

Observations on the Bronze Age in Jordan¹

by

Thomas L. Thompson

In the writing of the history of Jordan in the Bronze Age, one most serious and fundamental problem is determining the basic sociological structure of the people of this period. The difficulty of this historical task, however, is made even more acute by the added burden that any adequate reconstruction of the history must first deal with the problems which historians themselves have created and which prevent any fundamental re-examination of our sources for history. This burden for the early history of Jordan is the well-worn problem which William Albright and Nelson Glueck helped to create with their historical evaluation of the surveys of the Jordan Valley and the East Jordan plateau.² This was the theory that the Jordan

Valley and the entire region south of the Wadi Zerqa was depopulated during the Middle Bronze II and the Late Bronze periods, that is, throughout most of the second millennium, B.C. This theory held that the earlier settlements of the Early Bronze and Middle Bronze I periods had been succeeded in this region until about the thirteenth century, B.C. by semi-nomadic tribes, which had left no archaeological trace whatever. This picture which Glueck gave of the settlement of Eastern Jordan, which is still held by many, was that of a relatively dense agricultural settlement during Middle Bronze I throughout the whole of Eastern Jordan. This, according to Glueck, was followed by a period of nomadic control and total lack of agricultural settlements

(1) This paper was first presented as a lecture sponsored by the American Center for Oriental Research at the British Council in Amman on April 6th, 1974. It is presented here unchanged except for the addition of the footnotes. This historical interpretation has been developed during research on maps of the Bronze Age for Palestine and Syria to be published in the new interdisciplinary *Tübingen Atlas des vorderen Orients* (TAVO) being prepared at Tübingen University in West Germany.

(2) W. F. Albright, "The Jordan Valley in the Bronze Age", *AASOR*, 6 (1926) p. 13-74; *idem*, Note to Nelson Glueck, "Three Israelite Towns in the Jordan Valley," *BASOR*, 90 (1943) p. 17-18; Nelson Glueck, "The Archaeological Exploration of El-Hammeh on the Yarmuk", *BASOR*, 49 (1933) p. 22f.; *idem*, "Further Explorations in Eastern Palestine", *BASOR*, 51 (1933) p. 9-18; *idem*, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine I*, *AASOR*, 14 (1934); *idem*, "Explora-

tions in Eastern Palestine and the Negev", *BASOR*, 55 (1934) p. 3-21; *idem*, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine II*, *AASOR* 15 (1935); *idem*, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine III", *BASOR* 64 (1936) p. 9-10, 65 (1937) p. 8-29; *idem*, "An Aerial Reconnaissance in Southern Transjordan", *BASOR* 66 (1937) p. 27f., 67 (1937) p. 19-26; *idem*, "Explorations in the Land of Ammon", *BASOR*, 68 (1937) p. 13-21; *idem*, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine III*, *AASOR*, 18-19 (1939); *idem*, "The Earliest History of Jerash", *BASOR*, 75 (1939) p. 22-30; *idem*, *The Other Side of the Jordan* (1940); *idem*, "Further Explorations in Eastern Palestine", *BASOR*, 86 (1942) p. 14-24; *idem*, "Three Israelite Towns in the Jordan Valley: Zarethan, Succoth, Zaphon", *BASOR*, 90 (1943) p. 2-23; *idem*, "Some Ancient Towns in the Plains of Moab", *BASOR*, 91 (1943) p. 7-26; *idem*, *The River Jordan* (1946); *idem*, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine IV*, *AASOR*, 25-28 (1955).

south of the Wadi Zerqa from the Middle Bronze II period onwards.³ Glueck's interpretation is based on the fact that he had found little pottery from the Middle and Late Bronze Age in this region.

This "nomad" hypothesis, used to explain the lack of finds in his survey, is very interestingly paralleled by the still almost universally accepted understanding of the Middle Bronze I period in the region to the west of the Jordan.⁴ This understanding of the Middle Bronze I in Palestine, based primarily on the lack of major architectural structures from this period at sites such as Tell es-Sultan (Jericho)⁵ and Tell Beit Mirsim,⁶ but also at other important Bronze Age sites as well,⁷ tries to explain the distressing lack of material finds by

(3) Nelson Glueck, "Transjordan" in *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, D. W. Thomas, ed., (1967) p. 445; *idem*, *The Other Side of the Jordan* (1940) p. 15f. 114f.; *idem*, "The Age of Abraham in the Negev", *EA*, 18 (1955) p. 7f.; *idem*, "The Seventh Season of Archaeological Exploration in the Negev", *BASOR*, 152 (1958) p. 20; W. F. Albright, *BASOR*, 163 (1961) p. 36f. For a more detailed criticism of Glueck's survey results, cf. Th. L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham*, *BZAW* 133 (1974) p. 192-95.

(4) Thompson, *Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*, 144-71.

(5) Cf. E. Sellin and C. Watzinger *Jericho: Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen* (1913) p. 14f. 46f. 108-12; K. Kenyon, "Some Notes on the History of Jericho in the Second Millennium, B.C.", *PEQ*, (1951) p. 106-13; *idem*, "British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem Excavations at Jericho, 1952: Interim Report", *PEQ*, (1952) p. 4-6; *idem*, "Excavations at Jericho, 1952", *PEQ*, (1952) p. 65-68, p. 74-80, *idem*, "Excavations at Jericho, 1953", *PEQ*, (1953) p. 90-93; *idem* "Excavations at Jericho, 1954" *PEQ*, (1954) p. 56-58; *idem*, *Digging up Jericho* (1957) p. 186 209; *idem*, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (1960) p. 135-61; *idem*, *Jericho I* (1960) p. 180-262; *idem*, *Jericho II* (1964) p. 33-166, 551, 565;

relating them to a few scattered literary texts from Sumer, which deal with the threat of nomadic incursions there,⁸ drawing the conclusion that Palestine hosted a semi-nomadic population, whose archaeological remains consisted mostly of quite elaborate shaft tombs found throughout the hill country of the West Bank.

Since we are dealing here with a survey of archaeological finds, I will only point out that these Sumerian literary texts, dealing with people whom scholars often refer to as "Amorites", not only had nothing to do with Palestine, but they are specifically described in the literary texts as *not* burying their dead at all,⁹ while, if the present literature on the period in Palestine is to be believed, the

idem, "Syria and Palestine, c. 2160-1780 B.C.", *CAH*, fascicle 29 (1965) p. 38-6; *idem*, "Palestine in the Middle Bronze Age", *CAH*, fascicle 48 (1966) p. 3-13; *idem*, *Amorites and Canaanites* (1966); *idem*, "Jericho" in *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, D. W. Thomas, ed. (1967) p. 267-69.

(6) W.F. Albright, *The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim I: The Pottery of the First Three Campaigns*, *AASOR*, 12 (1932) p. 8-14; *idem*, *I A: The Bronze Age Pottery of the Fourth Campaign*, *AASOR*, 13 (1933) p. 62-67; *idem*, "Palestine in the Earliest Historical Period", *JPOS*, 15 (1935) p. 220; *idem*, *TBM II: The Bronze Age*, *AASOR*, 17 (1938) p. 12-16; *idem*, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1957) p. 163f.; *Archaeology of Palestine* (1949) p. 80-82.

(7) See further on the history of this question, W. G. Dever, "The 'Middle Bronze I' Period in Syria and Palestine", in *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century*, Essays in Honor of N. Glueck, J. A. Sanders, ed., (1970) p. 134f.

(8) Especially, K. Kenyon, *CAH*, fascicle 29, pp. 34f.; W. G. Dever, "The People of Palestine in the Middle Bronze Period", *HThR*, 64 (1971) p. 218.

(9) Cf. Thompson, *Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*, pp. 67-88, 157f.

people of the Middle Bronze I period are known almost *exclusively* from their tombs. 10

It is baffling to try to correlate the received opinions about the state of settlement in both East and West Palestine together. One is presented with the quite remarkable picture that during the transition period of Early Bronze IV and Middle Bronze I, both eastern Jordan and the arid central Negev, south of Palestine, were settled extensively by an agricultural population, while the rich farmland of western Palestine was controlled by sheep and goatherding seminomads. We are asked to believe that during the succeeding period, Middle Bronze II, when Palestine flourished with the most intensive agricultural settlement of the whole Bronze Age, those previously preferable regions for farming, the East-Jordanian plateau south of the Wadi Zerqa, as well as the whole of the central Negev, were now abandoned to wandering seminomadic shepherds. While this is a very *interesting* configuration — indeed, it has fascinated a whole generation of scholars — it is hardly *understandable*.

I am not suggesting, however, that the historian can abandon the — necessarily arbitrary — piecemeal gathering of data, nor can he give up constructing hypotheses to interpret his arbitrarily gathered data. *Events* — categorically — do *not* have their own logic ! Nor is their interpretation amenable to any pre-set

(10) I am presently preparing a collection of the EB IV/MB I remains in Palestine which will be included in the monograph: **The Bronze Age Settlements of Syria and Palestine**, being prepared for TAVO. A useful list of some of the EB IV/MB I sites can now be found in K. Prag, "The Intermediate Early Bronze - Middle Bronze Age: An Interpretation of the Evidence from Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon", *Levant*, 6 (1974) p. 112-16.

patterns furnished by the historian. Nevertheless, before an historical theory, based on limited and fragmented knowledge, can be accepted as expressive of what once took place, that is, as *history*, it must have a minimal coherence, not only with what we know, but with what we know to be possible and likely.

Simple common sense and an awareness of the incoherence of the generally accepted interpretation has led a few scholars to the unfortunately extreme position of denying the existence of that part of the evidence which most embarrassed the orthodox. Thanks primarily to the confirmatory survey of Siegfried Mittmann in the northern Transjordan, carried out in the middle sixties, the agricultural nature of the settlements of Eastern Jordan during the EB IV/MB I period, as embarrassing as it is to the interpretations of Palestinian archaeologists, has proven unassailable. 11 The over 300 known EB IV/MB I sites of the central Negev mountains, 12 however, are now being written off as nomadic camping sites. It is argued that since the Beer-sheba Basin, which in an absolute sense is unquestionably better suited to agriculture than the central Negev, was for the most part not settled at this period, the arid regions to the south could not have been settled with farmers. 13 Although this would dismiss one of the most embarrassing obstacles in the path of interpretation, we are still left with the also illogical description of this period as

(11) *Beiträge zur Siedlung- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes*, ADPV, (1970).

(12) A list of these sites will be published by the author in the monograph: **The Bronze Age Settlements of Sinai and the Negev**, to be published as a supplement to TAVO.

(13) So, M. Kochavi in his unpublished dissertation: **The Settlement of the Negev in the Middle Bronze I Period** (Jerusalem, 1967).

primarily a curiosity, with intensive farming of the East-Jordanian plateau alongside of the empty fertile valleys of Palestine. The Amorites mentioned above, and the biblical patriarchs, because of attitudes toward their place in Jewish and Christian faith, tend to distract the reader from any too critical examination of details.¹⁴

In spite of this, the hopes of interpreting the settlement patterns of the Bronze Age are not nearly so bleak as the foregoing recital perhaps seems to suggest, for we have only so far discussed the central attempt to put together an interpretation of the archaeological remains of the region of Palestine and Jordan, and in this synthesis, the surveys of Glueck, and the excavations of Kenyon and Albright have determined the course of all the subsequent discussion of the history of the Bronze Age. Whatever subsequent material was found has either been fitted into their hypothesis, changing the form of the argument only in detail, or the material has been left to the side, uninterpreted and by and large ignored.

The late Dr. Dajani of the Department of Antiquities,¹⁵ Dr. Dornemann of the American Center,¹⁶ my colleague Dr. Mittmann of Tübingen,¹⁷ as well as many other scholars of the archaeological his-

tory of Jordan, over the years have continuously been pointing out to us that Glueck's gaps in settlement in the Jordan Valley and the area south of the Wadi Zerqa during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages never in fact really existed, and that our map of the known settlements in these regions is progressively being filled out. The gap in Glueck's surveys is not to be explained as a historical curiosity, but rather as having been caused by the limited nature of the survey itself. The present plans and activities of the Department of Antiquities make it happily clear that the work of these scholars is being continued and expanded by the department, and that the coming years will show us the true state of affairs in the region south of the Wadi Zerqa.

The real curiosity is that Glueck's hypothesis was ever taken so seriously — as literally true — in the first place. Not only had his theory been based on the very shaky grounds of what he had *not* found, but his own survey itself, and not just subsequent discoveries, shows a significant number of settlements from both the Middle Bronze II and the Late Bronze periods,¹⁸ though it must be admitted that fewer such sites were found in his later surveying once he had published

(14) That neither the Amorites nor the biblical patriarchs have anything to do with this period is argued in detail in my *Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*, pp. 17-171.

(15) A. Dajani, "A Hyksos Tomb at Kalandia", *ADAJ*, 2 (1953).

(16) R. H. Dornemann, *The Cultural and Archaeological History of the Transjordan in the Bronze and Iron Age* (unpubl. Chicago Diss. 1970).

(17) S. Mittmann, *Beiträge*, esp. p. 221; cf. also, G. Lankaster Harding, "Excavations in Jordan, 1951-1952", *ADAJ*, 2 (1953) p. 82-88; *idem*, "Four Tomb Groups from Jordan", *PEFA*, 6 (1953); F. Ma'ayah, "Recent Archaeological Discoveries in Jordan" *ADAJ*, 4-5 (1960) p.

114-16; *idem*, "Recent Discoveries in Jordan", *ADAJ*, 8-9 (1964) p. 47-55; G. R. H. Wright, "The Bronze Age Temple at Amman", *ZAW*, 78 (1966) p. 351-57; J. B. Hennessy, "Excavation of a Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman", *PEQ*, 98 (1966) p. 155-62; D. Gilead "Burial Customs and the Dolmen Problem", *PEQ*, 100 (1968) p. 18; V. Hankey, "A Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman", *Levant*, 6 (1974) p. 131-78.

(18) N. Glueck, "The Archaeological Exploration of El-Hammeh on the Yarmuk", *BASOR*, 49 (1933) p. 23, *BASOR*, 51 (1933) p. 9-18; *idem*, "The Earliest History of Jerash", *BASOR*, 90 (1943) p. 22; *idem*, "Some Ancient Towns in the Plains of Moab", *BASOR*, 19 (1943) p. 7-26; and the *AASOR*, volumes, *passim*.

his Wadi Zerqa hypothesis. Moreover, perhaps because Glueck never gave us maps of his Middle and Late Bronze finds, it has not been noticed that the number of sites from these periods north of the Wadi Zerqa is also not large, and, moreover, no period is represented by a large number of sites to the south of the wadi. Apparently the south had not received a very thorough survey, and this resulted in fewer sites being found here, especially since the Transjordanian plateau becomes more arid the further south one goes. Finally, it must be suspected, on the basis of Mittmann's survey of the north, that Glueck was not sufficiently familiar with Middle Bronze and Late Bronze pottery, with the result that his survey shows the distorted picture that throughout eastern Jordan there was a disproportionately low number of sites of the Middle and Late Bronze Age. This disproportion is not found in Mittmann's survey.

This does not and is not meant to discredit Glueck's surveys. The inadequacies of Glueck's surveys are stressed, rather, to emphasize an important rule in interpreting any surface survey: not only must all that has been found be taken seriously, but all negative evidence (that is, what was not found), and any conclusions drawn from such lack of evidence, have to be always treated with severe scepticism.

Glueck's southern boundary for his Middle Bronze II culture in eastern Jordan — the north bank of the Wadi Zerqa — is furthermore unacceptably arbitrary, and should have been rejected on principle from the very beginning, for it pays no attention to the real causes which separate unsettled desert regions and semi-arid steppelands from the traditional agricultural regions. As all who live in

Amman are aware, the Zerqa can hardly be seen as forming a boundary of this type since its rich supply of water supports farming on both the north and the south banks of the river. This is of course not in itself an argument for settlement south of the river, but it does point out the potentialities for settlement that were also then available, and it should prevent us from dismissing too lightly the positive archaeological evidence for settlement that we do have with strange theories about nomadic shrines with Mycenaean pottery and the like.

The striking contrast between the lack of Middle Bronze I archaeological remains in the Beersheba region south of the northern branch of the Wadi Gaza, and the very large number of sites in the much more arid region of the central Negev mountains raises similar questions. Of course, we ought not to assume the existence of extensive agricultural settlement in regions of relatively barren mountains and steppeland, such as the mountains of the central Negev and Sinai, when agriculturally more promising regions — such as the Beersheba Basin — are obviously lacking such settlement. We ought to ask, however, whether the people of the Bronze Age considered the Beersheba Basin more preferable for the kind of farming they pursued; or perhaps better put: since the sites in the Negev do after all exist, why didn't people at this time find the Beersheba region also suitable for farming, when they settled over such large regions of the more arid central mountains only twenty kilometres to the south of Beersheba?

The answer lies not so much in the relative amount of rainfall in the two regions, but in the amount of water which the crops in fact

receive.¹⁹ The Beersheba Basin is a large flat plain with less than 200 mm. of rainfall, and has a rich agricultural potentiality only with the support of a developed technology in both water storage and irrigation. Such a technology, alongside of widespread agricultural settlement in this region, was not common until towards the end of Middle Bronze II, and was never fully exploited in this region before the sixteenth century, A.D. No such knowledge in the conservation of water resources necessary to farm this rich region is known to have existed in Palestine during the Middle Bronze I period. The small number of MB I sites that there were in the region lay along the banks of the larger tributaries of the Wadi Gaza, and apparently exploited the naturally irrigated fields there.²⁰ On the other hand, the large flat plains of the Beersheba region offer admirable grazing range, and with a relatively high

(19) Indeed, too often, totally untenable hypotheses are made on the basis of rainfall patterns alone. So K. Prag, in her *Levant* article argues that the 100 mm. Isohyet both coincides with the continuation of the Indo-Turanian vegetation types and marks the border of the region of most dense settlement in the Negev. She presents the principle that the 100 mm. Isohyet in general marks the limits of the EB IV/MB I settlement in the Near East. Not only is Indo-Turanian vegetation found in patches south of the 100 mm. Isohyes line but the majority of the EB IV/MB I sites lie in areas which receive less than 100 mm. mean annual rainfall! (Cf. M. Evenari et alii, *The Negev*, 1971, p. 30: Sde Boker 76mm; Avdat: 83mm; Shivta: 86mm; cf. also, P. Mayerson, *The Ancient Agricultural Regime of Nessana and the Central Negeb*, 1960, p. 10: Bir Asluj: 86mm; Auja: 65mm). Moreover, the southern part of the Beersheba basin receives an annual rainfall of nearly 200mm (Evenari, p. 30: 195 mm; Mayerson, p. 10: 192mm), though it appears to be unsettled at this time. When taken alone, rainfall.

Isohyets are only indicative of agricultural potentialities in areas where large flat fertile plains are found. In the few areas of Palestine

water table accessible to shallow wells, is extraordinarily suited for a non-agricultural people.

The situation in the central Negev mountains is quite different. Here we find an annual rainfall of less than 100mm, not even half that of Beersheba. Nevertheless, in contrast to the sparsely settled Beersheba region, there are hundreds of EB IV/MB I sites scattered alongside narrow terraced fields in the small but fertile wadis which run down from the mountains between the barren rocky hills.²¹ Though the amount of water from rainfall at first appears prohibitively limited, water running down off areas of many square kilometres is trapped by the terraces constructed in the wadis which hold back the soil and allow the water slowly to percolate into the rich loess. The floods in the Negev bring to these agricultural patches an abundance of water, on the average equivalent to

and Syria which fit such a description, the limits of agricultural feasibility, without compensating factors such as the development of irrigation technology and storage, probably lies somewhere between the 200-300mm Isohyet rather than the 100mm line.

(20) Far more important than absolute rainfall for the displacement of agricultural settlements in the fringe areas of the Near East is the drainage network which presumably brought supplemental water to the fields. It is along the banks of these wadis that most settlements in the semi-arid regions are found during these early periods. This settlement pattern changes radically during the MB II period. I hope to demonstrate this in detail in the *TAVO* volumes now in preparation.

(21) The fertility of these wadis has long been known (Cf. P. Mayerson, *The Ancient Agricultural Regime*), but now is beyond cavil after the extensive experimentation of M. Evenari's team (*The Negev - passim*). It is also apparent from widespread Arab settlement of this region prior to 1948. The description of these people as "beduin" is more related to cultural heritage than indicative of nomadism. (Cf. E. Marx, *Beduin of the Negev*, 1967).

about 600 mm. of annual rainfall,²² an amount similar to the better regions of Palestine. In dry seasons it has been found that even a single flood caused by at least 10 mm. of rain is sufficient to produce a minimal crop. During the Iron Age, and especially during the Nabatean, Byzantine, and early Islamic periods, the technology of terracing and water control was expanded to include most of the major waterways in the central Negev as well, from Nissana to Subeita and the Wadi Abda'. Before the 1948 war, approximately 25,000 Arabs settled this region — many in year-round settlements. Run-off agriculture — not counting the raising of feed crops for their sheep and goats — furnished some 60% of their income. Wheat and barley, grapes, dates, and figs, fruit trees and winter vegetables were their basic crops.

A further important difference between the MB I sites here and the few that have been found in the Beersheba Basin is that the sites near Beersheba, as much as can be determined from what we know of the sites today — several of which have been excavated — were relatively compact villages, next to good water sources, very similar to what we find throughout Palestine and Transjordan during most periods of their settlement. Most of the Negev sites, however, give

rather the appearance of widely scattered homesteads, with individual dwelling units and corrals for flocks.²³ Larger sites, still maintaining however the appearance of a conglomeration of homestead-like structures, occur only in a few extraordinarily fertile and relatively well watered regions, such as near a major spring. The architecture of the Negev sites, with their round stone foundations, courtyards and corrals, is strikingly different from anything found in Palestine or northern Transjordan.²⁴ Even the burial practices of the MB I people in the Negev, characterised by a shallow cist, covered by a mound of stones, is in stark contrast to the shaft tombs and the cave burials which are the more typical burial places of the regions to the north.

The overall picture that we now have of the MB I sites in the central Negev, extending from the north-central Sinai, differentiates them from the MB I sites of eastern Jordan. Geographically and ecologically, there is nothing in the central Negev which resembles the fertile regions of eastern Jordan. Jordan can, by no stretch of the imagination, be understood as an agricultural "fringe" area. The central Jordanian plateau is *sui generis*, and the hill country, even far to the south of Karak, has more in

(22) There is an abundance of evidence for this; the estimate here is taken from the experimentations carried out by the above-mentioned Evenari team.

(23) Descriptions of these sites can be found in the publications of Nelson Glueck: "Explorations in Western Palestine", *BASOR*, 131 (1953) p. 6-15; "Further Explorations in the Negev", *BASOR*, 137 (1955) p. 10-22; "The Age of Abraham in the Negev", *BA*, 18 (1955) p. 2-9; "The Third Season of Exploration in the Negev", *BASOR*, 138 (1955) p. 7-29; "The Fourth Season of Exploration in the Negev", *BASOR*, 142 (1956) p. 17 - 35; "The Fifth Season of Exploration in the Negev", *BASOR*, 152 (1958) p. 18-38; *Rivers in the Desert* (1959); "An

Aerial Reconnaissance of the Negev", *BASOR*, 155 (1959) p. 2-13; "The Negev", *BA*, 22 (1959) p. 82-97; "Archaeological Exploration of the Negev in 1959", *BASOR*, 159 (1960) p. 3-14; "Further Explorations in the Negev", *BASOR*, 179 (1965) p. 6-29. See also Y. Aharoni, "The Land of Gerar", *IEJ*, 6 (1956) p. 26-32; *idem*, "The Negev of Judah", *IEJ*, 8 (1958) p. 26-38; *idem*, "The Ancient Desert Agriculture of the Negev: Early Beginnings", *IEJ*, 8 (1958) p. 231-268; "The Negev" in *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, D. W. Thomas, ed., (1967) p. 384-401; and also B. Rothenberg, *God's Wilderness* (1961); *idem*, *Timna* (1973).

(24) M. Kochavi, "The Excavation at Tell Yeruham", *BIES*, 27 (1963) p. 284-92.

common with the hill country of Palestine than it does with the Negev and Sinai.

The EB IV/MB I sites of eastern Jordan continue the tradition of village agriculture common to both Palestine and Jordan during the whole of the Bronze Age. Changes in settlement patterns are only regional and local changes, and in no way reflect the sweeping historical disruptions one is asked to believe in most of the literature on this period.

This is also true of the EB IV/MB I period on the West Bank of Jordan. Kenyon's and Albright's claims that this transition period somehow reflects a conquest of Palestine by semi-nomadic Amorites, who are known mostly by their tombs, pastoral wanderers in the hill country, who buried their dead after their return from seasonal migrations, is not even born out by their own excavations at Tell Beit Mirsim and Jericho. Both these sites show extensive, though shallow, occupation from this period.

Continued excavation and especially surface exploration throughout Palestine have brought to light numerous occupation sites from the EB IV/MB I period. Furthermore, when it is remembered that most burials during this period were in single interments, the proportion of known burials to settlements seems to be about the same as during the Late Bronze Age, when the custom of multiple burials with a single tomb — thus the use of fewer tombs — was widely practiced. Also the EB IV/MB I settlements are not usually found in the traditional grazing regions where one would expect to find them if the people had really been semi-nomadic shepherds. Most of the EB IV/MB I sites are located near the rich

agricultural fields of the Plain of Esdraelon, the Beisan Valley, along the rich alluvial stretches of the Wadi el-Far'ah, and especially in the Jordan Valley, on both sides of the river. In the hill country, however, except for a few cave dwellings, the MB I settlements are found next to the small fertile valleys scattered among the hills.²⁵ As already mentioned above, in the wide grazing plains of the Beersheba region, such sites are found only in very limited numbers, and there only where a minimal unirrigated farming seems possible. They are totally absent in the bedouin lands of the great Judaeac Desert.

Judging from such evidence — the evidence we now have — the culture of this period can be described as a typical village farming culture, in every way confirming the results of Glueck's and Mitmann's surveys of the northern Transjordan.

To summarize very briefly: the typical Bronze Age settlement of both Palestine and eastern Jordan can be characterized as that of small village agriculture. This type of settlement seems to be continuous throughout this entire area from the Late Chalcolithic period through the Late Bronze period. The heaviest concentration of settlements seems to be in those areas where rich and extensive fields are combined with plentiful water, especially the northern Jordan and Beisan Valleys. The settlements of the central Negev and northcentral Sinai form a separate fringe culture with its own regional history, is independent of the richer and more populous regions of the north.

Thomas L. Thompson
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(25) A detailed presentation of this material will be given in the above mentioned **TAVO**, volume.