architecture remains at Tall Irbid and Tall al-Fukhār and Tall Ya'mūn.

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