Labaya of Shechem and the Politics of the Amarna Age

George Kufeldt

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Abstract
The Amarna Letters have been the object of many studies since their accidental discovery in 1887 at El-Amarna in Middle Egypt. Beginning with text copies and collations such as those by H. Winckler and L. Abel in 1889-90, C. Bezold and E. A. W. Budge in 1892, and Otto Schroeder in 1914-15, it was not long until what has come to be the definitive edition of these texts was published by J. A. Knudtzon in 1915. Since that time, another seven important tablets which were part of the original find at El-Amarna have been published by F. Thureau-Dangin and G. Dossin. The site yielded some dozen or so more tablets and fragments in the course of later excavations by German and British archaeologists. Similar documents have been added to the total Amarna corpus by discoveries at various locations in Palestine, including Tell el-Hesi, Taanach, Gezer, Shechem, Jericho, Megiddo, and Hazor.

Degree Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

First Advisor
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Third Advisor
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Subject Categories
Cultural History | Diplomatic History | Islamic World and Near East History | Political History

Comments

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LABAYA OF SHECHEM

AND THE

POLITICS OF THE AMARNA AGE

by

George Kufeldt

A Dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The Dropsie University

Philadelphia

1974
APPROVAL

This dissertation, entitled
LABAYA OF SHECHEM
AND THE
POLITICS OF THE AMARNA AGE

by

George Kufeldt
Candidate for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

has been read and approved by

[Signatures]

Date March 18, 1974
PREFACE

Many people have contributed to the writing of this dissertation. No one, however, has had such a direct and important part in the actual research and writing as has Dr. Jay D. Falk, the writer's adviser. My special thanks and appreciation go to him for his patience, his guidance, his time-consuming and thorough work on the manuscript throughout the several stages leading toward its completion. Although he worked under severe strain and hardship as a result of the illness suffered by those near and dear to him, he still found time to work with me in this long and sometimes frustrating writing project. I will always stand in debt to him for what he has done for me.

Thanks are due also to Dr. Abraham I. Katsh, Miss Sarai Zausmer, and Dr. David I. Owen for the help they gave in making this project possible. I want to express my appreciation to all those who instructed me in any way during my studies at Dropsie. I am sure that I received more from them than I was able to share with them. Finally, I would not forget the influence of Dr. Moshe Held who introduced me to the world of Assyriology and related studies, and thus started me on the road to the goal which this writing project symbolizes. Todah rabbah!
DEDICATED TO

my wife, Dena,

through whose great patience and

loving encouragement this project

finally has been completed.

אשה חיה ועבודת בצלת

(Proverbs 12:4)
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Amarna Letters have been the object of many studies since their accidental discovery in 1887 at El-Amarna in Middle Egypt. Beginning with text copies and collations such as those by H. Winckler and L. Abel in 1889-90,¹ C. Bezold and E. A. W. Budge in 1892,² and Otto Schroeder in 1914-15,³ it was not long until what has come to be the definitive edition of these texts was published by J. A. Knudtzon in 1915.⁴ Since that time, another seven important tablets which were part of the original find at El-Amarna have been published by F. Thureau-Dangin and G. Dossin.⁵ The site yielded some

²The Tell el-Amarna Tablets in the British Museum (London, 1892).
⁴Die El-Amarna-Tafeln, Vorderasiatische Bibliothek, II (Leipzig, 1915). The present writer will be using the reprint by Otto Zeller Verlagsbuchhandlung (Aalen, 1964).
⁵Thureau-Dangin, "Nouvelles lettres d'El Amarna," RA, XIX (1922), 91 ff.; Dossin, "Une nouvelle lettre d'El-Amarna," RA, XXXI (1934), 125 ff. These, plus other Amarna
dozen or so more tablets and fragments in the course of later excavations by German and British archaeologists. Similar documents have been added to the total Amarna corpus by discoveries at various locations in Palestine, including Tell el-Hesi, Taanach, Gezer, Shechem, Jericho, Megiddo, and Hazor.

Intensive and specialized study of the Amarna letters was led by W. F. Albright, as any random check of the bibliographies of Amarna resources will show. In turn, Albright was followed in these studies by some of his students, notably William L. Moran and E. F. letters discovered since Knudtzon's EA was published, have now been published in transliteration and translation by Anson F. Rainey, El Amarna Tablets 359-379, AOAT, VIII (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970).


See these relevant articles by W. F. Albright:


Campbell, Jr. Other specialized studies in the Amarna field have been done by J. de Koning, K. A. Kitchen, Wolfgang Helck, Ronald F. Youngblood, Paul Gilchrist, Kenneth Barker, to name only a few.

None of these, however, has attempted a detailed investigation of one of the important political personalities appearing in the Amarna letters, namely, Labaya, Prince of Shechem. It is our purpose, therefore, to attempt such a study of the life, political career, power, and influence of Labaya. Such a study will test the frequent appraisal made of Labaya that he, among all the

12E. F. Campbell, Jr., The Chronology of the Amarna Letters with Special Reference to the Hypothetical Coregency of Amenophis III and Akhenaten (Baltimore, 1964).


14Some of the above mentioned works do refer to Labaya, but usually only in passing. Even the study of the Labaya letters (EA 252-254) which is included in Gilchrist's work goes into the subject only briefly (see pp. 13-16). It must be noted here that, as will be seen later, while the name "Labaya" may be considered as being based on the root *1lb', for the sake of convenience the Anglicized form, without the aleph, will be used throughout this study.
Canaanite princes, "stands out as the leader of the anti-Egyptian faction."\textsuperscript{15} It will be seen that Labaya certainly was a unique personality among the Canaanite princes who were under the control of Egypt. It is our intention, by studying Labaya's political and interpersonal involvements with the other princes and with the Egyptian government itself, to present a clearer picture of the general situation which prevailed in the Amarna period, especially as it pertains to Syria-Palestine itself. So, in our study of Labaya of Shechem, we will view him from the following perspectives: as a man, as a Canaanite prince who was both an ally and an enemy to his fellow princes, and as a vassal prince under Egypt who was sometimes loyal and sometimes a rebel.

Method

No historical figure can be understood apart from his historical antecedents or apart from his total contemporary setting. Without question, this principle applies to Labaya, Prince of Shechem. We propose, then to follow this plan or method in our study concerning him. First, we plan to survey or sketch the development of the Egyptian Empire during the New Kingdom era, giving special attention to the kings of the Eighteenth

Dynasty (1567-1320 B.C.), since this is the period within which the "Amarna Age" falls. Included will be the chronological inter-relationships between Egypt and Syria-Palestine during this period, with some reference to the larger international setting. The development of the Egyptian control of Syria-Palestine in the areas of military and political administration, including the economic responsibilities of the vassal city-states to the Egyptian crown, will be explored as part of the background needed for an understanding of the specific situation in which Labaya lived and ruled. Of the kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty, most attention will be given to the main rulers of the Amarna period, Amenophis III (1417-1379 B.C.) and Amenophis IV or Akhenaten (1379-1362 B.C.). Knowledge of the life and times of both these pharaohs is most important since it is likely that Labaya's life and influence overlapped their successive reigns.

16 These are the dates followed in the various fascicles of The Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, various dates as published). Hereafter this series of fascicles will be referred to as CAH2. A convenient listing of the kings of the 18th Dynasty is found in William C. Hayes, "Egypt: Internal Affairs from Thutmose I to the Death of Amenophis III," CAH2, fasc. 10, pt. 2, inside back cover. Slight variation is seen in dates for the 18th Dynasty as accepted by different scholars. Hermann Kees, Ancient Egypt (Chicago, 1961), p. 347, for example, gives 1568-1318 B.C. as the limits.

17 For slightly differing dates, see E. F. Campbell, Jr., "The Amarna Letters and the Amarna Period," BAR, 3, p. 62.

18 Ibid., pp. 57-62. For more details concerning the chronology of the reigns of these two kings, see also Campbell's Chronology, pp. 103 ff.
The second part of our plan is to study Labaya as a man, as a prince and as a vassal, using the information gained from the background we will have examined to this point, and including the relevant Amarna letters. This means that some analysis must be made of those dozen letters which either were written by Labaya himself (EA 252-254), or which make specific or indirect references to him (EA 244-246, 249-250, 255, 263, 280, 289). Our analysis of these letters will not be a detailed linguistic study of them, but rather it will be a historical investigation of their content, including both the historical allusions and geographical references found in them. It is in the non-Labayan letters that most of the details concerning Labaya himself will be found, including whatever information is available relative to his relationship both with the kings of Egypt and the other Canaanite princes.

Also, since Labaya appears to have had some connection with the Habiru/‘Apiru people (see EA 289, etc.), it will be necessary to investigate the problem of the identity of this people in an effort to discover just how Labaya related to them.

Sources

The basic source for our study of Labaya will be the Knudtzon edition (EA) of the Amarna letters, already referred to above. The English translation of some of the pertinent letters by W. F. Albright and George E. Menden-
hall\textsuperscript{19} will supplement the Knudtzon work. The many studies in Amarna which have been published in various journals by Albright, Moran, Campbell, Mendenhall, \textit{et al.}, will be utilized as possible. The Egyptian historical documents will of necessity be limited to our use in English translations found in anthologies such as that edited by Pritchard (ANET), and that translated and edited by James H. Breasted, \textit{Ancient Records of Egypt}, Vol. II.\textsuperscript{20} Other valuable resource materials will be found in A. H. Gardiner, \textit{Ancient Egyptian Onomastica}, Vols. I and II,\textsuperscript{21} E. Meyer, \textit{Geschichte des Altertums}, I–III,\textsuperscript{22} D. B. Redford, \textit{Studies in the History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt},\textsuperscript{23} Albrecht Alt, \textit{Essays on Old Testament History and Religion},\textsuperscript{24} W. C. Hayes, \textit{The Scepter of Egypt},\textsuperscript{25} Cyril Aldred, \textit{Akhenaten},\textsuperscript{26} the various relevant fascicles already published in the newly revised edition of


\textsuperscript{20}(Chicago, 1927). Hereafter noted as \textit{ARE}, II.

\textsuperscript{21}(London, 1968). Hereafter cited as \textit{AEO}, I or II.

\textsuperscript{22}2nd ed. (Stuttgart und Berlin, 1907–1956).

\textsuperscript{23}(Toronto, 1967)

\textsuperscript{24}(Garden City, N.Y., 1968). Especially useful is his essay, "The Settlement of the Israelites in Palestine," pp. 175–204. Hereafter, this essay will be designated, "Settlement."

\textsuperscript{25}(Greenwich, 1968).

\textsuperscript{26}(New York, 1968).
The Cambridge Ancient History, Vols. I and II, 27 and a
host of other helpful resources which will be noted as the
study progresses.

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27 (Cambridge, fascicles published at various times
as completed). Hereafter CAH².
CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN HEGEMONY IN SYRIA–PALESTINE
DURING THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY

Every man and nation is the beneficiary of many influences, past and present, as well as specific and general. This was true in no small measure of Syria–Palestine during the Amarna Age and of the Canaanite princes who ruled this territory while it was under the direct control of Egypt at this time. Thus, it is important to take an overview of the main political, social and ethnic movements which contributed to the formation of Syria–Palestine as it was in the Amarna Period. Only in this way is it possible to understand the life and times, the friends and foes, of the one Canaanite vassal prince who is the special concern of this study, namely, Labaya, Prince of Shechem.

Syria–Palestine, the Crossroads of the Ancient Near East

The designation "Syria–Palestine" is being used throughout this study to describe that geographic unit which, in part or in the whole has sometimes been called "Syria,"¹ and portions of which in later times, have been

¹"Syria" is the usual translation of the biblical
known as "Palestine." Generally speaking, "Syria" (distinct from the modern country called "Syria"), will be used here to indicate that northern section which in ancient times was most often referred to as "Phoenicia." On the other hand, "Palestine" will be used to designate the territory most familiarly known as ancient "Israel," or "Canaan" (Kinahhi in the Amarna letters).

Geographically, then, "Syria-Palestine" denotes the territory which stretches the 350 miles or so from the Sinai or Arabian peninsula in the south to the Taurus and Amanus Mountains in the north, averaging only about sixty miles in width from the shore of the Mediterranean "Aram." Whether this term is a shortened form of Assyria or is derived from the Babylonian Suri is probably not possible to determine. See George A. Smith, The Historical Geography of the Holy Land, Harper Torchbooks (New York, 1966), p. 27. This is a reprint of the 1931 ed. of the original 1894 publication. Smith takes "Syria" to include all that is here designated as "Syria-Palestine."

2See Smith, Historical Geography, pp. 27-28, n. 5, for literature and a discussion of the conclusion that the term "Palestine" has come down to us through the Septuagint as the Greek form for the name of the land of the Philistines. Ironically, it is the name of their arch-enemies which has endured as the name for the land of the Israelites!

3Ibid., p. 28, n. 1. See also EA, Glossary, p. 1577, for references to Kinahhi in the Amarna letters.

Sea to the desert limits in the east. While it is traditionally considered as the southwestern extension of the Fertile Crescent, certainly it offers little from the agricultural and climatic standpoint in comparison with the other parts of the Fertile Crescent. Its primary geopolitical importance lies, rather, in its unique location between the lands and powers to the east and the west as they existed during most of ancient times, for it serves as "the only land bridge between the two continents of Asia and Africa." 

Thus, because of its location, Syria-Palestine was constantly the recipient, willingly and otherwise, of cultural influences which flowed to and through it from virtually every point of the compass. These east-west, north-south influences were evident at least as early as the beginning of the third millennium B.C. as the natural consequence


5 Ibid, p. 5. Some knowledge of the geography of Syria-Palestine is being assumed of the reader, so a review of the details is not considered necessary. Suffice it to point up the following additional resources for a fuller study of the geography of Syria-Palestine and its relationship to its history: Ephraim Orni and Elisha Efrat, Geography of Israel (Jerusalem, 1964); Y. Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, The Macmillan Bible Atlas (New York, 1968).

of mutual influences and a constant, if not always conscious, give and take of cultural and commercial goods between countries and peoples from Egypt to Babylonia.\(^7\)

By means of overland communication and by way of its sea-ports, Syria-Palestine became the natural channel of world trade by which raw materials and finished products were exchanged between east and west, north and south. Little wonder then that all political development in the ancient Near East tended toward the domination of Syria-Palestine by its neighbors, and that "possession of this key position assured supremacy in the world as it then existed."\(^8\)

The most common designation for Syria-Palestine by the ancient Egyptians, especially during the Eighteenth Dynasty, was the Egyptian term rtw, now generally vocalized as "Retenu,"\(^9\) the form which will be followed throughout the present study. Albrecht Alt has noted that during the Middle Kingdom, the Egyptians regularly used this term


\(^{8}\)A. Goetze, "The Struggle for the Domination of Syria (1400-1300 B.C.)," CAH², fasc. 37, p. 3.

\(^{9}\)Other spellings vary from Gardiner's Retjnu (AEO, I, passim) to E. Meyer's Rezenu (Geschichte, II, 2nd ed., pp 261, 396). Aharoni notes that the correct reading is uncertain "because the three Egyptian consonants r-t-n could be transcriptions of the Semitic consonants r/l-t/d/z-n" (Land of the Bible, p. 60). This explains Alt's reading of r-t-n as Canaanite ltn or ldn, and his resulting identification of Retenu with Lod/Lydda. Similarly, E. Meyer had contended that it should be read as Losan, interpreting rtw as being given that pronunciation by the ancient Egyptians. For a summary of these positions, see Gardiner, AEO, I, 148±.
to speak of "a monarchical state...which must be in Palestine."\textsuperscript{10} He asserted further that the town Lod/Lydda "was the chief city of the district of Rtnw and gave it its name."\textsuperscript{11} Few scholars, however, have accepted this narrow meaning of the term.\textsuperscript{12}

The earliest known occurrence of the use of "Retenu" is in the Story of Sinuhe,\textsuperscript{13} where it is used in the qualified form, "Upper" Retenu. Meyer took this to mean

\textsuperscript{10}Alt, "Settlement," p. 179.

\textsuperscript{11}Loc. cit. Thus, he wrote of "a kingdom of Lydda;" see his "Ein Reich von Lydda. Thesen zur ältesten Geschichte Palästinas," ZDPV, XLVII (1924), 169-185.

\textsuperscript{12}Most recently, Manfred Weippert has marshalled conclusive evidence which destroys Alt's old equation that Retenu = Lydda. He points out that from the Middle Kingdom until the Ptolemaic period, "rtnw is a fairly general name for Palestine-Syria whose origin (which must, in any case, be Egyptian, not Syrian!) and original meaning we do not know" (The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Palestine: A Critical Survey of Recent Scholarly Debate [Naperville, Ill., 1971], pp. 8-9, n. 14). This is the trans. by J. D. Martin of the German original, Die Landnahme der israelitischen Stämme in der neueren wissenschaftlichen Diskussion (Göttingen, 1967). See Gardiner, AEO, I, 148\textsuperscript{e}, for disagreement with Alt concerning Lod as a city-state. Albright related rtn to the city Luz (ldn) or biblical Bethel (Gen. 28:19; 35:6). See his The Vocalization of the Egyptian Syllabic Orthography, AOS, V (New Haven, 1934), p. 9, n. 23. Aharoni observes that it is unlikely that the name of one of these cities could have served at the same time as an all-inclusive title for Syria-Palestine, and probably rightly assumes that they were never important beyond their own locality. He is more amenable to Mazar's suggestion (EI, III (1954), 21) "that the name should be read Razanu (rzn) meaning 'the land of the rulers' (Heb. rwznym)" (Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 60).

"the highlands (Bergland) of Palestine." Gardiner points out that this is the only Middle Kingdom use of "upper" (Egyptian ḫrt) to qualify the term Retunu, and that "it appears to assume a single ruler for 'Upper Retjnu,' as though this were an area of limited extent." He quickly concludes, however, on the basis of the evidence from the Middle Kingdom:

Retjnu was used generically, as it were, for both Palestine and Syria, or for particular districts therein; at the level of the Lebanon it was called "Upper Retjnu;" down in the south it received no qualifying adjective.

On the basis of later texts from Egypt, it is clear that sometimes the Egyptians thought of Retenu in terms of their own country and divided it into Upper Retenu and Lower Retenu. Still, as Aharoni soberly reminds us:

It is difficult to say just where the boundary was between these two areas of Retenu, or if this was a geographically definable division. Possibly the border region was in the vicinity of the Plain of Jezreel.

During the 18th Dynasty, the term Djahy (d-h) was sometimes used to designate at least part of Palestine.

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14 Meyer, Geschichte, I, 261.
15 Gardiner, AEO, I, 142*-143*.
16 Ibid., p. 143*. Thus, he concurs with the opinion of Weippert, noted above.
17 Gardiner is surely correct (AEO, I, 148*) in his contradiction of Meyer's contention that "lower" Retenu meant "the flatlands of the Euphrates" (Geschichte, I, 600).
18 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 60.
19 See especially the Annals of Thutmosis III, ANET, pp. 234; 237-239.
but probably more often was used to denote Syria-Palestine as a larger unit, although the origin of the term is in no sense clear. The term Rete ·nu appears to have been in more common use, however.

A third term which came to be used during the New Kingdom for at least some parts of Palestine was "the land of Ḫurru" (ḥ-ṛ), the land of the Horites. This name obviously has its basis in the ethnic and cultural changes which resulted from the Hyksos invasions from the north in the early part of the second millennium B.C. The clearest evidences of this Ḫurrian influence are the many personal and city names of Ḫurrian origins which are found in documents of the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C. As will be noted below, the name "land of the Ḫurru" probably had ethnic connotations first, but later came to be used in the geographical sense.

What is probably the most familiar biblical term for Syria-Palestine, namely, "Canaan" (Ex. 6:4; Lev. 25:38,

20 Gardiner, AEO, I, 145*.

21 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 61. See Gardiner, AEO, I, 145*-146* for evidence of the confusion surrounding the meaning of the term.

22 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 61.

The term first appears in the inscription of Idrimi, king of Alalah (ca. 1450 B.C.), where he stated that he came to Ammiya in the "land of Kin'ani/u," the city of Ammiya being located on the Phoenician coast. The earliest Egyptian use of the name is in a victory inscription of Amenophis II (ca. 1450-1425 B.C.) who listed some 640 "Canaanites" (Egyptian kyn'w) among his captives in Retenu. While this use of the term seems to indicate an ethnic or social group since they are listed along with captives from among the Hurrian military aristocracy, the maryanna, there is evidence that in ancient times the aristocracy often included the merchant or trader class as well. It is noteworthy that this is "the only known native name for the entire district...(Phoenician and Hebrew Kn'nu, cuneiform Kinahhi, 24 See n. 3 above. Also, the article by R. de Vaux in JAOS, LXXXVIII (1968), 23-30; Aharoni, Land of the Bible, pp. 61 ff.


26 ANET, p. 246.

27 Aharoni points out some biblical references where "Canaanite" seems to be used in the sense of "nobles and merchants;" e.g., Isa. 23:8; Hosea 12:7; Zeph. 1:11; Zech. 11:7 (Land of the Bible, p. 61). He concurs with B. Maisler who made this suggestion in his "Canaan and the Canaanites," BASOR, 102 (1946), 11 ff. Albright takes a similar position in his "The Role of the Canaanites," p. 356, n. 50.
Kinahna)." The morphology of the term in the various
documents presents no real problem, for the Egyptian/West
Semitic laryngeal ' (ayin) is often written as h in the
cuneiform syllabic scripts. While the etymology of the
term is still debated, it seems reasonable to accept Mais-
ler's suggestion that kn'n meant "merchant, trader." Since
the most important and widely sought merchandise from these
merchants was the red-purple dye produced from the Murex
sea shell which abounded on the Phoenician coast, it seems
to have acquired a secondary meaning of "purple merchant."

The fact that in the Hurrianized Nuzi inscriptions of the
15th century B.C. the adjective kinasj (kinahhena), is
used in the sense of red-purple dye was interpreted by
Speiser to mean that the name of the place of origin had
given the name to the product. On the contrary, Albright
interpreted "Canaan" to be a West Semitic expression


30 Maisler, "Canaan and the Canaanites," pp. 7-12. He was followed by Albright who had originally taken it from the Hurrian *kinaazini (see his "Role of the Canaanites," p. 356, n. 50). A. S. Kapelrud retained this Hurrian explanation in his "Phoenicia," IDB, III, 800, however.


32 Ibid., p. 329.
meaning "belonging to [the land of] Purple," which still seems to leave open the possibility of a prior Hurrian connection. Much clearer is the more-or-less synonymous place-name "Phoenicia" which is directly based on the Greek phoinix, meaning "purple," and derived from the main product of the area, purple dye. In this case, of course, the product gave the ethnic designation for the people of the area.

Of special importance here is the fact that "Canaan" (Kinaḥhī, Kinaḥna) is found quite often in the Amarna letters. Here, as in the biblical and other uses, it is found in the narrower meaning of the term, referring primarily to the Phoenician coastal region, as well as in the wider meaning as the "general term for the whole region of Egyptian rule in Palestine and part of Syria." Indeed, as Aharoni observes concerning the phrase in the letter written to Amenophis IV by the King of Babylon: "[Ca]naan is your land and [its kin]gs are [your servants]!" (EA 8:25), by this time Canaan has been transformed into a political concept and has become the official name of the Egyptian province which included Palestine and southern Syria. In the north it extended up to the

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33 Albright, "Role of the Canaanites," p. 337.


35 See EA, Glossary, p. 1577.

36 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 62.
boundary of the Hittite sphere of influence, the Hittite kingdom being Egypt's strongest opponent in this period.\textsuperscript{37}

While the term "Canaanite" often had definite ethnic connotations in its biblical usage,\textsuperscript{38} this meaning appears to have been secondary. When used in this manner it referred to the Semites "who were the largest element in the population and who stamped their ethos on the culture and language."\textsuperscript{39} However, it was frequently used loosely by the Hebrews to indicate the general population which preceded them in Syria-Palestine. In the Amarna letters, "Canaan" is used in the same manner generally, having "neither an ethnic nor a political connotation, except in so far as it denotes an administrative area under Egyptian control."\textsuperscript{40} Thus, when the phrase "Canaanite (vassal) prince" is used in the following pages, it does not necessarily indicate an ethnic distinction. Although some of the vassals appear to have been Semitic in background, others must have had Hurrian and Indo-European blood in their heritage.

The cultural and political influences of lands to the north upon Syria-Palestine were felt at least as early

\textsuperscript{37}Loc. cit.

\textsuperscript{38}J. C. L. Gibson, "Observations on Some Important Ethnic Terms in the Pentateuch," pp. 217 ff.


\textsuperscript{40}Drower, "Syria, c. 1550-1400 B.C.," pt. 1, p. 11.
as the third millennium B.C. At about this time, many traders from the Mesopotamian and Anatolian areas began arriving in search of wood and other raw materials which they did not possess in their homeland. Soon followed by military forces, these traders opened the way for the ultimate conquest of northern Syria by Sargon I of Agade (ca. 2350 B.C.), and the subsequent infiltration of Babylonian religion and culture. Probably the most important, far-reaching aspect of Babylonian influence was the introduction of the Babylonian language and its cuneiform system of writing. This system of communication was to persist for centuries as the means of international and diplomatic correspondence, with the Amarna letters standing out as the classic example of this usage in Syria-Palestine.41 As a result of the great Amorite (Amurrû, "Westerners")42 movements between 1900 and 1700 B.C., as shown by the documentary finds at Mari and Alalah,


42 Perhaps the most definitive study on the complex origins and history of the Amorites is still Édouard Dhorme,
cultural contacts between Syria and Mesopotamia were so close as to produce a virtually identical culture from the Orontes Valley to the Zagros Mountains.\textsuperscript{43}

Albrecht Goetze\textsuperscript{44} has suggested that it was during the Amorite rule over Syria-Palestine that the feudalistic small city-state organization developed, forming the background of the situation which is so vividly reflected in many of the Amarna letters. This feudalistic pattern of city-states was developed even further by the Hurrians\textsuperscript{45}


\textsuperscript{43} Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites," p. 334.

\textsuperscript{44} Goetze, "Struggle for the Domination of Syria," p. 3; on the early Amorites, see O'Callaghan, Aram Naharaim, pp. 18-21.

who, as John Bright put it, "filled," northern Syria as well as Upper Mesopotamia by the middle of the second millennium. The Hurrian upper class, with their charioteers, the maryanna, were able to take over the best lands, with the result that "the rift between the rulers and ruled was not only economic and social, it was ethnic as well."47

The Hurrians were able to play an increasingly important role in the events and culture of Syria-Palestine during this period because the still largely unknown Kassites had replaced the Babylonian dynasty which had known such widespread power and influence under the great Hammurabi. This was especially true in North Syria where Hurrian culture was strongest and where Hurrian names

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47 Goetze, "Struggle for Domination of Syria," p. 3.

48 Since the Kassites did not reduce their language to written form, it is known to us primarily from other sources in which a few dozen words and a few hundred Kassite names have been distinguished; see Drower, "Syria: c. 1550-1400 B.C.," pt. 1, pp. 20-23, and the sources cited there. Much information comes to us from the kudurru or boundary stone stelae which the Kassites inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform. For the standard treatment of the kudurru inscriptions, see L. W. King, Babylonian Boundary Stones and Memorial Tablets in the British Museum (London, 1912).
abounded as a result. In the Amarna letters, Hurrian personal names are found among the local chieftains, such as Abdi-łęba of Jerusalem (EA 285-290), and some Hurrian glosses occur. The pharaohs who invaded Syria-Palestine in the fifteenth century included among their prisoners some of the Hurrian maryanna class. However, as Albright has shown by use of statistics, although there was some continuing Hurrian influence, Syria-Palestine was actually quite an ethnic mixture. In fact, the figures show that of the non-Egyptian names in the Amarna letters, the clear majority show Northwest Semitic background, followed closely by names of Indo-Aryan origin. Thus, Albright observed:

Evidently the proportion of Indo-Aryans decreases as we go downward in the social scale. Moreover, we find traces of the symbiosis of Hurrian and Indo-Aryans which was already well known from Nuzi, Mitanni and northern Syria. In all these areas, the highest-ranking patricians (maryanna) tended to have Indo-Aryan names, while the common people were overwhelmingly Hurrian in name.

This social, economic and political disparity within the ethnically diverse population during the Hurrian period resulted in inner strife and weakness in the ruling

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49 O'Callaghan, Aram Naharaim, p. 54; Speiser, "Hurrian Participation," pp. 256-261.
50 Ibid., p. 257, n. 42; EA, pp. 1551-1554.
51 ANET, pp. 245-246.
53 Ibid., p. 13; O'Callaghan, Aram Naharaim, pp. 56 ff.
class. The Egyptians and Hittites also were weak in Syria at this time. 54

Taking advantage of the situation, the Mitannians moved down from Upper Mesopotamia into Syria "to create a kind of Hurrian confederacy which was controlled from their capital," 55 while retaining the Hurrian culture. One of the most important of the Mitannian kings was Tushratta who came to the throne during the latter half of the reign of Egypt's Amenophis III (ca. 1417-1379 B.C.). The fact that seven of the Amarna letters (EA 17-21; 23-24) are friendly letters written by Tushratta to Amenophis III shows the congenial relationships which existed between the two countries at this time, relationships which were cemented in large part by means of marriages between the two royal houses. In view of the friendly relationships between the two countries in spite of Mitanni's obvious efforts to exercise control in Syria, Goetze is probably correct when he says:

One is led to assume that a formal understanding must have existed by which the coast of Syria and all of Palestine, including the region of Damascus, was recognized as an Egyptian sphere of influence, the rest of Syria being considered as Mitannian domain.56

Relations between Mitanni and the sleeping giant,

55 Loc. cit.
56 Ibid., p. 7.
the land of the Hittites, were not to be so congenial for long, however. With his accession to the Hittite throne, Shuppiluliuma (ca. 1380-1336 B.C.) was determined to make his country a great power once again, and by the time of his death, he had made good on his desires. After many clashes and battles with the Mitannians, many of which involved vassal princes of Egypt who ruled over various principedoms in Syria-Palestine, Shuppiluliuma became "the undisputed master of Syria and wielded more power than any of his contemporaries." Part of this was due to the fact that he took advantage of the unrest among the Egyptian vassal princes in Syria, and before long they came under the control of the Hittites. Also, strange as it seems, Egypt maintained "correct" diplomatic relations with the Hittites, in spite of tensions which developed between them, as reflected in Shuppiluliuma's letter to Amenophis IV (ca. 1379-1362 B.C.) upon the latter's accession to the throne (EA 41). It is understandable that such tensions would exist in view of the family ties between Egypt and

57 For summaries of the Amarna princes who were involved in the Mitannian and Hittite conflicts, see Kitchen, Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs, pp. 12-33; Redford, History and Chronology, pp. 216-225. For a survey of the history of the period, see Goetze, "Struggle for Domination of Syria," pp. 7-22; Kurt Bittel, Hattusha, the Capital of the Hittites (New York, 1970).


the Hittite enemy, the Mitanni throne. Not only that, but the incursions of the Hittites into Syria certainly were not friendly actions toward the Egyptians who had been in control there. Whatever the reason, Egypt apparently offered little outward resistance to the increasing power of Shuppiluliuma, and by the end of the Amarna Age, he was undisputed master of Syria. It was not until the Nineteenth Dynasty that Egypt began to exercise military power again in that area.

The cultural and political contact between Syria-Palestine and Egypt to the south began at about the same time as that between Syria-Palestine and the lands to the north and east. It must have begun at least as early as the 1st Dynasty of Egypt (ca. 2850-2600 B.C.), as shown by objects found at Byblos (ancient Gu'bla). These objects include dated Egyptian inscriptions from as early as Nebka, the last king of the Second Dynasty, with most of the remains at Byblos dating to the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. All such evidence (which cannot be cited here) supports W. F. Albright's conclusion that Byblos, located in the northern part of Syria-Palestine, was an Egyptian colony from the Second Dynasty to the collapse of the Old

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60 Goetze notes that "the situation suggests that Amenophis IV had no desire whatever to become involved in what he considered the internal affairs of Syria" ("Struggle for the Domination of Syria," p. 9). Perhaps it was simply the fact that he did not want to be caught between the Mitannians and the Hittites, and so he ignored both.
Kingdom in the time of Pharaoh II (from \( \text{ca.} \ 2600-2200 \) B.C.). \(^{61}\)

In the period from 2100 to 1900 B.C., during which Egypt was weak and the population in Syria-Palestine had sharply declined, \(^{62}\) a great deal of contact between these two areas is not to be expected. The so-called "execration texts" \(^{63}\) which were composed in Egypt during the Twelfth Dynasty (\( \text{ca.} 1991-1786 \) B.C.), however, do indicate that the pharaohs claimed control over Syria-Palestine. They also give further evidence of the Amorite movements of this period for the texts are replete with Amorite names. \(^{64}\) The evidence of excavations at sites such as


\(^{63}\) For historical evaluation of the execration texts for the 20th century B.C., see K. Sethe, "Die Achtung feindlicher Fürsten, Völker und Dinge auf altägyptischen Tongefässcherben des mittleren Reiches," Abh. d. Preuss. Ak. d. Wiss. Nr. 5 (Berlin, 1926); on the late 19th century B.C. statuettes, see G. Posener, Princes et pays d'Asie et de Nubie, Textes hiératiques sur des figurines d'envoiement du Moyen Empire (Brussels, 1940). Also, see W. F. Albright's discussions of these texts in: "New Egyptian Data on Palestine in the Patriarchal Age," BASOR, 81 (1941), 16-21; "The Land of Damascus between 1850 and 1750 B.C.," BASOR, 83 (1941), 30-36; "A Third Revision of the Early Chronology of Western Asia," BASOR, 88 (1942), 32. For a later summary of the discussion of these texts, see S. H. Horn, "The Relations between Egypt and Asia during the Egyptian Middle Kingdom" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1951). Some of these texts are found in translation in ANET, pp. 328-329.

\(^{64}\) See n. 42 above.
Ugarit, Qatna, Byblos and others in Syria-Palestine not only shows actual domination over this territory during the Twelfth Dynasty, but disproves the formerly-held concept that Egypt was largely self-contained and isolated from Asiatic influence.

The collapse of Egyptian power in the early part of the eighteenth century B.C. made it possible for the Amorite-Canaanite peoples of Syria-Palestine to develop their own artistic and cultural themes, although some of the earlier Egyptian and Mesopotamian influences continued. However, the direction of major influence was radically turned around when the Hyksos suddenly swept south out of Syria-Palestine, overran the delta area of Egypt and established their rule at Avaris (ca. 1725 B.C.).

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66 O'Callaghan, Aram Naharaim, p. 75.

67 For Albright's conclusion that the racial and linguistic differences between the Canaanites and the Amorites were almost negligible, see his "The Role of the Canaanites," p. 335. He concluded that the differences stemmed from the fact that the Amorites were strongly influenced by Mesopotamian culture, while the Canaanites were almost equally affected by Mediterranean and Egyptian culture. See also Kenyon, Amorites and Canaanites.

One of the earliest references to this invading people is that found in the Egyptian story of Sinuhe.\(^69\) In this story, they are referred to as Hegau-Khasut (Egyptian hq̃ h3swt), which John A. Wilson translates as "the rulers of (other) foreign countries."\(^70\) In view of the fact that most of the Hyksos names now known are probably Canaanite or Amorite, Albright noted that the ancient priest-historian, Manetho (ca. 280 B.C.), was correct in referring to the Hyksos as "Phoenicians,"\(^71\) although he misunderstood their name to mean "Shepherd Kings."\(^72\)

Since the Hyksos brought with them the hitherto unknown military instruments, the horse and chariot, Albrecht Alt deduced that this meant that they came originally from areas to the north of Syria, presumably Anatolia, and that they must have ruled in Syria-Palestine for some time before they moved against and into Egypt. Also, the fact that they settled in the delta area of Egypt seems to have made it possible for them to control Syria-Palestine as

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\(^69\) For the story of Sinuhe, see translations in ARE, I, § 494; AE pp. 14-29; ANET, pp. 18-22. See also Rainey, "The world of Sinuhe."

\(^70\) ANET, p. 20, n. 16.

\(^71\) Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites," p. 335; see also, Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 135, n. 32.

This invasion and ultimate control of at least northern Egypt by these foreign peoples, with its concomitant effect on the Theban rulers as well, has been described most aptly by John A. Wilson as "the great humiliation." This description is supported by the fact that no contemporary records of this period in Egypt have come down to us. How this could happen is explained by Wilson:

The answer lies in the nature and purpose of Egyptian texts, which asserted the eternal and not the ephemeral and which presented for eternity those aspects of life which were felt to represent most truly the gods' purposes for Egypt. In that psychology, there was no impulse for writing down the record of a great national humiliation.

It is only after the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt that some references to these foreigners are found, and these are given in less than complimentary terms. So, Queen Hatshepsut (ca. 1503-1482) declared:

I have restored that which was ruins, I have raised up that which was unfinished since the Asiatics (عمر) were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland, and the barbarians were in the midst of them, overthrowing that which was made, while they ruled in ignorance of Re.

Similarly, the ignominy of the Hyksos period is

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73A. Alt, "Settlement," p. 182. We would only note here that the continued control of Syria-Palestine by the Hyksos was seen by Alt as having had a profound affect upon the political and territorial division of this area, reflected in the Amarna letters. This viewpoint will be brought into this study in the next chapter where the divisions of Syria-Palestine are considered.

74Wilson, Culture, p. 154  
75Ibid., pp. 158-159.  
76ARE, II, § 303; ANET, p. 231.
reflected in the folk tale, preserved in the Papyrus Saliier, I, 1-3 (ca. 1223 B.C.), which tells how Prince Sekenenre of Thebes finally was able to throw off the yoke of King Apophis of the Hyksos. 77

The very weapons which had enabled the Hyksos to conquer the Egyptians may well have been their own eventual undoing as well. Chafing under many years of bondage, the Egyptians finally were able to combine their hatred for their overlords with their own skill with the weapons they had newly acquired from the Hyksos, and overthrow the Hyksos control. 78 While, as Wilson notes, "it is an ironical twist of history" 79 that no official source describing the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt exists, much, even if not enough, information is gained concerning this momentous event from the biography of Ahmose whose mother was Eben, and who served as a naval officer under three successive kings of the New Kingdom (Amosis I, Amenophis I, and Thutmose I). 80 In his biography he tells how the Hyksos capital of Avaris fell after three assaults on it, following which the war shifted to Palestine where the town of Sharuhen was besieged for

77 AE, p. 165-167; ANET, p. 231.
78 Wilson, Culture, p. 163.
79 Ibid., p. 164.
three years before it finally fell to the Egyptian forces. With the defeat of the Hyksos at Sharuhen, Egypt again was united under its own kings and gods, and the Eighteenth Dynasty was well established as the ruling power. Under the rule of this dynasty, Syria-Palestine was soon to become controlled by Egypt, and the stage was to be set for the "Amarna Age."

Empire-building During the Eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty

The domination of Egypt by the Hyksos had a profound and lasting effect upon the national psychology, especially at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty. For one thing, the previous "lofty complacency about Egypt's clear superiority to the nomadic and semi-nomadic neighbors across her borders" had suffered a rude shock. In order to prevent such a humiliation again, the army now became a most important arm of the crown, beginning with Amosis I, founder of the New Kingdom. James A. Breasted observed:

He was now at the head of a stormy army...for the next century and a half the story of the army will be the story of Egypt, for the army is now the dominant force and the chief motive power in the new state.83

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81 ARE, II, § 13; ANET, p. 233.
82 J. A. Wilson, "Egypt," IDB, II, 47.
During the earlier periods of Egyptian history the army was comparatively insignificant. With the Eighteenth Dynasty, however, "we meet for the first time with a large standing army organized on a national basis and officered throughout with professional soldiers." 84

At the head of the entire military complex was the Pharaoh himself who took to the field as Commander-in-Chief in major campaigns. The Minister of War was usually the Vizier, assisted by the "wrtw of the Ruler," 85 and an Army Council. The field army was organized into divisions, each a complete army corps in itself, and consisting of both chariotry and infantry. Such a division probably numbered about 5,000 men. 86 The infantry consisted of two main classes of soldiers, the trained or seasoned troops and the new recruits. While there was no cavalry

84 R. O. Faulkner, "Egyptian Military Organization," JEA, XXXIX (1953), 41. For a detailed study of the many facets of the military hierarchy of the New Kingdom, see Alan R. Schulman, Military Rank, Title and Organization in the Egyptian New Kingdom, Münchner Ägyptologische Studien, Nr. 6 (Berlin, 1964), hereafter noted as MRTO.

85 Faulkner takes this obscure title as having some possible military significance ("Egyptian Military Organization," p. 42). Breasted (ARE, II, § 695) translates it as "commandant of the ruler," while Schulman (MRTO, pp. 37-38, 138) translates it as "quartermaster." Since Breasted notes further (loc. cit., note d) that this officer was "a district commandant who delivered game and supplies for the prince's table," this would parallel the modern military usage of Schulman's term, "quartermaster."

86 Faulkner, "Egyptian Military Organization," p. 42. He accepts Breasted's estimate of the Egyptian army of four divisions at Kadesh under Rameses II as numbering 20,000 men in all (ARE, III, §§ 316-27).
as yet, the chariot forces, adopted from the Hyksos, apparently

took the first shock of battle, the infantry advancing behind them to exploit a tactical success or to stem the enemy's advances if matters went awry.87

Transportation of supplies needed by an advancing army was by means of pack-animals such as the donkey and mule. The more efficient ox-cart was added later by Thutmosis III (ca. 1504-1450 B.C.).88

Consolidation of the gains and progress made by Amosis I was continued by his son, Amenophis I. However, in spite of the declaration of Ahmose, son of Eben, that Amenophis I campaigned to "broaden the boundaries of Egypt,"89 T. G. H. James notes that evidence for aggressive activity in Asia by Amenophis I "is minimal."90 This appraisal is supported by Wilson in his note that

the first generations of the Eighteenth Dynasty carried on the earlier tradition of punitive raids into Asia rather than administrative incorporation of conquered territory.91

It is with Thutmosis I (ca. 1525-1512 B.C.), successor to Amenophis I, that we have the beginnings of the

87 Faulkner, "Egyptian Military Organization," p. 44.


89 K. Sethe, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie (Urk. IV), VII (Berlin, 1906), 2.

90 James, "Egypt: From Expulsion of the Hyksos to Amenophis I," CAH², fasc. 34, p. 23.

91 Wilson, Culture, pp. 173-174.
traditions which portray Egypt as a truly military state. Trained from his early life in the disciplines of the military, he ruled his country with the same kind of efficiency. 92

In theory, the king's right to rule grew out of his divinity, for it was believed that he was the son of the sun-god Amon-Re, who had begotten him and placed him on his throne. In fact, however, "the really solid basis of his power was his control of the machinery of government, including the army and the police," 93 to say nothing of his control of the legislative and judiciary branches of the state, and the priesthood. As a result, even the brief interlude under Queen Hatshepsut, when no great military expeditions were undertaken and when there may have been some decline in Asiatic occupation forces, did not materially affect the continuation of the strong position of the King.

Few would argue with Hayes' statement that Thutmosis III (ca. 1504-1450 B.C.) "proved himself to be, in- 92 See William C. Hayes, "Egypt: Internal Affairs," p. 3.

93 W. F. Edgerton, "The Government and the Governed in the Egyptian Empire," JNES, VI (1947), 154. See also W. Helck, Der Einfluss der Militärführer in der 18. ägyptischen Dynastie (Leipzig, 1939), for a discussion of the power struggle between the priest and the military in the government."
contestably, the greatest pharaoh ever to occupy the throne of Egypt." He was a "Napoleonic little man," not only because he was about the same physical size, but because he, like "the little corporal," excelled as a general and conqueror. A soldier by training, he had chafed for some twenty years under the obscurity imposed upon him when his aunt, the dowager queen, Hatshepsut, seized the throne upon the death of his father, Thutmosis II. Not satisfied to play the usual part of regent, Hatshepsut made herself, not queen, but the god-king. Although she ruled with great vigor and gave herself to much building and to foreign trade, Hatshepsut's powerful rule was finally broken by Thutmosis, and she suddenly disappeared from history.

Finally getting his chance, Thutmosis III devoted himself to the exercise of his military and administrative genius. He led no less than seventeen military campaigns into Asia, by which he established military and civil

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95 Loc. cit.
96 On the evidence of his mummy, Thutmosis III appears to have been less than five feet, four inches tall. See G. E. Smith, The Royal Mummies (Cairo, 1912), p. 34.
97 Ineni, mayor of Thebes, wrote of her: "The Divine Consort, Hatshepsut, settled the affairs of the Two Lands by reason of her plans" (ARE, II, § 341).
98 Wilson, Culture, p. 176. The reasons are not clear. Redford suggests that she died a natural death (History, p. 87).
control over an Egyptian empire that now included much of Syria-Palestine. In fact, within seventy-five days after he had seized the reins of the government of Egypt, he was already embarked on his great military career:

His majesty made no delay in proceeding to the land of DJahi (Syria-Palestine), to kill the treacherous ones who were in it.99

By means of his military campaigns, his power became so great that not only did his fame dominate Syria-Palestine for a century afterwards, but in his own country his throne name, Men-Kheper-Re, gave magical power and authority to scarabs for a thousand years.100 As it turned out, his intention "to extend the boundaries of Egypt, according as his father, Amon-Re, had commanded,"101 also involved the putting down of a "rebellion" which was actually a coalition of some three hundred princes of Syria-Palestine. The rebellion culminated in the famous Battle of Megiddo which Thutmosis won by means of daring military maneuvers in which he acted against his council of war.102

99 This is part of his official records of his reign; see ANET, p. 234; also see notes 3 and 9 on pp. 234-235. For a summary of his incredible accomplishments on his first campaign, as recorded in his Annals, in ARE, II, § 410. His Annals are inscribed on the walls of the temple in Karnak, and are translated with commentary in ARE, II, §§ 391-443. See also ANET, pp. 235-238.


102 Ibid., §§ 420-422; ANET, p. 235. For details of the Battle of Megiddo, see the following: H. H. Nelson, The Battle of Megiddo (Chicago, 1913); R. O. Faulkner, "The Battle of Megiddo," JEA, XXVIII (1942) 2 ff.; Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 141; A. Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs, pp. 189-193. An interesting parallel between the tactics of Thutmosis III at Megiddo and those followed by the
With the defeat of their uprising, the princes promised: "The countries of Retenu will never repeat rebellion another time!" Taking the part of the victor in stripping his vanquished enemies of all their possessions, Thutmosis still allowed them to live and to return to their homes after they had sworn an oath of loyalty to him. As a mark of vassaldom, they were sent home on donkeyback, Thutmosis' forces having taken their horses from them. Wilson observes that "never again did a Syrian-Palestinian group of such wide composition unite to confront Egypt."

In the years following, Thutmosis III seems to have met with little or no resistance from the Syrian-Palestinian princes who dutifully brought their annual tribute. In fact, the so-called "campaigns" following his initial expedition appear to have been primarily parades of armed strength and inspection tours in which he collected the tribute, consisting of cedar and other woods and precious and semi-precious stones. Perhaps the Hittites when they defeated Ramesses II at Qadesh is made by S. Yeivin in his article, "Canaanite and Hittite Strategy in the Second Half of the Second Millennium B.C.," JNES, IX (1950), 101 ff.

103 The Barkal Stela, ANET, p. 238.
104 For a listing of the booty taken, see ARE, II, §§ 434-35; ANET, p. 237.
most "military" of all the succeeding campaigns was against Qadesh on the Orontes River, during his sixth campaign. The prince of this city had been a leader of the coalition that Thutmosis had defeated at Megiddo, and this city appears to have been constantly fomenting revolt among the other Syrian cities. 108 So, Thutmosis proceeded to capture and to severely punish Qadesh. Taking its crops and other booty, he took the children of the chiefs also, bringing them to Egypt to be educated or indoctrinated into the Egyptian way of life. 109 Breasted was surely correct in interpreting this re-education of the children as having been undertaken in order that "they might be sent back gradually to replace the old hostile generation of Syrian princes." 110 Wilson observes:

The system seems to have worked well for Egypt, if one may judge from the continued loyalty—the almost fanatical loyalty—of some of these Asiatics in the troubled Amarna period. 111

For several reasons, Thutmosis III's eighth campaign seems to have been the climax of his military career. He led the first Egyptian army to defeat a Mitannian force on its own territory. 112 From this time onward, the kings


110 Ibid., § 463.

111 Wilson, Culture, p. 183.

of Babylonia and Assyria began to send congratulatory gifts to him. And, to crown it all, he was able to achieve the dream of his life, to erect a kudurru, boundary stone, beside that of his grandfather, Thutmosis I, just east of the Euphrates River. When he retired from war sometime in his eighth decade, Thutmosis III not only had extended the boundaries of Egypt as he had originally planned, but he had organized these conquered territories with resident garrisons, set up Egyptian high commissioners, and had provided for effective communications through a courier system.

With the accession to the throne of Thutmosis III's son, Amenophis II (ca. 1450-1425), we have what might be termed "a general being succeeded by a sportsman,"

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114 Ibid., §§ 476, 478. No contemporary record exists of Thutmosis I actually setting up a boundary stela at the Euphrates, although in his Tombos Stela he uses the term "boundary" when he says that "his southern boundary is as far as the frontier of this land, (his) northern as far as that inverted water which goes down-stream in going up-stream" (ARE, II, § 73), thus expressing his amazement that the Euphrates would flow southward instead of the "normal" northward direction as does the Nile!

115 Wilson, "Egypt," p. 49.

although Thutmosis III was amply described as a man of
great physical prowess,117 and Amenophis II led at least
two vigorous military expeditions into Asia. In his cam­
paigns into Syria-Palestine, Amenophis was able to show
that there would be no change in Egyptian policies and
control, especially by putting down the revolt begun by
the cities of the Biqa' in Syria at the death of his
father. In the first of his campaigns, he virtually
retraced the steps of his father in the Orontes area, re­
pressing revolts in cities such as Takhsy, Shamash-Edom,
Niy, and Tunip.118 His treatment of the rebellious chieft­
tains was intended to show that he would brook no further
rebellion, as his records on the Amada and Elephantine
Stelae indicate:

His majesty returned in joy of heart to his father
Amon, when he had slain with his own mace the seven
princes who had been in the district of Takhshi,
who had been put upside down at the prow of his
majesty's falcon-boat...six men of these enemies
were hanged on the face of the wall of Thebes...
the other foe...was hanged to the wall of Napata.119

Further indications of the position and influence
of Egypt at this time are found in other inscriptions of
Amenophis II which claim that delegations from the Hittites,

117 See the Armant Stela, ANET, pp. 240 and 243, in
which his skill as an elephant hunter and bowman are
described.

118 ARE, II, 780-790; ANET, pp. 245-48; AEO, I,
151*.

119 The Amada and Elephantine Stelae, ANET, p. 248.
from Naharin, and from Shanhar\textsuperscript{120} came bearing gifts "in order to beg peace from his majesty, seeking that there be given to them the breath of life."\textsuperscript{121} The similar bringing of tribute by the Mitanni is described as "a mighty occurrence, it has never been heard since the times of the gods. This country which knew not Egypt beseeches the Good God."\textsuperscript{122}

In his second campaign, Amenophis II fought a battle in the general area of Soco, probably modern Tell er-Ras, located some ten miles northwest of Samaria.\textsuperscript{123} Through this victory, he was able to bring back to Memphis some 90,000 Syrian-Palestinian prisoners. In the list of captives were some 127 princes of Retenu, 179 brothers of princes, 3,600 \textit{pr.w},\textsuperscript{124} 15,200 Shasu, 36,300 Kharu, 15,070 Neges, and some 30,652 adherents/families connected

\textsuperscript{120}Shanhar is probably biblical Sin'ār or Babylon. See Gen. 10:10; 11:2. Gardiner discusses this term in \textit{AEO}, I, 209*-212*.

\textsuperscript{121}\textit{ANET}, p. 247. \textsuperscript{122}\textit{ARE}, II, § 804.

\textsuperscript{123}W. F. Stinespring, "Soco," IDE, IV, 395. This Soco has been identified with No. 67 of the topographical lists of Thutmosis III; see Aharoni, \textit{Land of the Bible}, p. 149; \textit{ANET}, pp. 242-243; \textit{ARE}, II, § 401. It is in the vicinity of the Sharon.

\textsuperscript{124}W. F. Albright long ago showed that the unvocalized Egyptian form \textit{pr.w} points to the spelling \textit{Apiru}; see his \textit{The Vocalization of the Egyptian Syllabic Orthography}, p. 42. See also A. Goetze, "The City Khalbi and the Khapiru people," BASOR, 79 (1940), 32-34.
with them. This is the first time that the 'pr.w or 'Apiru-people are mentioned in the Egyptian records. It will be seen, however, that they played an important role in the Amarna letters just a few years later. Thus, a brief examination of what is known of their background must be made.

From this time on until the middle of the twelfth century B.C., there are a number of references to the 'Apiru in the Egyptian texts where they are usually described as "foreign labourers" in the vineyards, stone quarries, and in the army, consistently in menial roles. However, this is probably because they were listed as prisoners of war, and so were slaves. That they were listed immediately following or with the princes of Retenu

125 ANET, p. 247. See n. 48 (loc. cit.) which points up the variations in the figures given in the text and the actual totals. In his n. 47 (loc. cit.), Wilson observes: "The appearance of the Apiru... in a list of Asiatic captives is unusual. They are listed as the third element in a list, preceded by princes and princes' brothers(?), followed by three terms having geographic connotation--Shasu, the Bedouin, especially to the south of Palestine; Kharu "Horites," the settled people of Palestine-Syria; and Neges, perhaps "Nukhashshe," the people of northern Syria... The Apiru are notably greater in number than the princes and princes' brothers; they are notably fewer in number than the three regional listees or the retainers (or families). It is quite clear that the Egyptians recognized the Apiru as a distinct entity from other peoples, clearly countable." See also AEO, I, 184*; B. Maisler, "Canaan and the Canaanites," p. 9.

in Amenophis II's list of captives,\textsuperscript{127} really says nothing about their original status in their Syrian-Palestinian homeland, either whether they were of the ruling class or were dependent upon the elite groups with which they were listed.\textsuperscript{128}

The problem of the identity of the 'pr.w has been discussed for many years among scholars, with varying conclusions. Much of the discussion centered in the early days on whether the 'pr.w had some connection with the biblical Hebrews.\textsuperscript{129} With the discovery of other inscriptions, especially texts from Ugarit published by Ch. Virolleaud in 1940,\textsuperscript{130} a direct connection between the 'pr.w and Syrian-Palestinian sources seemed to be unfold-

\textsuperscript{127} See n. 125 above. See also ANET, p. 261, where in the lists of Ramesses III they appear along with maryannu.

\textsuperscript{128} Albright argued, by analogy, that since Sutu is a generic term for "Bedouin" in the Amarna letters where they are listed along with the Habiru in EA 195, the listing of the 'pr.w along with the Shasu in the Amenophis II text shows that "both were donkey nomads but the 'Apiru were less nomadic than the Sutu" ("Amarna Letters," p. 15). For full treatment of the Shasu, see R. Giveon, Les bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens (Leiden, 1971); W. A. Ward, "The Shasu Bedouin," JESHO, XV (1972), 35-60. Giveon contends that the Shasu (Egyptian ḫsw) originated in Transjordan and in all cases where they are found elsewhere they are there because of migration or forced transfer (Les bédouins, p. 235). Ward disagrees, saying they were a social class, not an ethnic group, and that their presence outside Transjordan simply shows they were wandering mercenaries or robbers. Also, their name probably is from an Egyptian root meaning "to wander about" ("Shasu," p. 59).

\textsuperscript{129} On this discussion, see Greenberg, Hab/piru, pp. 10-11.

\textsuperscript{130} Ch. Virolleaud, "Les Villes et les corporations du royaume d'Ugarit," Syria, XXI (1940), 123 ff.
ing. In these tax lists of NQMD, king of Ugarit, the un-
vocalized Ugaritic \( \text{ṣprm} \)\(^{131} \) is paralleled by the term,
\text{SAG.GAZ}, a variant of the long-familiar \text{SA.GAZ}. It seems
clear that the people identified by the logogram, \text{SAG.GAZ}
were the same as those termed \( \text{ṣprm} \), and there seems little
doubt that the latter is a Canaanite equivalent of the
Egyptian \( \text{ṣpr.w} \), with which it is contemporaneous.

The term \text{SA.GAZ} is found in documents as early as
the Ur III Dynasty (ca. 2050 B.C.), and as late as the Neo-
Assyrian period (seventh century B.C.).\(^{132} \) It is found
frequently in the Sumero-Akkadian lexical texts,\(^{133} \) where
it is equated with the Akkadian \( \text{ḥabbātu} \), meaning "robber,
plunderer."\(^{134} \) As early as 1894, Joseph Halévy noted that
\text{SA.GAZ} must be the Sumerian form of the Akkadian \( \text{saggāšum} \),
"murderer, destroyer," so he, followed by Benno Landsberg-
er in 1930, interpreted the pseudo-logogram as meaning

\(^{131} \) On the Ugaritic form, \( \text{ṣprm} \), with the Canaanite
plural ending, see Mary Gray, "The Ḫ̄abirū-Hebrew Problem
in the Light of Source Material Available at Present,"
\text{HUCA, XXIX} (1958), 160-163.

\(^{132} \) See Greenberg, Ḫ̄ab/piru, pp. 15-19; Jean Bot-
téro, \text{Le Probleme des Ḫ̄abiru, Cahiers de la Société Asis-
atique, XIII} (Paris, 1954), pp. 3-6. For the latest sum-
mary of the Ḫ̄abiru problem, with full listing of all texts,
see Bottéro, "Ḫ̄abiru," \text{RLA, IV} (1972), 15-21.

\(^{133} \) For relevant selections of these lexical texts,
see Bottéro, \( \text{Ḫ̄abiru} \), pp. 141-143; Greenberg, \( \text{Ḫ̄ab/piru} \),
pp. 54-55.

\(^{134} \) \text{CAD, VI}, 13-14; W. von Soden, \text{Akkadisches Hand-
wörterbuch} (Wiesbaden, 1959 ff.), p. 304. Hereafter \text{AHw}.
"killer, one who knocks down." In basic support of this position, Greenberg has noted:

There is now more reason than ever to believe that SA.GAZ is a pseudo-ideogram for šaggāšu...it has now been reenforced by the Ugaritic cuneiform writing SAG.GAZ. Such variations in signs with consistency in sound make it probable that the writing was phonetic; true logograms do not act that way.

At the same time, however, Greenberg pointed out that the meaning of the Akkadian šaggāšu, "destroyer, murderer," went beyond the character of the group so described and recognized within certain social classes in the ancient Near East. Also, since šaggāšu is a perfectly good Akkadian word, Greenberg could see no reason for glossing the Akkadianized SA.GAZ with the somewhat less scurrilous ḫabbātu, "plunderer." Therefore, he suggested this solution:

Since šaggāšu could dispense with a gloss had it carried its normal Akkadian value, the possibility suggests itself that in this case it did not have its normal value. If the name of the class in question were colored, say, with the connotations of West-Semitic *šgs...it might then have carried the appropriate meaning, 'disturber', 'one who is restive'. This West-Semitic coinage, when taken over into Akkadian, might well have required qualification to distinguish it from Akkadian šaggāšu 'murderer'. Such qualification might have been

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136 Greenberg, Ḥab/piru, pp. 88-89.
the function of the gloss ḫabbātu, a term presumably more in consonance with the nature of the group. 137

Of direct importance for the present study is the fact that the logogram SA.GAZ, or some variation of it such as SA.GAZ.ZA or SA.GA.AZ, is found nearly sixty times in the Amarna letters. 138 There the term often referred to brigands who suddenly swooped down on a town or who often united with disgruntled vassal princes of Syria-Palestine. Thus, references to them in the letters are usually pleas to Egypt by the vassal princes for help against them. In 1888, A. H. Sayce discovered that in EA 290 Abdi-Ḥeba of Jerusalem used the term "Ḥabiru" (cuneiform ḫa-bi/pi-ru) to describe a similarly antagonistic people 139 against whom he was writing for help. It is now generally accepted that although only Abdi-Ḥeba uses the term "Ḥabiru" in his letters (EA 285-290), these are the same people who in other Amarna letters are called SA.GAZ or some variation of it. 140 Hugo Winckler concluded as early as 1895 that when Amarna letter writers other than Abdi-Ḥeba wanted to

137 Ibid., p. 89.
138 See EA, pp. 49-53.
139 A. H. Sayce, "Babylonian Tablets from Tel El-Amarna, Upper Egypt," Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, X (1887-1888), 496.
140 See the excellent brief survey of the history of the problems inherent in the SA.GAZ = ḫabiru equation in Greenberg, ḫab/piru, pp. 3-12.
refer to the Šabiru, they simply used the SA.GAZ logo-
gram. This equation made rapid headway in scholarly
circles, especially among those who wanted to connect the
SA.GAZ/Šabiru with the biblical Hebrews and with the
Israelite invasion of Palestine. Among those who had
serious doubts about Winckler's contention was J. A. Knud-
tzon who found it difficult to answer what was for him ein
grosses Rätzel: If the SA.GAZ = Šabiru equation is so
clear, why is it that it is only in the Abdi-Šeba letters
that they are referred to by the Semitic name Šabiru while
elsewhere in the Amarna texts the term SA.GAZ is always
used? However, he did admit that the SA.GAZ seemed to be
more closely related to the Šabiru than either seemed to be
to the nomadic Sutu, although there must have been some
similarities in manner of life and actions.

Further support for the SA.GAZ=Šabiru equation came

141 H. Winckler, Geschichte Israels (Leipzig, 1895),
I, 18 ff.
142 For a statement of the generally accepted nega-
tive verdict on this position today, see E. F. Campbell, Jr.,
143 EA, p. 51.
144 Ibid., p. 52.
145 The ethnic origins of the Šabiru and the Sutu,
however, were not the same. See n. 128 above. Also, for
further discussion by Knudtzon, see EA, pp. 45-46; for
other Amarna references, see the glossary, EA, p. 1580.
George Mendenhall is probably correct in seeing the Sutu as
"true nomads" (as Albright above) in the Amarna period, and
thus since they had no permanent places of residence, "they
can, like the modern Bedouin, be safely regarded as statisti-
cally and historically negligible" ("The Hebrew Conquest
of Palestine," BAR, 3, p. 103.)
from an Amarna letter which was published by F. Thureau­Dangin just seven years after Knudtzon had expressed his doubt and puzzlement about it.\(^{146}\) In this letter, written by Shuwardata of Keilah to Amenophis IV, it is stated that the writer and Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem were united in their fight against "the chief of the SA.GAZ."\(^{147}\) A reasonable assumption would be that since in his own letters Abdi­Heba spoke of his own enemies as the Ḥabiru, the enemy here referred to by the logogram SA.GAZ was the same.

It has long been observed\(^{148}\) that at least in one instance in the Amarna letters where SA.GAZ is used (EA 299:26), it is written with the phonetic complement -tu₄ (T₂M), i.e., \(\text{LUS} \text{SA.GAZ.MES} tu₄\). Such a writing may be understood to mean that the logogram was to be read as Ḥabbātu₄(m), even though in line 24 it is written simply \(\text{LUS} \text{SA.GAZ.MES}\), which is probably to be read as Ḥabirū. It is certain, as Bottéro notes,\(^{149}\) that the -tu₄ ending makes no

\(^{146}\) This was his publication of Louvre Tablet AO 7096, now generally known as EA 366, in "Nouvelles lettres d'el-Amarna," \(\text{RA}, \text{XIX} \) (1922), 99 ff; see Rainey, \(\text{EA 359-379, pp. 28-31}\).

\(^{147}\) EA 366:2-21 describes the conflict. Here we adapt from Albright's translation of lines 12 and 21: "the chief of the 'Apíru" (ANET, p. 487). Greenberg translates simply: "SA.GAZ-man" (Hab/piru, p. 45). Rainey transliterates only as 'Apíru (EA 359-379, pp. 29, 31).


\(^{149}\) Bottéro, Ḥabiru, p. 110, n. 2.
sense if it is read with the Akkadian equivalent ḫābirū in line 26. This example would support the conclusion of M. B. Rowton that both Akkadian terms, ḫabbātu and ḫābiru, were used with such a vague difference in meaning that the Sumerian SA.GAZ served for both. 150

Assuming that SA.GAZ = Ugaritic 'prm/Egyptian 'pr.w, and that SA.GAZ = Akkadian ḫābiru, it is clear that the forms 'prm/ 'pr.w and ḫābiru must be reconciled. The solution lies in the differences inherent in the mode of writing which was employed in each case, i.e. alphabetic versus syllabic writing, albeit both were cuneiform. Since the Akkadian language has lost the Semitic (ayin), this glottal stop sound is represented in the Akkadian cuneiform script as h, although in other instances an Akkadian h might approximate the West Semitic h, h, or h. 151 As seen above, the initial ayin of the Ugaritic 'prm confirms the equivalence with the Egyptian 'pr.w. A related ingredient is the middle radical which in the Egyptian/Ugaritic words shows as p while in the Akkadian ḫābiru it is obviously a h. It is to be noted that the Egyptian sources offer no real difficulty since their renderings of foreign h and p


and vice versa, show an easy or common interchange of these labials.\textsuperscript{152} The evidence from Ugaritic is even more convincing,\textsuperscript{153} for, like other Semitic languages, Ugaritic shows a definite shifting between $p$ and $b$.\textsuperscript{154} Lewy had rightly pointed out that since the population of Ugarit included Hurrian elements, it is these Hurrians who "are responsible for a confusion in the rendering of Semitic $b$ and $p$ because their scribes did not distinguish between voiced and voiceless stops."\textsuperscript{155} Thus, for example, the name of the Hurrian goddess Hepat appears in the Ugaritic texts as both $hpt$ and $hbt$. It should not be overlooked that Akkadian itself adds to the problem by the fact that the syllable $bi$ (BI) may also be read $pi$, so $ha-bi-ru$ could also be read $ha-pi'-ru$.\textsuperscript{156} In view of the evidence, then, there seems little doubt that the Egyptian/Ugaritic

\textsuperscript{152}See G. Posener, "Textes Égyptiens," in Bottero, Habiru, p. 165.


\textsuperscript{155}J. Lewy, "A New Parallel Between Ḫābirū and Hebrews," HUCA, XV (1940), 48, n. 7. This was pointed up earlier by E. A. Speiser in his "Ethnic Movements in the Near East in the Second Millennium B.C.," AASOR, XIII (1933), 26; 38, n. 93. For further details, see his Introduction to Hurrian.

\textsuperscript{156}See W. von Soden, Das Akkadische Syllabar, ANOR, XLII, (Rome, 1967), No. 140.
root is approximated by the Amarna Canaanite-Akkadian habiru as found in the Abdi-Heba letters. However, such equivalency across language and dialectical boundaries still leaves unresolved the question of correct spelling,\textsuperscript{157} and the related even more important problem of possible etymology. There seems to be no question that habiru is not an Akkadian word per se, but is "an Akkadianized form of the...West Semitic root."\textsuperscript{158} The problem of the correct root, resulting from the varying orthography as noted above, led Weippert to note:

It comes, therefore, as no surprise that $*$āb/piru and $*$āpiru and $*$āpiru have all been suggested. A decision on the question would perhaps be possible if a convincing etymology for āpiru could be found, but all the suggestions proposed so far seem to me to be satisfactory.\textsuperscript{159}

Greenberg is no less discouraged when he notes also that "the derivation of Hab/piru is still obscure."\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{157} Consequently, Greenberg entitled his study of this problem The Hab/piru, indicating obvious uncertainty; Rowton used the term "Hapiru" (see n. 150 above); Bottéro (see n. 132), Lewy (see n. 155) and M. Gray (see n. 131) use variations of "Habiru." Perhaps the most common form is that used by Albright, Campbell, Wilson, and others is āpiru, following the Ugaritic/Egyptian writing.

\textsuperscript{158} This is from a note written by Lewy to Bottéro who quotes it in his Habiru, p. 163. Similar opinions were expressed to Bottéro by von Soden, B. Landsberger, and A. Goetze (Bottéro, Habiru, pp. 158-162).

\textsuperscript{159} Weippert, Settlement, p. 81.

\textsuperscript{160} Greenberg, Hab/piru, p. 90.
The inconclusiveness regarding the etymology of Habiru/'Apiru requires at least a brief survey here of the possibilities which have been suggested for each of the two root, *'br and *'pr. One of the early defenders of the root *'br as the basis of Ḫabiru was Julius Lewy, supported later by Mary Gray and others.161 Lewy proposed that the Akkadian form Ḫabiru goes back to a West Semitic *'ābir, "he who crossed (the frontier)," i.e. "the foreigner."162 Thus, as noted above,163 habiru would be an Akkadianized form of a West Semitic term. It would appear, then, that the root was used as an apppellative noun describing a class of people "'who cross or have crossed boundaries,' 'immigrant.'"164

161 Lewy, "Ḫabirū and Hebrews," HUCA, XIV (1939), 604, n. 89; Gray, "Ḫabirū," pp. 135-202; Barker, "Amar­na Canaanisms and Canaanite Vocabulary," pp. 88 ff; see now George E. Mendenhall's very recent essay, "'Apiru Movements in the Late Bronze Age," in his The Tenth Generation (Baltimore/London, 1973), pp. 122-141. There he states: "It is now possible to give a sound and historically grounded etymon for the term 'Apiru. It is simply the common Semitic root 'BR, 'to cross [especially a boundary],' the semantic equivalent of the Akkadian etegu" (p. 140).

162 Lewy, "Ḫabirū," p. 604. Lewy adds (loc. cit.): "The term occurs, comparatively speaking, only in a very limited Akkadian sources and certainly is not one of the current Akkadian words for 'foreigner.' Since, consequently, the word Ḫabiru was applicable only with regard to a special type of foreigner, and since... the Ḫabiru texts from Nuzi deal with servants, the conclusion suggests itself that Ḫabiru had the specific sense of 'foreign servant,' or the like."

163 See n. 158 above.

164 Gray, "Ḫabirū," p. 171. Speiser had suggested a similar etymology in his "Ethnic Movements," p. 40, n. 96. See now n. 161 above where Mendenhall is quoted as supporting this basic interpretation also.
The root *špr has led scholars in several directions in search of etymologies. Albright once took it to have its origin in an Egyptian word *špr which means "ship's crew," which he interpreted as referring to manual laborers. At the end of his long career, however, Albright connected the root with the Semitic *špr, "dust," following the suggestion of E. Dhorme and R. Borger, and thus vocalized it as 'Apîru, "dust-covered." Thus, Albright contended that the 'Apîru were the dusty-ones who are dusty because they are caravaneers who trudge along in the dust behind their donkeys, mules or chariots. From this, it was a relatively easy step for him to see the biblical Abram, the Hebrew (šãbrî), as Abram, the Donkeyman or Caravaneer. He supported this position by asserting that the Akkadian term, šabbātu, "robber,

plunderer,"\(^{170}\) had this meaning only secondarily, and that it originally meant "tramp, wanderer, roving agricultural worker, donkey driver."\(^{171}\) Some support for this position might be read into the interpretation given by the editors of the \textit{CAD} when they state that the \textit{SA.GAZ} = ʰabbātu equation "is possibly to be connected with ʰabātu ['to move across, to make an incursion']\(^{172}\)...as referring to migratory workers or 'displaced persons.'"\(^{173}\) Albright took his reasoning one step further when he stated that the root \textit{pr} developed into the later \textit{šabiru}, "one from beyond (river or boundary)," as a homonym to the fairly rare thirteenth and twelfth centuries B.C. term ʰa-bir-a-a = ʰabirayu/a.\(^{174}\) He later explained the development as through the above noted interchange of the labials \textit{p} and \textit{b} and through popular etymology after the donkey caravaneers were forced into other occupations by the changing use of mules and wagons.\(^{175}\) Albrecht Goetze,\(^{176}\) followed by Greenberg,\(^{177}\) also

\(^{170}\) See n. 133 above and related discussions.

\(^{171}\) Albright, "Amarna Letters," p. 16.

\(^{172}\) \textit{CAD}, VI, p. 12, meaning D.

\(^{173}\) Ibid., p. 14.


\(^{175}\) Albright, \textit{Archaeology, Historical Analogy}, p. 40. See p. 51 above and notes 153-156.

\(^{176}\) As stated by Goetze in a personal note to Bottero who quoted it in his \textit{Ḥabiru}, pp. 162-163.

\(^{177}\) Greenberg, \textit{Ḥab/piru}, p. 91.
accepted the root āpr, but related it to the East Semitic word eperum, to furnish (somebody) with food." 178 Thus, āpir was taken as a verbal adjective meaning "one provided with food." This obviously would emphasize the dependent status of the Habiru, an appraisal which cannot be completely validated. Greenberg himself offers the main objection to this theory: "lack of evidence for a West Semitic *ēpr which would yield such a meaning." 179

In view of the differing approaches to the possible roots, a really certain etymology is difficult, if not impossible. 180 Argumentation on purely linguistic grounds is always dangerous, especially when a term has a long history, or when similarity of sound becomes a dominant ingredient. 181 To compound the matter, the term Habiru/ 'Apiru is never defined in any of the texts in which it is found. 182

However, when the linguistic and historical evidence is combined, it seems to the writer that the root

178 See von Soden, AHw, p. 223, where it is defined as verköstigen, versorgen. Also, see CAD, IV, 190.
179 Greenberg, Hab/piru, p. 91
180 See the statements by Weippert and Greenberg on p. 52 above.
181 Weippert, Settlement, pp. 82-83.
182 Bottero, "Habiru," p. 27.
ůbr is the most likely choice. If Lewy's suggestion of a West Semitic *ʿābir, "he who crossed a boundary," is accepted, it certainly fits in with the description of the ḥabiru in the texts. As we shall see later, they were usually foreigners, people away from their homes, although they may not have really crossed national boundaries in our sense. They were just not natives of the place in which they were when they were referred to in the texts. They often were equated with the ḥabbātū, "vagrants, wanderers," yet in several cases they had a fixed place of residence, and so were not to be equated with bedouin. Although non-natives, they cannot be classified as any specific ethnic group. Sometimes they were employed as soldiers or servants, an element which upheld the law, while at other times they seemed to be a disruptive element which, at best, might be described as "ḥabiru bands." On this puzzling polarity, Rowton has stated:

It can be explained in three ways. The ḥapiru could be a people. The ḥapiru bands could be mauroauding [sic] bands of mercenaries. And, third, these bands could consist of an uprooted and fugitive element in territories which lay outside the effective control of the established states.

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183 See p. 53 above, including notes 161-164.
184 CAD, VI, 84-85 lists it as ḥāpiru (ḥābiru): (a social class); from OA and OB on; foreign (prob. WSem) word. AHw lists it as ḥāpiru(m): Fremdling (als Klasse), (p. 322).
185 See pp. 54-55 above.
Rowton rejects the first two in favor of the last, although he does not really separate it from the second. His discussion is based on the well-known solution to the Ḥabiru problem in which Landsberger proposed that the Ḥabiru were not a people but a class of the population, the class of the destitute and the uprooted, people who had severed all connections with their families and usually also with their home country or city-state. 187

To this solution, Rowton then adds the factor of topology, especially as it involves the roughness of the terrain of Syria-Palestine and the density of the forests of the area in Amarna times. He shows that both the terrain and the woodland provided such cover for observation and ambush that it would have been extremely difficult to control or to defend oneself against the Ḥabiru bands. This would have been especially true in the Shechem area, as well as around Jerusalem and Byblos. 188 He concludes that many fugitives and malcontents would have come into this wooded hill country, primarily the destitute and uprooted from the city-states of Syria-Palestine, but perhaps including some from the surrounding nomadic tribes and from other countries as well. 189 Some of these may have been deserters from the ranks of Ḥabiru mercenary soldiers, although there is no way of knowing just what proportion

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189 Ibid., p. 385
they may have composed. Their number probably would not have been great for, as Rowton notes:

The ḫapiru constituted the core of the nationalistic resistance to Egyptian sovereignty, and it is not easy to credit a movement of that kind to men who would have no loyalties or local patriotism.\(^{190}\)

Thus, it is not likely that their attitude toward a foreign invader would have been much different than that of the population in general. Also, it is likely that many would have left their home city-states "precisely because of difficulties with Egyptian officials or troops or with city rulers supported by the Egyptians."\(^{191}\)

When, however, it is seen in EA 318:11-13 that the Ḫabiru seem to be named together with the ḥabbātu 'robbers,' and the Sutū 'nomads,' it must mean that all three groups often were found in the same territories. Consequently, "clear and consistent distinction between the Ḫapiru bands and the ḥabbātu bands is hardly to be expected."\(^{192}\) Because of this close association in some instances, and because some Ḫabiru did take the part of bandits at times, the term Ḫabiru often came to be used synonymously with ḥabbātu and in a pejorative sense.

In summary, then, it may be suggested that SA.GAZ, the pseudo-logogram for the Akkadian ṣaggāšu 'murderer,'

\(^{190}\) Loc. cit.

\(^{191}\) Ibid., p. 386. See EA 286:18-20 where the Ḫabiru are sharply contrasted with the Egyptian officials.

\(^{192}\) Rowton, "Topological Factor," p. 386.
was toned down by its connection with the West Semitic root *~g~ 'disturber, one who is restive.' This last, then was glossed by the similar meaning Akkadian ḫabbātu 'robber, plunderer.' Thus, in the Amarna letters especially, \( \text{SA.GAZ} = \text{ḥabbātu} = \text{Ḫabiru} \) more often than not, although it was not necessarily true that all ḫabiru deserved a negative attitude toward them. However, when used in relation to Labaya and to the situations in which he lived and operated, it is clear that its usual meaning is negative in nature, as we will see in the chapter dealing with the life and career of Labaya.

The successor of the first Egyptian king to mention the ḫabiru ( 직접), Amenophis II, was his son, Thutmose IV (ca. 1425-1417 B.C.) whose rule seems to have been as short as his official records are scanty. It is likely that he made at least one campaign into Syria-Palestine, for a tablet in his mortuary temple at Thebes says that he settled Syrians (Egyptian Kharu 'Horites') from Gezer as temple slaves in Egypt.\(^\text{193}\) Perhaps the most noteworthy event of his reign was his very determined effort to make an alliance with Mitanni by means of marriage to the daughter of Artatama, king of Mitanni. It was only after Thutmose repeated his request for the seventh time that it was granted.\(^\text{194}\) This Mitannian princess became the

\(^{193}\) ARE, II, § 821; ANET, p. 248.

\(^{194}\) EA 29:16-18, where the account is given by Tusratta to Amenophis IV, grandson of Thutmose IV.
mother of Amenophis III (ca. 1417-1379 B.C.), the first
king of the Amarna period, described by Breasted as "the
last of the great emperors," as well as "the Magnifi-
cent." In virtually the same breath, however, Breasted
comments that "with him the high tide of Egyptian power
was already slowly on the ebb, and he was not the man to
stem the tide."  

In all fairness to Amenophis III, it might be said
that he had the misfortune to become pharaoh of Egypt at
just that juncture in her historical supremacy when very
little was required of him. Thanks to the conquests of
Thutmosis I and III, and the zealous consolidation of
their successors, Egypt had become established as the
dominant power in the Near East. At this period, the
five great powers of western Asia could be described as
being "in balance." Egypt and Mitanni had an agreed
upon frontier, and were on most friendly terms. Before
his second year as king, Amenophis celebrated his marriage
with Tiy with a scarab on which he claimed that his nor-
thern boundary went "as far as Naharin (N-h-ry-n')."

Although the extent of this boundary is not clear, evidence

196 Ibid., p. 353. 197 Ibid., p. 329.
200 EA 17-19. 201 ARE, II, § 862.
from the Amarna letters from Ugarit (EA 45-49) seems to indicate that the coast as far as Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra) was under Egyptian control.202

By now enough time had elapsed that the grandsons of the princes who had been conquered by Thutmosis III were so "thoroughly habituated to the Egyptian allegiance ... that they knew no other condition than that of vassals of Egypt."203 Further evidence from the Amarna letters (EA 10:8-11) shows that Babylonia was a stated ally of Egypt, for the writer of this letter, King Burnaburia~ II, clearly professed friendship which had already begun with his forefathers. Finally, the Assyrians and the Hittites were also on friendly terms with Egypt for the moment. All in all, Egypt seemed to have everything so well in hand both at home and abroad that years later in writing to the son of Amenophis III, the prince of Byblos, Rib-Haddi, stated: "Behold, your father did not march forth and inspect the lands of his governors" (EA 116:61-63).204


203 Breasted, A History of Egypt, p. 335.

204 This translation follows that given by Knudtzon. However, W. L. Moran has read the lines as a question, contending that they were intended to put Amenophis IV on the spot by implying that he has not continued his father, Amenophis III's policies: "Behold thy father, did he not come forth and did he not care for the lands of his governor?" (W. L. Moran, "A Syntactical Study of the Dialect of Byblos as Reflected in the Amarna Tablets" (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins Univ., 1950), p. 171). Agreeing with the possibility of such a translation,
While there is no substantial evidence of Amenophis III being a great military leader in active campaigns, especially into Asia, this does not mean that his rule was devoid of military capabilities. It may mean instead that because it was strong, no campaigns were necessary. 205

It is clear that the fame of Amenophis III is based not on military achievements, but rather on his activities as a builder and patron of the arts. 206 Something of the breath-taking richness of his building projects can be caught from the building inscription in his mortuary temple which was located behind the famous "Colossi of Memnon" which still stand in the western plain at Thebes. 207 Included among the buildings and monuments

Campbell still contends that "a Syrian campaign for Amenophis III is very much in question" (E. F. Campbell, Jr., Chronology, p. 87, n. 51).

205 This is supported by A. R. Schulman's contention that "there was no break in the Amarna period with the earlier military traditions of the Dynasty" ("Some Observations on the Military Background of the Amarna Period," p. 51). This is not to overlook a common contrary position, however, which views the Amarna period as a period of Egyptian military decline. Scholars who hold this latter view include A. Goetze, A. Gardiner, J. A. Breasted and J. A. Wilson. Further discussion of this issue will be given below in relation to Akhenaten's reign and times.


207 ARE, II, §§ 878-892; ANET, p. 375. This inscription was discovered by Flinders Petrie in 1896 in the ruins of the Temple of Amenophis II which had been demolished in the 19th Dynasty, and the stela used as part of the building which was erected on the site by Merneptah. For
described in this inscription were: the temple of the so-called Memnon Colossi, the Luxor Temple and its connected buildings, the Third Pylon of Karnak, and the Temple of Soleb. The grand size of his undertakings is well illustrated by his palace south of Medinet Habu, and the complex of royal buildings connected with it, all of which together covered over eighty acres:208

Not only did temple architecture show the new imperial pride and the new wealth by expanding toward the colossal, but in the hands of Amenophis III, this architecture was used in an unprecedented manner for the emphasis of the tradition that the king was also god. In his temples, through reliefs and inscriptions, he lost no opportunity to place himself side by side with "his father Amon-Re, lord of Thebes,"209 and to show his relationship with the god by claiming that Amon-Re had called Amenophis "my son, of my body, my beloved,...my living image, whom my limbs have created."210 In later times, Amenophis III is referred to along with Ptah as one of the gods of Memphis, and "there is evidence that his 'living Image' was worshipped there in a great temple of his own building

further details of the discovery and its contents, see Aldred, Akhenaten, pp. 56-60.

208 W. C. Hayes, "Inscriptions from the Palace of Amenhotep III," JNES, X (1951), 35-36, 82-111.

209 RE, II, § 886.

210 Ibid., § 890; ANET, p. 376.
called 'The House of Nebmare.'"211

Paradoxically, the imperialism and affluence of the Eighteenth Dynasty which was enjoyed by Amenophis III not only gave expression to this literal concept of the divinity of the king and his identity with the god, especially Amon, but it also set the stage for a cosmopolitanism under Amenophis IV (Akhenaten). It was he who developed the concept of "a unique universal god, the Sun, who surveyed the whole earth and was lord of all countries, not merely Egypt."212

Historically, the king of Egypt was always considered to be a god, "the divine principle of rule upon earth."213 He was first connected with Horus, the sky-god. Because Horus carried the disk of the sun across the heavens, he was assimilated into the worship of Re, the sun-god, and the king became "the son of Re." The god of Thebes was Amon, "the Hidden One," who manifested himself in the wind or air, and was thus an unseen and ever-present


212 Aldred, Akhenaten, p. 66. It is beyond the province of this study to give a lengthy discussion of the so-called "monotheism" of Akhenaten. The reader is referred instead to the following basic sources: Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion (New York, 1961), pp. 24 ff.; Aldred, Akhenaten, pp. 163-196; Wilson, Culture, pp. 206-235; P. Montet, Eternal Egypt (New York, 1969), pp. 136-165; Breasted, A History of Egypt, pp. 355-357; Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs, pp. 214-230.

force. When, in the course of time, the priests of Thebes became more powerful than those at Heliopolis, the center of the worship of Re, it was not difficult to rationalize that Amon, the wind or breath, that mysterious source of life in man and beast, was not really different from Re who ruled the days and seasons. Thus, Amon-Re became the supreme national god who permeated and ruled all. Still, in spite of what may appear to us to be an inconsistency, this "blending of different beings into a single being for a functional purpose never destroyed the separate identities of these beings." This, by definition, cannot be monotheism. Perhaps, "theoimonism" would be a more logical term, defining it as "(many) gods in one."

This many-faceted approach to the worship of Amon-Re as the supreme national god seems to have resulted in the "need for a word for 'sun' which had no religious or anthropomorphic associations, or at least reduced them to a minimum." Such a word is "Aten," which may be translated as "the sun's disk," primarily in the physical meaning of the term, although it included the idea that it was the seat of the sun-god but was not the god in itself.

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214 Wilson, Culture, p. 209. See Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, pp. 4 ff. for his discussion of "the multiplicity of approaches" theory as a way to understand the so-called monotheism of the Aten cult.

215 Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs, p. 216.

Eventually even this term was deified, for a worship of Aten as a god was known at least two generations before the time of Amenophis IV.²¹⁷ So, while Amenophis IV did not invent the religious concept of the life-sustaining sun-disk, he appropriated it for his special use. As Frankfort has described it:

His god was the Aten, the disk of the sun, the actual heavenly body before everyone's eyes, not conceived, of course, as a purely physical phenomenon, since such a conception was simply unknown to the ancients... nevertheless the Aten was more concrete, less spiritualized through mythology than any other god of Egypt. All the correlations of the sun... retained their validity for Akhenaten; but the conception of immanence prevailed strongly over every other aspect of divine power. Akhenaten adored but one power and refused to accept a multiplicity of answers.²¹⁸

The rapid development of this Atenist theology was probably the result of the direct influence of Amenophis IV himself, specifically illustrated by his rejection of his original name in favor of one honoring the Aten, Akhenaten, "The Effective Spirit (=incarnation) of the Aten."²¹⁹ Thus, the Aten, the rayed sun-disk, came to replace the old anthropomorphic and therianthropic forms of deity, and was regarded as the Heavenly Pharaoh whose rule began with that of Akhenaten. The Aten, in fact, was seen


²¹⁸ Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, p. 25.

²¹⁹ Aldred, Akhenaten, p. 185.
as co-regent with the king. 220 This certainly was a departure from the traditional polytheism. Aldred notes that the famous Hymn to Aten, 221 which has many parallels to the Hebrew Bible's Psalm 104, is more unusual for what it leaves unsaid than for what it says. For one thing, "nowhere in it is the slightest mention of other gods," 222 in contrast to the hymns to other gods which usually equate the god addressed by the hymn with various other gods. Such argument from silence, however, must be heard with caution. In agreement with Wilson (above), the contention that Akhenaten was a true monotheist is in no sense beyond question. In fact, it would appear that there is only a slight difference between the doctrine of Amon-Re and that of Aten, as explained by Alexandre Piankoff:

It (the Sun-disk) is the visible image of godhead that the devotees of the Amarna reform wished to adopt for their cult, without however denying that the motor, the active and activating force is Re, as is clearly expressed in the name of Akhenaton's god. The adversaries of the reform insisted, on the contrary, on the primacy of that activating

220Ibid., pp. 167-168.
221Trans. in ANET, pp. 369-371. Note that in his introduction to the hymn, Wilson states that the contention that Amarna religion was monotheistic is debatable, so "a reserved attitude would note only that Akh-en-Aton and his family worshiped the Aton, Akh-en-Aton's courtiers worshiped Akh-en-Aton himself, and the great majority of Egyptians was ignorant of or hostile to the new faith" (ibid., p. 369).
222Aldred, Akhenaten, p. 190.
and invisible force, which according to them was the godhead itself.\textsuperscript{223}

So, it would appear more nearly the truth to say that Akhenaten made one god supreme while all others were suppressed. The fact is that the old gods quickly revived after Akhenaten passed from the scene. Also, his religion was certainly different from the monotheism of the Hebrews with which it is often erroneously compared. This is plainly noted by Wilson when he writes:

It must be stressed that Atonism was a fervent nature-worship and made no demand upon the worshiper beyond loving gratitude. There was little ethical content in the new faith. . . in striking contrast to Hebrew monotheism, with the latter's categorical demands upon man for an upright life.\textsuperscript{224}

In asserting that "no nation ever stood in dire need of a strong and practical ruler than did Egypt at the death of Amenhotep III,"\textsuperscript{225} Breasted appears to be laying the groundwork for his own generally quite negative and sometimes dogmatic interpretation of the reign

\textsuperscript{223}Quoted by Aldred, \textit{ibid.}, p. 258, from Piankoff's work which is unavailable to the present writer: "Les Grandes Compositions Religieuses du Nouvel Empire," Bulletin de l'Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale, LXII, 218.

\textsuperscript{224}Wilson, "Egypt," p. 63. For a fuller discussion which rejects any real connection between the Atenistic theology and biblical monotheism, see Wilson, \textit{Culture}, pp. 224-229.

\textsuperscript{225}Breasted, \textit{History of Egypt}, p. 355. The long-debated question of the coregency of Amenophis IV with his father Amenophis III is not seen as lying within the scope of this study, especially at this point. Suffice it here to refer to the latest studies on the problem, including: D. B. Redford, \textit{History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt} (Toronto, 1967), pp. 88-169; E. F.
of Akhenaten, the successor of Amenophis III. While he
did not hesitate to call Akhenaton "the most remarkable of
all the Pharaohs and the first [individual] in history," 226
primarily because of his appreciation of the religious
innovations of the king, Breasted easily dismisses as
exaggerations any indications of Akhenaten's skill in the
ruling art. 227 For example, he interprets the following
record from Akhenaten's reign as evidence only of "the
illusion that he was still lord of Asia." 228

In the year 12, the second month of the winter,
the 8th, King Akhenaten and the great royal wife
Nefertiti living for ever show themselves on a
golden chair to receive the merchandise of Syria,
Nubia, the West and the East. All the lands are
brought together, the isles in the midst of the
sea present their products to the king on the

Campbell, Jr., Chronology, especially his conclusion on
p. 140, Campbell, "Amarna Letters," p. 61; W. C. Hayes,
"Egypt: Internal Affairs...", p. 12, n. 7; Eric Hornung,
Untersuchungen zur Chronologie und Geschichte des neuen
Reiches (Wiesbaden, 1964). These all reject the core­
gency theory which Gardiner had already concluded was "an
illusion" (Egypt of the Pharaohs, p. 213). Among the pro­
ponents of the theory of coregency one must list the fol­
lowing, although they arrive at differing conclusions with
regard to the length of the coregency: H. W. Fairman in
J. D. S. Pendlebury, et al., The City of Akhenaton, III
100-116. For a listing of other scholars on both sides of
the question, see Redford, History, pp. 88-92. K. A.
Kitchen, while he provisionally accepts an eight-year co­
regency, still does not exclude the possibility of no co­
regency at all, which literally puts him on both sides of
the issue! (Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs, p. 8).

226 Breasted, History of Egypt, p. 356.
227 Ibid., pp. 379-395.
228 Ibid., p. 389.
great throne of Akhenaten. The works of all the
lands are received, and Akhenaten grants the
breath of life.229

The present writer suspects that this negative
attitude toward Akhenaten as a political leader is based
in large part on silence in the record concerning this as-
p ect of the king's career. Breasted and others have found
it quite easy to accept Akhenaten's genius as a religious
leader, but at the same time to forget that his drastic
religious changes, involving deeply entrenched priest hood s,
would not have been possible without strong military con-
trol and backing as king. The same is true of his continuing
position as pharaoh, which required at least some per-
sonal control over the military both at home and abroad.

Perhaps part of this one-sided view of the per-
sonality of Akhenaten stems from the fact that in both
statues and reliefs he is shown as being obviously mis-
formed, and even feminine in figure. It has been sugges-
ted that he must have been a victim of "Fröhlich's syndrome,"
a disease which is usually caused by a tumor of the pitu-
itary gland and so generally results in hormonal imbal-
ance.230 Without real proof, however, perhaps the only

229 M. Sandman, Texts from the Time of Akhenaton,
Bibliotheca Aegyptica, VIII (Brussels, 1938), pp. 112 ff.;
ARE, II, 31014-1015.

230 Aldred discusses the medical implications in
133-139. He admits there that no certain conclusions can
be made in the absence of the mummy of this king. The
basic study on the physical problems of Akhenaten is that
done by C. Aldred and A. T. Sandison, "The Pharaoh Akhena-
ten: A Problem in Egyptology and Pathology," Bulletin of
reasonable conclusion we can make is that he suffered some sort of physical handicap which would have hindered the physical prowess that was usually expected of a ruler. This in itself does not eliminate the possibility of his having real control and power over his kingdom and empire, however, any more than it was the real reason for his having an unusual religious genius.

If the title "reformer" is applied to Akhenaten, it must be on the basis that he, like all true reformers, tried to return to or restore the glory of the past. In his case, it would be because he "attempted to restore the supremacy of the Pharaoh to what it had been in the early Old Kingdom." Thus, the very emphasis on the universality of the sun's disk could mean that by worshipping and claiming kinship with this universal deity he was claiming international status, as a powerful ruler. This appraisal would be in stark contrast to those who for too long have contended that the eventual loss of Egypt's empire was due primarily to Akhenaten's preoccupation with his new religion and an assumed consequent pacifistic attitude. The present writer is much more in agreement with the appraisal of A. R. Schulman who has noted that the Amarna period was

the History of Medicine, XXXVI (1962), 293-316. For a study of the influence of disease in shaping history, see Frederick F. Cartwright and M. D. Biddiss, Disease and History (New York, 1972).

231Aldred, Akhenaten, p. 258.
not a period of indolent pacifism, but that "the army, far from being the mute instrument of the crown, actually became so powerful that, in the end, it not only determined the royal policies, but installed its own leaders on the throne."\(^{232}\) Aldred also asserts that there is no real evidence to show that Egyptian influence experienced a wholesale collapse during the reign of Akhenaten.\(^{233}\)

The charge of pacifism usually leveled against Akhenaten is based on the argument that he gave little or no heed to the letters from the Canaanite princes which asked for help. Michael Several, however, makes what must be a valid observation at this point:

Aid would not have been requested unless it was expected. Experience must have taught that requests for aid would be fulfilled. Letters that have long been interpreted as picturing the decline of the empire give, in contrast, a further indication that the imperial institutions were legitimate. The pharaoh was still looked upon as the ultimate source of power.\(^{234}\)

Schulman notes further that

the Amarna letters...provide enough indications to allow us to suppose that this king had also [as had Amenophis III] made serious plans for an Asiatic campaign which, however, never came to fruition because of his death.\(^{235}\)

Some of these Amarna statements clearly reflect real,
expected intervention by the king, militarily: EA 141: 18-30, from Ammunition of Beirut: "The king...has written to his servant...: 'Make ready for the soldiers of the king!'. Indeed, I have prepared with my horses, with my chariots, and with all that is mine. for the soldiers of the king;' EA 142:25-31, also for Ammunition: "I have prepared with my horses, with my chariots, and with everything possible which I have, in readiness for the soldiers of the king;' EA 144:18-21, from Zimreda of Sidon: "Let the king know that I have made preparations in anticipation of the soldiers of the king...I have prepared everything in accordance with the command of the king;' EA 193: 5-24 (with omissions), from Diyate: "I am in the city and am very much on my guard. My horses and my men...serve the king, and I will go with them before the (Egyptian) soldiers. I have prepared oxen and small cattle as you have commanded on your tablet."

In addition, Schulman points out that in the Amarna tomb scenes Akenaten often is shown as addressed by his soldiers as "the one who brings into existence (or: trains) the classes eligible for military service" (shpr d3mw), The Amarna passages quoted here are taken from Schulman, "Some Observations on the Military Background," p. 63, n. 99. He cites many other supported passages as well. On the dating of these letters, see Campbell, Chronology, pp. 134-135.

Schulman, "Some Observations on the Military Background," pp. 58-59. Breasted translates shpr d3mw a bit differently: "He trains the youth and the generations" (ARE, II, § 983), although Breasted does...
which again points to the king's having an active role in the perpetuation and control of the standing army.

The fact that the king seemed to give little heed to the letters from the vassal princes of Canaan also may demonstrate the self-assurance of the king concerning his control of his Syrian outposts, as well as his realization that the complaints were deliberately exaggerated by the writers and were really blatant evidences of the internecine rivalry constantly going on among the governors. Campbell makes this appraisal of the frequent negative tone of the vassal letters:

The letters from Syrian and Canaanite vassals cannot be judged on a purely factual basis. This is to say that the various vassal princes did everything in their power dramatically to prove their opponents in the wrong, while affirming wholeheartedly that their own intentions were honorable and completely upright. This may mean that the threat of an opponent was exaggerated and that petty quarrels were described as full-scale campaigns.

Universally, the vassals were out for personal gain. They were not seeking to throw off one yoke in order to be burdened with another. Each prince sought, rather, as much freedom of action and personal power as he could get. A move by any one vassal caused a shift in the line-up of allies and enemies simply because each vassal was forced to plan how he could gain the most from a shift in the balance of power.238

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238 Campbell, Chronology, pp. 66-67. Schulman concurs when he notes that the vassals, especially those who were in trouble with their fellow-vassals, "having an axe to grind, may very well have painted the blackest possible picture" ("Some Observations on the Military Background...", p. 61).
Thus, Schulman must be correct in his conclusion:

We may assume, therefore, that the King and the Egyptian Foreign Office did not callously ignore the pleas sent to them by the Syrian and Palestinian rulers. They well knew what was going on, and took action only when necessary. Particularly so, because the army was needed elsewhere.239

Under the tradition that the king was actually the god-king, the civil government and the priesthood were inseparably linked during the Eighteenth Dynasty, just as much under Akhenaten as they had been before. The fact that Akhenaten was able to suppress the power of the Theban priests of Amon who had been enjoying the primary position among the various temple hierarchies, and was able to establish Amarna as both the seat of government and the center of religion, certainly points to Akhenaten's overall power. When, with his passing, his religious reforms were reversed, the reversal was perpetrated by the kings of the Nineteenth Dynasty, beginning with the usurper of the throne, Horemheb (ca. 1348-1320 B.C.), rather than the rival priests of Amon-Re. The intervening kings, both sons-in-law of Akhenaten, Smenkhkere and Tutankhaten, were unable to stem the tide and to keep the family in power. Indeed, it is interesting to note that although Tutankhaten openly renounced Akhenaten's heretical religion and reverted to the old Amon worship (as indicated by his changing of his name to Tutankhamon),240 almost no effort

239 Ibid., p. 66.
240 Ibid., pp. 67-68.
was made at this period to erase the memories of Akhenaten and Atenism. This did not come until later when Horemheb seized the throne and so had the motivation to prove that he was the real god-king successor to Amenophis III, making it necessary to ignore Amenophis IV or Akhenaten.\textsuperscript{241} His use of the army in his reorganization of Egypt would surely contradict the notion that the army had lost virtually all its power during the reigns of Amenophis III and especially Akhenaten. It may have become weakened by Horemheb's time, but it was still strong enough to keep him in power.\textsuperscript{242}

\textsuperscript{241} Ibid., p. 68.

\textsuperscript{242} For a description of Horemheb's reorganization of Egypt, see Gardiner, \textit{Egypt of the Pharaohs}, pp. 244–245, 248.
CHAPTER II

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SYRIA-PALESTINE
DURING THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY

In achieving their purpose of extending the boundaries of the empire by means of many campaigns into Syria-Palestine, the pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty were in fact creating a great administrative problem for themselves. When they conquered the Nubian lands to the south, they had little difficulty in assimilating this quite primitive people into their cultural and political organization.1 But, in conquering Syria-Palestine, with its heterogeneous population, its complex political structure and its diversified geography, the Egyptian conquerors found themselves saddled with a people whose culture was as old as their own, and "whose city states possessed an evolved constitution, an organized religion, and a complex social and legal system."2

While the origins of this complex structure cannot

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1W. C. Hayes, "Egypt: Internal Affairs from Thutmose I to the Death of Amenophis III," pt. 1, CAH², fasc. 10, pp. 36-43.

2Margaret S. Drower, "Syria: c. 1550-1400 B.C.,” pt. 1, CAH², fasc. 64, p. 50.
be recovered completely, it has been noted above\(^3\) that Albrecht Goetze has suggested that the feudalistic city-state organization goes back to the Amorite occupation of Syria-Palestine during the 20th-18th centuries B.C. On the other hand, Albrecht Alt had conjectured that the feudal city-state system began during the Hyksos period of control of Palestine.\(^4\) He contended that the rise of the Hyksos and their ultimate control was due mainly to their introduction into Palestine of the horse and chariot. Noting that "men who fight from chariots are usually professional soldiers of aristocratic rank,"\(^5\) he concluded that it was natural for the rulers who need the services of such professional soldiers to reward them with large grants of land. The large land holdings not only enabled these aristocratic lords to become self-sufficient economically, albeit at the expense of the serfs who tilled their lands, but these land grants made them beholden to their territorial rulers. At the same time, the Hyksos ruler of the whole territory was able to strengthen his power and control through these feudal lords or petty city-state heads. This military aristocracy, ruling over their various petty city-states, continued to rule in

\(^3\)See pp. 21-24 above.

\(^4\)Alt, "Settlement," pp. 181 ff. On the Hyksos, see pp. 28-31 above, especially the sources on them cited on p. 28, n. 68.

their own right, according to Alt, until the Hyksos were driven out and these feudal lords were forced into subjection by the pharaohs of the Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 184-185.}

Writing as he did before the discovery of the "execration texts" which were written in Egypt just before the Hyksos invasion,\footnote{On the "execration texts," see pp. 27-28 above, and the sources cited in n. 63.} Alt seems to have had an intuition that later evidence from some texts would show that even before the Hyksos came, the city-state system would have had at least some rudimentary beginnings:

If we could generalize from what seems to be the case here we should say that at the beginning of the second millennium B.C. Palestine was organized politically into a number of independent territories each centered on a particular town. But we cannot yet decide whether the country was more or less completely settled by that period, and organized throughout into states. When archaeologists have further explored the first stages of town life in Palestine, they may be able to throw more light on the matter, but what has been discovered up to now does not justify any general conclusions. But even if by 2000 B.C. Palestine had a considerable number of towns it is unlikely, from what we have said, that the later system of small independent city-states had already begun.\footnote{Alt, "Settlement," pp. 180-181.}

The evidence from the "execration texts" caused Alt to modify his view somewhat,\footnote{Ibid., p. 181, note 12 which was written later.} although he was probably correct in seeing the Hyksos as being the ones who gave the Palestinian city-state the definite feudalistic charac-
teristics which it had when the Eighteenth Dynasty pharaohs reasserted their power in Palestine, and which are reflected in the Amarna letters. However, Goetze's position that this organization had its beginnings at least as early as the Amorite period is substantiated by the evidence from the "execration texts." This is made more emphatic in view of Bright's conclusion that "the earlier Hyksos rulers appear to have been Canaanite or Amorite princes from Palestine and southern Syria, of the sort known from the Execration Texts." ¹⁰ Ultimate Hyksos power and control of Egypt came ca. 1650 B.C. when "a new and well-organized wave of warriors, apparently of quite mixed composition, arrived from Asia." ¹¹ These Hyksos founded the Fifteenth Dynasty, moving the Egyptian capital to Avaris in the delta area. The Hyksos finally were driven out by the Egyptians about one hundred years later, and the Egyptians were able to move back into Syria-Palestine.

The Egyptian conquerors, however, soon realized that it would be beyond their power and resources to assimilate the Syrian-Palestinian feudal city-state system into their own political machinery. As Alt put it, "the Egyptians lacked the technical ability, if not the power, to develop any different system." ¹² Thus, each city-state was taken over much as it was and allowed to retain its

ruler who now became a vassal of Egypt, subject to its control.

In most cases, it appears that the existing rulers or heirs were appointed by the king to rule the city, after they had taken an appropriate oath of fealty. This is illustrated by the Barkal Stele inscription which, in part, summarizes the great achievements of the First Campaign of Thutmosis III:

Then my majesty had administered to them [the princes who had been besieged at Megiddo for seven months] an oath of fealty, with the words: "We will not repeat evil against Men-kheper-Re [Thutmosis' throne-name], who lives forever, our good lord..." Then my majesty had them given leave to (go to) their cities. They all went on donkey (back), so that I might take their horses. I took captive the townspeople thereof for Egypt, and their possessions likewise.13

Similarly, Amenophis II recorded of his conquest of Qadesh: "Its prince came out in peace to his majesty. They were made to take the oath of fealty and all their children as (well)."14

Sometimes the conqueror chose to appoint someone other than the current prince, with no reason given:

The Prince of Geba-Shunem, whose name was Qaqa, was brought, his wife, his children, and all his retainers as well. Another prince was appointed in his place.15

Even the sporadic uprisings by the vassal princes, such as that put down by Thutmosis III at Megiddo, did not

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13 ANET, p. 238. For sources concerning the Megiddo uprising, see pp. 37-38, n. 102, above.
14 ANET, p. 246. 15 Ibid., p. 247.
force the kings to make any drastic changes in their administrative policies in Syria-Palestine. Instead, they continued to trust in "the doubtful loyalty of the hereditary princes in the conquered areas,"\(^\text{16}\) and allowed them to be responsible for the carrying out of official Egyptian policies. Whenever a rebellion did occur, or whenever a ruler might die or be deposed, usually another member of the same ruling family, such as a brother or a son, would be placed on the vassal's throne.\(^\text{17}\)

It has already been noted above\(^\text{18}\) that children of the conquered princes were brought into Egypt to educate them in the ways of Egypt and to ensure their loyalty to the crown when they returned to their homeland to replace their fathers as vassal princes. While the daughters were placed in the king's harem (EA 99:10-20; 187:22-25), the sons were taken to the Egyptian capital where, in "a sort of princely prison,"\(^\text{19}\) they were thoroughly Egyptianized. Then, when a vassal died, his son was appointed to succeed him. After his head was "anointed with oil" (EA 51:5-7), he was sent home to occupy his father's throne. This policy appears to have been quite successful for most


\(^{17}\) M. Abdul-Kader Mohammad, "The Administration of Syro-Palestine During the New Kingdom," ASAE, LVI (1959), 130.

\(^{18}\) See p. 39 above.

of these princes remained faithful to Egypt, even amid the rivalries reflected in the Amarna letters. Drower suggests, however, that there may have been instances of negative side effects, perhaps illustrated by the experience of Rib-Ḫaddi of Byblos. It would appear that in his case, such Egyptianizing resulted in an estrangement of the new prince vassal from his own people because they did not trust him after such training.20

Alt was certainly correct in saying that "no feature is more obvious"21 than the city-state organization in Syria-Palestine under the Egyptian kings. These city-states seem to have been the center of a district, and each had its own hereditary prince. In his study of the 119 cities which were listed by Thutmosis III,22 Martin Noth23 has shown that the size of the area under the control of each city-state in the plains varied considerably from north to south in Syria-Palestine. The terrain surely was a primary factor. The greater proportion of arable land in the plains would support a greater population, so many communities or cities would develop, in

21Alt, "Settlement," p. 188.
close proximity to each other. Alt thus concluded:

The possessions of an average city-state consisted of nothing more than the fields belonging to the city and the few villages round about it.24

Consequently, the city-states in the plains were generally quite small. Yet, most of them probably were autonomous. This fact is quite amazing when it is noted that even "the princes of the very smallest states maintained their own diplomatic relations with Pharaoh."25

Alt concludes that since the headings of the list of Thutmosis III26 indicate that the cities in the list are only those cities whose leaders were defeated at Megiddo, this means that the cities listed were those who had followed the king of Qadesh in central Syria in trying to throw off Egyptian control.27 He notes further that the list "hardly mentions a single city that can be located with certainty in the mountains of Judah and Samaria."28 Thus, he interpreted this to mean that the mountain areas took no real part in the rebellion against Thutmosis III, and that those cities which have not otherwise been identified in the list could not have been located in the mountains. It is the Amarna letters which give

26 ANET, p. 242.
27 On the problems involved in interpreting the list, see Aharoni, Land of the Bible, pp. 143-146.
us the basic information concerning the political organization which existed in the mountains of Palestine during the period of Egyptian suzerainty. In fact, we know of the important roles played by both the mountain cities of Shechem and Jerusalem (both of which were omitted from the Thutmosis III list) in the Amarna letters. Indeed, these are the only cities in the region to figure significantly in these texts.

At the same time, while granting that Shechem and Jerusalem may have dominated the mountain area, Aharoni notes that there were a number of other towns in this area, presumably part of these larger states. Perhaps the best illustration of this type of situation comes from the Amarna letters themselves. In the letters written by Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem (EA 285-290), there is a reference to Bethlehem, located just eight miles south.

29 Ibid., p. 197.

30 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, pp. 162-163. He lists at least nine towns not on the Thutmosis III list which were in existence in the hill country at that time. Alt also admits, in passing, to this possibility ("Settlement," pp. 197-198).

31 This assumes that we may read Bit-Lahmi in EA 290:16, which Albright had once asserted "is an almost certain reference to the town of Bethlehem, which thus appears for the first time in history" (ANET, p. 489, n. 21). This reading has been accepted generally, as illustrated by G. W. van Beek, "Bethlehem," IDB, I, 395. Knudtzon had read it only tentatively as Bit-Ninib (EA, p. 876). Citing other scholars, Weber declared his uncertainty, but noted his opinion that this site must be west of Jerusalem (EA, pp. 1343-1344). In his Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), Albright stated "it is not Bethlehem" (p. 138), but returned to his suggestion of
of Jerusalem, as being "a town of the country of Jerusalem" (EA 290:15). Alt, however, was not quite willing to allow that this meant that Jerusalem was in the same political category as was Shechem to the north:

This does not imply any greater extent of territory than that of other city-states, and as far as I can see, nothing else suggests that the power of the prince of Jerusalem extended any further. The continual complaints in his letters show rather how hard-pressed and isolated his domain was.  

In addition to the fact that the terrain of the hill country limited the amount of arable land needed for any sizeable settlement, Alt has also shown that the mountains did not lend themselves to the location of good trade routes and commercial roads or to the use of chariot warfare which was the favorite military technique of the Amarna period. Thus, the city-states were more logically located in the valleys or lowlands, on international

long ago that it is Beth-Ḥoron, probably in the vicinity of Gezer (see his "The Canaanite God Ḥaurôn (Horôn)," AJSL, LIII [1936], 7, n. 20). Agreeing with this interpretation, and reading the cuneiform as bit-ninurta, are Z. Kallai and H. Tadmor, "Bit-Ninurta=Beth Horon--on the History of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the Amarna Period," EI, IX (1969), 138-147. M. Weippert agrees in principle but notes that "the question can be left open...since we are not dealing with an independent city-state" (Settlement, p. 15, n. 31). Weippert has up-dated his English edition, citing our references to Kallai and Tadmor and agreeing at least tentatively to Albright's identification of the site as Lower Beth-horon. Clearly, final identification of the site referred to in EA 290:16 has yet to be established to the satisfaction of everyone.


33 Ibid., p. 194.
crossroads and at strategic military points. In this way they would be easier to control by the Egyptian crown, especially as the king deliberately perpetuated the aristocracy which clung to its hereditary positions over the many small city-states concentrated in the plains or valleys. These small city-states would find it to their advantage to accept the control of the greater Egyptian power.

The situation in the hill country was different, however, for the same reasons. Because of the terrain and the implications noted above, it would be logical that few city-states would be established in the mountains. Indeed, as Alt asserts,

During the whole period of Egyptian suzerainty there is no suggestion that the system of city-states ever spread throughout the mountains.34 Instead, as we have noted above, the Amarna letters show that there were only a few centers in the mountains, such as Shechem and Jerusalem, with some influence over towns nearby them. Alt reads this to mean that the mountains must have had larger territorial systems than did the plains, and therefore a different attitude toward Egyptian control.35

Weippert, however, probably is correct in interpreting the evidence somewhat differently. He notes:

34Ibid., p. 201
35Ibid., p. 199.
One cannot conclude that the normal form of political organization in the hill country as opposed to the valleys and plains was the 'larger territorial system.' ... The kingdom of Lab'ayu and his sons in Shechem and the rule of Tagu... are particular powers which arose because of the fact that particularly energetic and unscrupulous dynasties extended their area of control from the basis of one city-state at the expense of other city-states. 36

Thus, geography was not nearly so important as strength of leadership, and the ambitions of those leaders. So, Labaya made Shechem a great city and powerful influence, in spite of its location. On the other hand, Jerusalem did not achieve such wide influence or power in the Amarna period even though it was located in the hill country also, because it lacked the leadership to make it strong.

Political history often has shown that strong personalities, such as Labaya and Tagu certainly were, can overcome many obstacles in order to gain their ends. John A. Wilson concurs, noting: "a few local princes ... experimented in separatism," 37 carving out small states for themselves, taking advantage of distance and less direct Egyptian control. As the Amarna letters show, no smaller city which was within the reach of Labaya's forces was safe, and as a result, the territory ruled over by Labaya "was especially large in contrast to the small Canaanite principalities round about." 38

36 Weippert, Settlement, p. 146.
37 Wilson, Culture, p. 230.
38 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 163.
The exceptional territorial expansion by rulers such as Labaya only proves the rule that the main feature of political organization in Syria-Palestine in the Amarna age was the city-state, as inherited from the Hyksos. The fact that there were so many small city-states, with their own political leadership, with varying power and authority, led Gardiner to actually doubt "whether the much vaunted Egyptian empire ever existed." In this doubt, he was granting only that these city-states and their rulers endured their vassal situation as the least of several evils, and the one which made possible the sometimes questionable protection of Egypt. This continuation of the old city-state pattern hinged not only on the sworn loyalty of the vassal rulers, but on an extreme confidence in the autocratic bureaucracy which regarded the king as the state and the ultimate source of authority and power. As an absolute monarch whose authority rested on his supposed divinity, "the law was merely his formally expressed will," so no deviation was allowed.

Thus, all administrative districts and officers, whether within Egypt proper or in its possessions, were completely subordinate to the central government in every respect. The "humiliating proskynesis," seven times on

the belly and seven times on the back, as so frequently professed by the vassals when they wrote to the king must reflect this attitude and situation, even when it is admitted to be an exaggeration of loyalty. On the more practical side, it was not seen to be necessary to change the administrative pattern since effective control of the status quo was accomplished "by frequent parades of power through Asia by the Egyptian army." Such campaigns were usually timed to take place during the critical harvest seasons when the crops would be appropriated by the disciplining forces.

In their inscriptions, the Egyptians referred to the vassal city-state rulers or princes by the title $\text{wr}$, which means "Chief," "Asiatic prince," or "the Great One." Since this title was applied also to the heads of state of Babylonia, Assyria, or Mitanni, as well as to the Hittite king, it may best be translated as "prince" or in some cases, "king." Albright observed that these vassal princes, "in spite of their excessive grovelling before Pharaoh, which sometimes occupies over half their letters, were patricians, proud of their ancestry." In the Amarna

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$^4_2$ Wilson, Culture, p. 182.


letters, the vassal princes often refer to themselves or to each other as ḫaziānu, which means something like "chief magistrate of a town, village or estate, the mayor or headman." The ḫaziānu appears to have been the local ruler of a city-state, but one who was still under the control of an Egyptian area or provincial commissioner.

45 The Amarna scribes were more or less consistent in writing this term defectively: ḫaziānu or ḫazānu (see references in the Glossary, EA, pp. 1415-1416). The normal Akkadian form is ḫazzānu, which occurs as early as the Ur III period, while ḫaziānu only goes back to the Middle Assyrian period (see CAD, VI, 163-164). W. F. Albright and W. L. Moran, in "A Re-interpretation of an Amarna Letter from Byblos (EA 82)" JCS, II (1948), 243, n. 5, saw ḫazānu as derived from an assumed *ḥaziʾānu, which they equated with the OB form daʾikānū, "murderer," where -ānu is added to the participle to indicate professional status. For a differing grammatical interpretation, see Ronald F. Youngblood, "The Amarna Correspondence of Rib-Haddi, Prince of Byblos (EA 68-96)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Dropsie College, 1961), pp. 116-117. The related LH hazzān and the Aramaic hazzānā, "overseer, synagogue servant," has long been recognized. The post-biblical Hebrew use of hazzān in the sense of "cantor" is a most interesting development!


47 EA 89:41: ālu annū lā ḫazānu, "this city is not a ḫazzānu-city;" EA 89:49: bit ṣurri yānu biti ḫazāni, "the house/dynasty of Tyre is not the house of a ḫazzānu;" EA 125:31-32: ammīni yīštakanuni šarruKi ma LUMES ḫazānūti, "why has the king appointed me as a ḫazzānu?", et passim.
the rābisu, whose office will be described below. Often, however, the vassal prince was called "king" (Akkadian šarru, Canaanite*milku/malku, Hebrew melek) especially within his peer group. However, in his "humble" correspondence to the pharaoh, he usually referred to himself as "the man/free man (awīlu) of X-city." On one occasion the prince of Hazor seems to have forgotten himself and openly applied the title "king" to himself in writing to the Egyptian king (EA 227:3)! The pharaoh always addressed the vassal prince as the "awīlu of X-city," without special greeting, and gave him his orders directly, sometimes with threat of punishment if he failed to carry them out as specified.

The first duty of the vassal prince was to carry out the will of the pharaoh who apparently had the power of life and death over him: "You give us life, you give us death" (EA 238:31-33). As an official installed in his office "[to] protect the place of the king which was in [his] charge" (EA 99:8-9), the awīlu "had no independent entity." Further, it was the vassal's duty to collect and pay an annual tribute which had been fixed by the pharaoh, as illustrated by the following quotations from

48 C. Brockelmann, Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen, I, 73, 337, 339, 340; Weippert, Settlement, p. 8, n. 11; p. 82, n. 110.
49 Mohammad, "Administration," p. 111. For a full list of his responsibilities, see pp. 111-114.
pharaonic inscriptions:

List of the tribute brought to the glory of his majesty by the princes of Retenu in this year. 50

Presenting the tribute of Retenu and the produce of the northern countries: silver, gold, turquoise, and all costly stones of God's Land, by the princes of all foreign countries, when they come to make supplication to the good god and to beg breath for their nostrils. 51

The vassal prince was required to furnish the necessary supplies and provisions for the Egyptian troops and garrisons in his territory. 52 It was his responsibility to summon his subjects for corvée duty when necessary, although this was not always willingly or freely done, as seen in this complaint by Biridiya against other vassals (EA 365:15-25):

Behold, the governors who are with me do not as I (do): they do not work in the town of Shunama, and they do not bring men for the corvée, but I alone bring men for the corvée from the town of Yapu. 53

On the other hand, to refuse to obey the king's or the commissioner's command was considered an act of rebellion, and a crime (EA 254:11-15). He could, however, complain directly to the king whenever he felt that the commissioner had treated him unjustly, and ask for help (EA 270:9-23). It appears that most vassals responded

50 The Annals of Thutmose III's Sixth Campaign, ANET, p. 239.
51 Inscription in a tomb scene from the time of Thutmose IV, ANET, p. 249.
52 ARE, II, §§ 472, 483, n. a. 53 ANET, p. 485.
willingly to mere threat of reprisal, as indicated in EA 162:35-39:

If for any reason you plot to exercise hostility, or harbour any thought of enmity or hatred in your heart, then you and your family are condemned to death; therefore, submit to the king, your lord, and you shall live.54

The territory over which a vassal prince was responsible was ordinarily one city, with its surrounding district. In a few cases he was in charge of a group of small cities around a central city or capital. Thus, Rib-Haddi of Byblos ruled over several smaller cities in the area round about, calling them "my cities" (EA 81:8, passim). At the same time, he constantly made reference to his capital city, Gubla (Byblos). Abdi-Asirta was in charge of several cities in the Amurru district (EA 60, 62, passim). As we have noted above,55 Labaya of Shechem probably was the most famous vassal in terms of control over a large territory in the northern hill country. As already stated, it is probable that much of this territory came under his control through conquest, and not by appointment of the pharaoh. In spite of the fact that he must have encroached on the territory of other vassals of the king, he was still quite vocal in his claim of primary loyalty to the king and his interests.

55See p. 86 above.
There are some indications that each vassal prince had at least a few troops at his command, troops which he would use to keep order in his area, and to protect his people as well as his own interests. These troops were separate from the king's occupation forces, and being very limited in number would make insurrection quite unlikely. The function of these troops was

to maintain peace within his city, to protect the deputy of the king, to look after the king's interests and to carry out his orders.  

The limited size of these forces is vividly seen in the fact that when the vassal prince wrote to the king appealing for extra troops, the requested troops were surprisingly small in number: 30 pairs of horses (EA 72:27); 20 foot soldiers (EA 149:18); 100 garrison troops (EA 244:35); 50 garrison troops (EA 289:43) et passim. It seems most likely, however, that some princes, such as Labaya, must have violated the rule against recruitment of forces beyond a limited number. Otherwise, they would not have been able to engage in the conquest of additional territory so readily.

Further evidence of the size of the forces at the disposal of the vassal princes is shown by the small number of men included in the Egyptian occupation forces, which were separate from the vassal's forces.

It seems almost incredible that forces of five to twenty-five Egyptians could hold a city. But the Asiatic towns were small and always disunited.

Behind the little garrison lay the vast power of pharaoh's army, so that the handful of troops could act as a local police and as an intelligence system.⁵⁷

While the vassal princes had a certain amount of autonomy, they were closely supervised by Egyptian agents (Egyptian uputi [wpwty]), "envoy" or simply "commissioner."⁵⁸ In the Amarna letters, the commissioner is usually referred to as rābisu, the precise meaning of the term being illustrated by the use of the Canaanite gloss, sükinu, "caretaker," several times in the Amarna letters.⁵⁹ In the letters, the commissioner is described as the "rābisu of the king" (EA 68:19, 23; 85:82; 139:16; 287:45; 288:19; 321:15-16, passim), indicating that he must have been directly responsible to the pharaoh. He was probably more an administrative than military officer, although he seems to have been in charge of the forces of the king which were garrisoned in Syria-Palestine. So, he had the power to send these forces wherever there were disturbances (EA 71: 23-32; 117:60-63; 122:22-39). As the representative of the

⁵⁷Wilson, Culture, p. 182.


⁵⁹EA 256:9; 363:69. Sükinu is derived from the Canaanite verb sakānu (ana), "to care (for)," which is found frequently in the Abdi-Heba letters (EA 285-290). There can be no doubt that sükinu is the Canaanite background for the Hebrew šōkēn in Isa. 22:15 (BDB, p. 698). In the Phoenician Ahiram Inscription, škn must mean "governor, prefect;" see Z. S. Harris, A Grammar of the Phoenician Language, AOS, VIII (New Haven, 1936), p. 126. See now AHw, p. 1055, s.v. sükinu; also, Rainey, EA 359-379, pp. 362, 369.
pharaoh, he had full authority over the vassal princes who had to obey him strictly (EA 254:14-15), and carry out his orders (EA 216:10-14).

In the Amarna period when the vassal princes were often at each other's throats, the commissioner would serve as an arbiter in their disputes. In fact, EA 105: 31-37 appears to indicate that if a vassal complained to his commissioner of an act of aggression by another vassal prince, a court of three commissioners would be formed to try the case. 60 If the problem was beyond the commissioner's control, the king would send a special delegate to investigate the complaint (EA 118:13-17, 51-55).

Most of the commissioners or "agents" were Egyptians, but occasionally a Canaanite of Semitic background would rise to such a position of responsibility. 61 Perhaps the outstanding example was Addaya, whose headquarters were at Gaza and who seems to have been the high commissioner of the whole district 62 (EA 254:37; 285:24; 287:47, et passim). The checkered career of Yanhamu 63 as


63 Ibid., pp. 249-250; Campbell, Chronology, pp. 90 ff.; note the wide range of his activities as reflected in the many references to Yanhamu in the Amarna letters, listed in the glossary, EA, p. 1562.
described in the letters seemed to range all the way from "the Egyptian governor of Palestine at the beginning to the reign of Akh-en-Aton,"\(^\text{64}\) and "Fan-bearer at the king's right hand" (Akk. musallil ṣarri, Egyp. ḫbšw bh.t)\(^\text{65}\) to virtual disgrace and loss of position in the government.\(^\text{66}\)

By the Amarna period, Retenu seems to have been divided into three administrative districts, each with its own commissioner. In fact, a comparison of these districts with the geographical divisions reflected in the earlier Thutmose III city list shows that the Amarna period divisions really originated prior to Thutmose' time.\(^\text{67}\)

In delineating these districts, Helck identified them by the following names:\(^\text{68}\) Amurru, the most northern covering the territory from Ugarit to Byblos; Upe, the central district, embracing Qadesh, the Biqa', Damascus, and the Anti-Lebanon; and the southern district, Canaan, which included all of Palestine from Egypt to Tyre. It is probably better to do as Aharoni does, however, and that is to call the districts by the name of their particular

\(^{64}\)\textit{ANET}, p. 486, n. 11.


commissioner's headquarter city: Ṣumur, Kumidi, and Gaza. 69

Full control of such wide territories, extending as far as northern Syria, required an effective communications system and supervision. This was accomplished to an exceedingly efficient degree by means of the officer whose Egyptian title, "the royal messenger," 70 was approximated by the Akkadian mār šipri, "messenger" (EA 47:14; 147:17, 31, passim). 71 He was of ambassadorial status, and was often entrusted with important and delicate missions. 72 Since it was the lingua franca of the time, he had to be conversant with Akkadian, or take an interpreter with him. Often he "might be charged with negotiations at the highest

69Aharoni, Land of the Bible, pp. 146, 152-153. Aharoni cannot accept Helck's names (ibid., p. 146, n. 72). Note his listing of the regions under each district, and the relationship he gives with the place name numbers in the Thutmosis list (ibid., p. 152). On Amarna references to the district headquarters cities, see EA: Ṣumur, p. 1530; Kumidi, p. 1577; and Gaza, p. 1575.

70Mohammad, "Administration," p. 119.

71While the Amarna letters give no specific description of the office and responsibilities of the mār šipri, it is reasonable to assume that they were parallel to the mār šipri of Neo-Assyrian times and culture where the documents fully describe his work. See H. W. F. Saggs, The Greatness that was Babylon (New York, 1962), pp. 249-250.

level."\(^{73}\) Thus, he might carry a letter or "passport\(^{74}\) demanding, if not insuring, safe passage through a territory. This is illustrated by EA 30, probably written by the king of Mitanni to the kings of Canaan, requesting that no one detain the bearer. The life of the royal messenger was far from easy, in spite of the exaggerated picture of it given by the satirical letter of Hori.\(^{75}\) It describes a rather detailed picture of the requirements for the task, as well as an interesting list of various familiar cities of Syri-Palestine.

The royal envoys worked out of a "home office" in Egypt, which, during the Amarna period, was located at a site which has been identified by means of inscriptions on its building bricks which read, "Bureau for the Correspondence of Pharaoh."\(^{76}\) Not only was it concerned with foreign and colonial affairs, but since this office involved correspondence with foreign countries, it included Akkadian and Egyptian scribes on its staff. Egyptian-Akkadian

\(^{73}\) Mohammad, "Administration," p. 120. For a full list of the messenger's duties, see further pp. 121-122.

\(^{74}\) Campbell, Chronology, p. 37.

\(^{75}\) AE, pp. 227-234; ANET, pp. 475-479. P. Montet, Eternal Egypt, p. 180, notes that "the warlike Pharaohs of the 18th dynasty laid great stress on the fact that their messengers could travel the length and breadth of Syria without let or hindrance."

glossaries found at Amarna indicate also that scribal schools were part of this bureau. This office was destined to be both the source and the means of the preservation of the important correspondence known as "the Amarna letters."

The administration of foreign territories required the use of occupation forces whose garrisons were placed in strategically located fortresses, such as at Sumura (EA 104, 106, 107); Byblos (EA 130:21-30); Jerusalem (EA 286:25-50); and Iirqata (EA 100, 103). While these garrisons were under the jurisdiction of the Egyptian district commissioner, the local princes had to provide the needed food and supplies for them.

Within the military command hierarchy of Egypt there was a virtual plethora of offices and titles, reflected only slightly in the Amarna letters. Albright was probably correct when he explained it thusly:


79 Mohammad, "Administration," p. 128.

80 In his MRTQ Schulman presents a detailed study of the many facets of the military organization and the various titles used in the Egyptian documents and inscriptions of the New Kingdom. This is the most complete study of the subject to date.
The contrast between the multifarious titles of the Egyptian inscriptions and the limited number of expressions employed in the cuneiform letters shows that the Canaanites found the intricacies of Egyptian officialdom hard to define. Often the scribe contented himself with the word rabū, 'officer' (literally, 'great one'). Thus, it is deemed sufficient for our purpose here to mention briefly only a few of these titles, primarily those which are reflected in the Amarna letters. These would be the titles which were connected with the garrison or occupation troops.

The occupying troops were referred to in the letters as amēlūti massarti, "men of the guard, guardsmen." The Akkadian massartum was used to represent the Egyptian jwṛṭ, "garrison." As noted above, the size of these garrisons were generally quite small. The commander of such garrison troops was "the commander of the host" (Egyptian hry pdt). Another officer was the wēw, an Egyptian term which is used untranslated in the Amarna letters where it is found a number of times: EA 152:45-50; 285:6;

82 Schulman, MRTQ, pp. 17-18. The Akkadian term, massartum, is based on the verb, nāsārum, "to guard, protect."
83 See pp. 96-97 above.
84 Schulman, MRTQ, pp. 50-51. In EA 107:14, Schulman (p. 123) reads ihripita (which Knudtzon read as ah-ribi-ta, a personal name) with the meaning "commander of a host." But, see W. F. Albright, "Cuneiform Material for Egyptian Prosopography, 1500-1200 B.C.,” JNES, V (1946), 14.
Albright defined this term as "petty officer," one who often is in charge of a detachment of archers. Schulman, however, defines it as "infantryman," noting that it was "the lowest rank of the infantry." In some cases it does seem to have an honorific meaning, especially when it is used with reference to a relationship to the king: "waw of the king," etc. On the other hand, when used by Abdi-Heba (EA 285:6; 287:69), he seems to use it with reference to himself as a term of extreme modesty or self-abasement. This would point to its being a term of low rank.

The economic ties which existed between Egypt and Syria-Palestine during the Amarna period were, as might be expected, largely one-way, with Egypt the beneficiary and Syria-Palestine the benefactor. As Drower puts it:

The aim of Egyptian administration was twofold: to keep the vassal countries from rebellion, and to extract from them the maximum possible revenue.

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85 Albright, "Amarna Letters," p. 7. The term, "archer-host," is found frequently in the Amarna letters, usually in the form ERIN.MES pitāte, and even as ERIN.MES šābe pitāte (EA 166:4). See CAD, XVI, 55, where it is noted that ERIN alone may stand for Akkadian ummanu, "army." For more on the term, see W. L. Moran, "A Syntactical Study of the Dialect of Byblos," p. 131.

86 Schulman, MRT0, p. 37.

87 Ibid., p. 36; ARE, II, § 987.

88 Drower, "Syria," pt. 1, p. 60. For some records of tribute paid to Egypt, see ARE, II, §§ 494-95; 514-15, etc.
Not only was it true that "the Egyptian troops...lived off the land and particularly enjoyed catching an enemy in harvest season," but much of the produce of the land during the occupation by Egypt was sent back to Egypt as tribute. This included grain, fruits, vegetables, wood, oils, incense, livestock and slaves. In addition to raw materials, the vassal princes also sent all kinds of manufactured articles such as those made of silver, gold, and bronze. It is to be noted that while the word normally used in Egyptian for "tribute" (inw) literally means, "things brought," it is used both for tribute given under duress and for gifts which might be given for any reason. Still, it is most likely that "gifts" which may have been given by vassal princes to the crown were usually given with ulterior motives. It is not known just what portion of his income from his own subjects the vassal had to send on to Egypt or just how large the pharaoh's total revenue from Syria-Palestine was each year.

In the area of social and cultural influence, the direction of exchange was more two-way, with both receiving much from the other. The Egyptian soldier, returning home from long campaigns in Syria-Palestine, brought home a

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89 Wilson, *Culture*, p. 182.

90 Drower, "Syria," pt. 1, p. 62; Wilson, *Culture*, p. 183, notes that all income was listed as "tribute, whether taken by force or received through commerce."

completely changed attitude toward the traditional superiority of the Egyptian way of life. He knew now that even the "wretched Asiatic" could surpass the Egyptian in some crafts and military affairs. The foreigners in Egypt, whether visitors or slaves, won in conquest of other lands, brought great changes too in ideas and in ways of doing things. Consequently, many Babylonian, Canaanite and Hurrian words came into Egyptian speech, especially technical terms dealing with weaponry, horses and chariots, raw materials, animals, plants, music, and religion.\textsuperscript{92}

Similarly, Egyptian ideas and practices were brought to Syria-Palestine by captive princes who were educated in Egypt and sent back to their homeland to succeed their fathers as city-state rulers. The influences of Egyptian religion were especially noticeable in the Egyptianizing of Canaanite religious figures and symbols. This is most obvious in Syrian cylinder seals where the Egyptian symbol of life, the \textit{ankh}, is shown being held by Egyptian gods.\textsuperscript{93} Further, in the Amarna letters there is reflected the fact that Egyptian medicine had such a wide reputation that Niqmaddu of Ugarit sent for an Egyptian physician (\textit{EA} 49:22-29).

\textsuperscript{92}Helck, \textit{Die Beziehungen} (1st. ed.), pp. 482, 497, 540.

\textsuperscript{93}H. Frankfort, \textit{Cylinder Seals} (London, 1939), p. 256, plate XLI.
Thus, in spite of Gardiner's doubt that the Egyptian empire ever really existed,\textsuperscript{94} the evidence briefly surveyed above surely contradicts him. The evidence of Egyptian presence, power and influence in and upon Syria-Palestine during the 18th dynasty is too convincing. Egypt brought both restraint and enlargement to the development of life and culture in Syria-Palestine. It is this tension which is so vividly illustrated in the career of Labaya of Shechem, the main object of the remainder of our study.

\textsuperscript{94}See p. 90 above.
CHAPTER III

SHECHEM, LABAYA'S CITY

There is only one reference in the Amarna letters to the city of Shechem, but in this single reference, Shechem is connected with Labaya. In EA 289, Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem wrote to the Pharaoh, Akhenaten, asking for help against the many enemies who were attacking the land which belonged to the crown. Having asked for help earlier, apparently in vain, Abdi-Heba realized that if help did not come immediately, he and his people were doomed. So, in desperation, Abdi-Heba pleaded: "Or shall we do like Lab'ayu, who gave the land of Shechem to the 'Apiru?" (EA 289:21-24). ¹

Admittedly, this statement by Abdi-Heba does not say in unmistakable terms that Labaya was the prince of Shechem. However, whenever all of the letters which deal with Labaya are considered, including the implications which may be read into them, ² general scholarly opinion would agree with this appraisal by Walter Harrelson:

¹Translated by W. F. Albright in ANET, p. 439.

²The details which are found in the Amarna letters concerning Labaya will be discussed fully in the following chapter of this study.
These facts, among others, are clear from these letters. 1) Lab'ayu is the prince of Shechem; 2) Shechem includes sufficient territory adjacent to it to be referred to as the land of Shechem.

But, while it probably is correct to assume that Shechem was Labaya's capital city, there is some disagreement concerning whether it was also his ancestral city. In EA 252, Labaya appears to be responding to charges of disloyalty which were made against him by the king. Instead of giving the servile and self-abasing reply so common in the Amarna letters, Labaya is defiant and defensive of his rights, insisting that his enemies will be resisted. It appears that two of his cities (lines 20-22) have been taken by his enemies; one city seems to have been the "place of residence" of the image of his ancestral patron god (lines 12-13), and so presumably it was his

3 Walter Harrelson, "Shechem in Extra-biblical References," BAR, 2, pp. 262-263. This article is based on his doctoral dissertation, published as The City of Shechem: Its History and Importance (1953), Microcard Theological Series, No. 3. One scholar who disagrees with the conclusion that Shechem was Labaya's capital is Moshe Greenberg who contends that this idea "derives its strongest support from [EA 289:22 ff.] in which he is accused of having given Shechem to the H. But this passage proves at most only that Shechem was under Labaya's control" (The Hab/piru, p. 45, n. 15).

4 To illustrate his defense, he quotes what must have been a familiar Canaanite proverb which says that when ants are smitten, they bite the hand of the smiter. See the classic study of this proverb by W. F. Albright, "An Archaic Hebrew Proverb in an Amarna Letter from Central Palestine," BASOR 89 (1943), 29-32. Note the proverbs about ants in Prov. 6:6; 30:25. For another Amarna proverb, see EA 266:19-25.

5 Otto Weber rightly questioned whether these are two cities other than that referred to in line 7 (EA, p. 1315).
ancestral city. In EA 253:11-15, Labaya further notes that he was at least a third generation governor of his city, which again must have been Shechem. E. F. Campbell, Jr., concludes that this city "is probably his ancestral city and hence the subject of Letter 252."6 A contrary opinion, however, was expressed by Harrelson when he said concerning the town referred to in EA 252:5-11:

This town cannot be Shechem, his capital city (on the basis of letter 289), since the loss of Shechem would have meant, we must suppose, the loss of significant influence in Palestine.7

The fact is that since the cities referred to in EA 252 are not identified by name, a certain ambiguity will always remain. Indeed, Otto Weber noted long ago that the city of EA 252:7 might even be Gezer if EA 292:41 ff. is related to the problem.8 This hardly is possible, however, in view of EA 3699 which was written to "Milkilu,


7Harrelson, "Shechem," p. 262. He agrees with Weber (EA, p. 1315) that the city involved was not Labaya's capital. However, since Harrelson believes that Shechem was Labaya's capital, he excludes Shechem in EA 252. Weber was uncertain about the location of Labaya's capital, so he could accept the possibility that Shechem was referred to in EA 252. It should be noted too that Albright at one time did not believe that Shechem, Labaya's capital, was his native town (ANET, p. 486, n. 9), a position he seemed to reverse later (see his "Amarna Letters," p. 19).

8EA, p. 1315.

9This is the generally accepted numbering of Brussels (Musées Royaux) Text E. 6753, published by G. Dossin in "Une nouvelle lettre d'El-Amarna," RA, XXXI (1934), 125-136. This text was not available to Weber since it was discovered after his comments in EA were published. See Albright's translation in ANET, p. 487; see now Rainey, EA 359-369, pp. 36-39.
prince of Gezer." Further, Milkilu appears as a rival to Labaya in EA 254. When all the information is taken together, and all the ambiguities are considered, it would appear that Campbell's tentative conclusion that Shechem was Labaya's ancestral town as well as his capital is as likely as any other. The problem of Labaya's loss of influence if the city described as seized by his enemies in EA 252 is his capital, Shechem, may be resolved if we assume that it was retaken by the time of the writing of EA 253. As powerful as Labaya appears to have been, and in view of the inherent military weakness of Shechem because of its location in a valley, it seems unlikely that a weaker enemy could have kept the city from Labaya for long.

Lending positive support to the conclusion that Shechem was the capital city of the rather extensive territory controlled by Labaya is the location of the city in the north central highlands of Palestine. Virtually every modern discussion of the importance of Shechem refers to Albrecht Alt's description of Shechem as "the uncrowned

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10 This problem was aptly noted by G. A. Smith, Geography, pp. 227-228, and W. L. Reed, "Shechem (City)," IDB, IV, 314.

11 For example, see Wright, Shechem, p. 9; Eduard Nielsen, Shechem: A Traditio-Historical Investigation, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen 1959), p. 31. Similarly, G. A. Smith observed "that natural and historical precedence have to be given, not to Mount Zion and the City of David, but to Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, with Shechem between" (Geography, p. 221.)
queen of Palestine." This description grew out of his observation that while Jerusalem may have been emphasized as the center of Palestine because of history, it is Shechem that is the one place in the hills of Palestine that meets all the requirements for a natural capital of the area. Located in the almost exact center of western Palestine, it is surrounded by mountains, and lies in the most important mountain pass in the country. Through this pass ancient highways ran in every direction. The geological history of the area created a bountiful water supply and the good rich soil of the plain which stretches for five miles to the east of Shechem. Thus, the area had the basic natural resources necessary for the establishment of an important city.


13 Wright, Shechem, p. 9. Nielsen (Shechem, p. 31, n. 2), states that Alt's contrast between Jerusalem and Shechem, in favor of Shechem, is a bit exaggerated, for Jerusalem was actually quite important in the time of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom, and the Abdi-Heba letters from Jerusalem show this city as an important ally or faithful servant of the pharaoh in what were otherwise chaotic times. On the basic military weakness of Shechem, due to its location in the valley, see n. 10 above.

14 Wright, Shechem, pp. 10-14, briefly describes the geological history of the Shechem area. For further descriptions of the esthetic as well as the geological-topographical setting of Shechem and Samaria, see Smith, Geography, pp. 94-97, 216-217. For a good discussion of the physical and social aspects of the water supply of Shechem, see Robert J. Bull, "Water Sources in the Vicinity," Appendix 4, in Wright, Shechem, pp. 214-228.
On the basis of the confusion of ancient traditions, it was long thought that the ruins of the ancient city of Shechem lay beneath the modern Samaritan city of Nablus. As Albright has pointed out, Shechem most likely was destroyed about 67 A.D. by the Roman Emperor Vespasian at the same time that he leveled the Samaritan temple on nearby Mount Gerizim. Some five years later, in 72 A.D., the "new city," Neapolis (Nablus) was built by Vespasian a short distance up the valley, so there was no real purpose in rebuilding Shechem again. About 90 A.D., the Jewish historian, Josephus, made reference to Shechem, which is to be located between Mts. Ebal and Gerizim. Since Shechem was no longer in existence, it became easy, if not natural, to confuse it with Neapolis. In the fourth century A.D., however, Eusebius, in his Onomasticon of biblical places, and the Bordeaux Pilgrim who visited the Holy Land in 333 A.D., both put Shechem at the eastern suburbs of Nablus, between "Jacob's Well" and the village of Askar. This location was supported by


16Josephus wrote: "He [Vespasian] came down through the country of Samaria, and hard by the city, by others called Neapolis (or Sichem) but by the people of that country Marbortha" (Wars of the Jews, Book IV, trans. Wm. Whiston [Philadelphia, n.d.], p. 761.

the earliest map of Palestine now known, found in a mosaic floor of the sixth century church at Madeba, which also shows the traditional tomb of Joseph near the small village shown on the map. 18

It was not until 1903 that ruins in this area were identified as those of ancient Shechem. This discovery was made by the German scholar Hermann Thiersch who had stopped there for a rest because of tired horses. 19


19 For a translation of his journal entry describing the discovery of the ancient site of Shechem, see Wright, Shechem, pp. 1-2. In spite of subsequent archaeological verification of the identification, note the still hesitant acceptance of the fact by J. Simons, especially since he finds it difficult to square the facts of archaeology with the literary evidence regarding Shechem (The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament [Leiden, 1959], p. 296). In 1838, Edward Robinson wrote that earlier travelers, specifically Maundrell in 1697 and Schubert in 1837, had claimed to have seen thick walls near Jacob's Well, but that he and a companion, Eli Smith, "were not able to make out anything of this sort; and saw only the ruins of the church [at Jacob's Well] and the hamlet Belâṭ" (Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Adjacent Regions: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838 by E. Robinson and E. Smith [Boston, 1836], II, 292, n. 2). In contrast, however, Robinson noted in his journal of 1852 that as early as the 14th century a certain R. Parchi considered Balâṭah as the "site of the ancient Sichem, distinct from Nabulus!" (Later Biblical Researches in Palestine and in the Adjacent Regions: Journals of Travels in the Year 1852 [Boston, 1856], III, 132, n. 2). The "certain R. Parchi" is described by Aharoni (Land of the Bible, p. xii) as "the Jewish scholar Eshthori ha-Parchi, who lived in Beth-shean in the first half of the fourteenth century, ...and combined a mastery of biblical and talmudic sources with his knowledge of Hebrew and Arabic as he engaged in topographical research." The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York, 1910) lists him under "Farhi (Parhi)" and notes that he visited Palestine in 1312 (Vol. V, 343).
identification by Thiersch was substantiated by excavations conducted by German archaeologists who began working on the site in 1913, directed by Ernst Sellin. As early as the next year, Sellin was able to write that there could be "no doubt that the hill of Balata represents the site of the Canaanite-Israelite Shechem." \(^{20}\) Tell Balatah or ancient Shechem thus may be pin-pointed as lying forty-one miles directly north of Jerusalem at the pass between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal where the main north-south and east-west highways converge, at the eastern end of the pass. \(^{21}\)

The earliest probable references to the name "Shechem" are found in texts from the 12th Dynasty of

\(^{20}\) Wright, Shechem, p. 8. This was translated for Wright by S. H. Horn from Sellin's original report, Anzeiger der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-Hist. Klasse 51, Jahrgang 1914, VII, 35-40.

\(^{21}\) W. L. Reed, "Shechem (City)," p. 313; Aharoni, Land of the Bible, pp. 55-56. For a full discussion of the archaeology of Shechem in all its periods, through the fourth campaign at the site (1962), see Wright, Shechem, pp. 23-184. For reports published on the subsequent campaigns, see R. J. Bull, et al., "The Fifth Campaign at Balatah (Shechem)," BASOR, 180 (1965), 7-41; R. J. Bull and E. F. Campbell, Jr., "The Sixth Campaign at Balatah (Shechem)," BASOR, 190 (1968), 2-41; E. F. Campbell, Jr., et al., "The Eighth Campaign at Balatah (Shechem)," BASOR, 204 (1971), 2-17. This last report covered the planned concluding years of the current excavations at the site, 1968 and 1969. A supplementary report was published later by Joe D. Seger: "Shechem Field XIII, 1969," BASOR, 205 (1972), 20-35. The present writer was fortunate enough to visit the site during the last major campaign, in the summer of 1968.
Egypt. The first of these is found in the so-called "exe­
creation texts" published by G. Posener in 1940. These
texts consist of inscriptions on small figurines in the
form of prisoners, and are variously dated from the begin­
ning of the nineteenth century B.C. In this group of
figurines, there is given a total of sixty-four place­
names, including the name or names of the ruler(s). The
apparent reference to Shechem reads: "The ruler of Skmimi,
'Ibshddw." Albright disagreed with Posener's vocaliza­
tion, suggesting instead Sakmâmi or Sakmâmi, meaning

Princes et pays d'Asie et de Nubie. See now G.
Posener, J. Bottéro, and Kathleen M. Kenyon, "Syria and
Palestine: c. 2160-1780 B.C.," CAH2, fasc. 29, pp. 12,
19-21, 25-29. For more on these texts, see p. 27 above
and related footnote 63.

Yohanan Aharoni puts them at the end of the 19th
or early 18th century (Land of the Bible, p. 131); Albright
dated them in the middle of the 19th century ("A Third Re­
vision of the Early Chronology of Western Asia," p. 32);
Posener dated them no earlier than Sesostris III (ca. 1880-
1840) and probably later (Princes et pays, pp. 21-35).

Ibid., p. 68.

Albright, "New Egyptian Data on Palestine in the
Patriarchal Age," BASOR, 81 (1941), 18-19, n. 11. See also
33. Albright took it as a dual form, similar to other place
names such as Ephraim, Misraim, and Yerushalaim. Some in­
terpret the final consonant in Skmâmm as a mimmation or an
enclitic mem form, an idea rejected by Posener. Z. S. Har­
riss notes that yâ-ak-mî in EA 289:23 "must be assumed to
have had initial [t]...since it is written with s in the
Egyptian transcriptions...and with š in the massoretic text;
only [t] would have appeared in both these forms" (Develop­
ment of the Canaanite Dialects [New Haven, 1939], pp. 62-63,
n. 63).
"the two shoulders." This interpretation certainly describes the topography of Shechem, located as it is between the two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal. Also, since place names, both ancient and modern, often reflect the physical or geographical setting, such a meaning would be a logical assumption. While the execration text in which the name Skmm appears gives no real indication of the size or importance of the city, Aharoni notes that when the group of texts in which Skmm is found is compared with earlier execration texts written on bowls, these later texts reflect the changes which took place in Palestine during the twentieth to the nineteenth centuries B.C.

In these texts, the indications are that the nomadic life has been exchanged for a basic urban society, and that the old patriarchal rule by tribal leaders has been replaced by an urban aristocracy. It seems clear that Shechem, along with Jerusalem which also appears in these texts, has

26 Note such American place names as Hot Springs, South Bend, Grand Rapids, Black Mountain, Flat Rock, etc. A modern study of the folk lore of place names is M. J. Quimby, Scratch Ankle, USA: American Place Names and their Derivation (Cranbury, N.J., 1969). In relation to biblical names, see Aharoni's chapter, "The Study of Toponymy," Land of the Bible, pp. 94-117.


28 Published by Kurt Sethe in 1926; see p. 27, n. 63 above.

29 Land of the Bible, pp. 133-134.

30 Nielsen, Shechem, p. 324.
become a major center. This is confirmed by the excavations of archaeologists which show it to have reached its zenith during the Hyksos period.31

The second reference to Shechem from the Twelfth Dynasty is found in the Khu-Sebek Inscription, usually dated to the time of the reign of Sen-Usert (Sesostris) III (ca. 1880-1840 B.C.).32 This inscription describes an Asiatic campaign by Sesostris III, including the conquest of Shechem:

His majesty proceeded northward to overthrow the Asiatics. His majesty reached a foreign country of which the name was Sekmem. His majesty took the right direction in proceeding to the Residence of life, prosperity, and health. Then Sekmem fell, together with the wretched Retenu.33

As noted by Harrelson,34 it would appear that Sekmem refers to a general geographical area, as well as a city Sekmem (Shechem) which served as its capital. It will be recalled35 that in the one Amarna reference to Shechem, Abdi-Heba had used the phrase, "the land of Shechem" (EA 289:23). So, Harrelson probably is correct when he states:

31Reed, "Shechem (City)," p. 314.

32Translated by John A. Wilson, ANET, p. 230; see also ARE, I, §§ 676-687.

33ANET, p. 230. Note that Wilson vocalizes Sekmem differently than either Albright or Posener.


35See p. 108 above.
It would appear that Sekmem was a term used in the Khu-sebek inscription to refer to the central Palestine area where, perhaps, opposition to the pharaoh had its center at Shechem. Even this much is by no means certain. It could be that the country of Sekmem meant no more than the region dominated by the influence of the city of Shechem; or, at the most, that a regional confederation of city-states, with its center at Shechem, provided the major opposition to the forces of the pharaoh.\textsuperscript{36}

From these texts, it seems reasonable to conclude that at least as early as the nineteenth century B.C. the city of Shechem was known by its biblical name. This certainly fits in with the prominence of the city in the patriarchal narratives which deal with the period only a few generations later (see Gen. 12:1-7; 33:18-20; 35:1-4; 37:12-14). Also, the Egyptian text, the Khu-sebek, "\textit{may} suggest that the region of Shechem is a center of significant opposition to the pharaoh."\textsuperscript{37} Such significance would likely be the result of the actual importance of Shechem as a political unit over a long prior period. So, it is likely that there was a long tradition and much precedence for the leadership and power which was demonstrated by Labaya as prince to Shechem, to say nothing of his reputed recalcitrance and opposition to Egyptian control.

\textsuperscript{36}"Shechem," p. 260. As Harrelson notes, this is contrary to the now generally rejected theory of Sethe who had contended that Egyptian Retenu referred to Palestine and that Shechem (Sekmem) was its capital. It also contradicts Alt's old theory that there were two political units in Palestine, one with its capital at Lydda/Lod (Retenu) and the other at Shechem (Sekmem).

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., p. 261. The italics are Harrelson's, showing his uncertainty.
While it is not within the primary purpose and scope of this study to examine the total archaeological evidence for all the periods of Shechem's history, it would seem appropriate to review the main points of the evidence up to and through the Amarna period. This will provide a clearer perspective of the city as it must have been during the time of Labaya's rule.

As has been noted above, the discovery in 1903 by Thiersch that Balâtah was actually the site of ancient Shechem was followed by the beginning of excavations at the site in 1913-1914 by German scholars. As we have seen, the director of this first dig and several subsequent campaigns, Ernst Sellin, was soon convinced that the excavated evidence proved Thiersch to be correct. In his first campaign, Sellin was able to dig a number of trenches to test the inner part of the mound, and as a result four strata were exposed. On the basis of artifacts which the different levels revealed, Sellin called the topmost level "Greek," the next "Jewish" or "Samaritan," the third "Israelite," and the lowest level he termed "Canaanite." Wright has refined and corrected these designations, noting:

Sellin was dating his findings on the basis of his Jericho work, where things dated "Israelite" are actually Middle Bronze Age, seven hundred years earlier. His "Canaanite" discoveries in 1913-14 are said to have been few in number, perhaps be-

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38See p. 114 above.
39See p. 115 above. 40Wright, Shechem, p. 7.
cause "Canaanite" in the Sellin and Watzinger work at Jericho meant Early Bronze Age and earlier.\(^\text{41}\)

Following the interruption caused by World War I, the excavations were resumed in 1926. Sellin continued to direct the work until 1928 when, as a result of criticism against him by the staff archaeologist, Gabriel Welter, Sellin was removed as director. He was replaced by Welter who remained in charge until 1932. At that point, because of his gross inefficiency and lack of excavation results, Welter was removed and Sellin was re-installed. The final German campaign was conducted in 1934. An insight into the approach and personality of Welter may be had in the fact that he discounted the probability that Tell Balatah was ancient Shechem at all, in spite of the evidence. He still held that the ancient city was underneath Nablus, and that Balatah was only the "Tower of Shechem" (Judges 9: 46-47).\(^\text{42}\)

Sellin made some important discoveries at Shechem, especially as the result of his considerable efforts concerning the city's ancient fortifications. Perhaps the most interesting was that of a huge building on the western side of the mound near the great wall. According to his

\(^{41}\)Ibid., p. 244, n. 14.

\(^{42}\)Ibid., p. 29. On Welter's inefficiency as director, see further Wright's, "The Archaeology of the City," BA, XX (1957), 26.
measurements, it was some 68 feet long and 84 feet wide, with foundation walls about 17 feet thick. His opinion that this was a temple seems to have been substantiated now by the discovery of a similar building at Megiddo.\(^4^3\)

Thus, Wright confirms Sellin's conclusions: "There can be no doubt that both of these buildings were once temples of a special type."\(^4^4\) The Megiddo temple had been dated by its excavators ca. 1400 B.C., leading Wright to guess that if the Shechem temple was contemporary with it, then it may have been used by Labaya and his sons in the early 14th century. If this was true, it could also have been the "Baal-berith" temple of Judges 8:33, 9:4, which was destroyed by Abimelech sometime during the 12th century.\(^4^5\)

However, Wright has since concluded that the Shechem temple, at least in its first phase, goes back to the 17th and 16th centuries, and that the same date probably holds for the first phase of the Megiddo structure as well.\(^4^6\)

Wright points out that in an unpublished paper on place names, B. Mazar shows that "these buildings belong to a class of migdāl or fortress-temples."\(^4^7\) Thus, it is only


\(^4^4\) Wright, "Archaeology of the City," p. 24.

\(^4^5\) Ibid., pp. 24-25.

\(^4^6\) Wright, Shechem, p. 94; Wright, "Shechem," p. 361.

\(^4^7\) Loc. cit.
logical to conclude that when a town in Galilee is called Migdal-el (Joshua 19:38), it must be that the town derived its name from a fortress of the god El, and that this fortress also served as a temple.

Although Sellin laid a good general foundation for future excavations at Shechem, it is unfortunate that he apparently was quite lax in keeping records of stratification by plans and the recording of objects while on his digs. Consequently, his sketchy reports of his work are of very limited value. Whatever records he did keep, as well as many of the small objects from the site, apparently were kept in his home in Berlin where they were destroyed in the American fire-bombing of the city in the fall of 1943.\(^{48}\) It was not until 1956 that work at Shechem began again, this time to continue for twelve or more years by the Drew-McCormick Expedition, headed by G. E. Wright.\(^{49}\)

The archaeological evidence as developed and correlated by Wright and his staff over the years indicates that the history of Shechem goes back to the fourth millennium B.C. At that time there appears to have been quite a sizeable Chalcolithic village on the site. The city of

\(^{48}\)This information was sent by letter to S. H. Horn by Sellin's daughter, Mrs. Erica Schneller, on Nov. 22, 1960, as reported by Horn in his "Scarabs from Shechem," \textit{JNES}, XXI (1962), 3, n. 8.

\(^{49}\)For a description of the organization and beginnings of this expedition, see Wright, \textit{Shechem}, pp. 35-56. The bulk of this book, of course, concerns the overall excavation of the site through 1962. See n. 21 above.
historical times, however, seems to have been established during Middle Bronze IIA (1900-1750 B.C.) in the so-called "Amorite" period. The best evidence from this period comes from the temple area on the western side of the site. There are clear indications that, not later than ca. 1800 B.C., before any known city walls were built there, a great leveling operation took place, presumably for some public function. This included a large earthen podium, the sides of which were protected from erosion by a layer of stones. Just what the function of this general area was is not clear, but it possible that it was connected with the fact that this area was the site of a succession of temples during the following six centuries.

Sometime around 1750-1725 B.C. this western area was enclosed by a stone socket wall. Shortly afterward, this wall was utilized in the building up of a vast earthen embankment which served as the mound's fortification. These earthen fortifications, found also at Hazor in Palestine, at Qatna on the Orantes River, and at Charchemish on

50 For a convenient Chronological Chart, listing both the generally accepted dates and archaeological periods for all the ancient Near East, see Thomas, *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, facing p. 452. For a brief chart showing the relationship of the archaeological periods to Shechem, see Wright, *Shechem*, pp. vii-ix. A recent reference to the origins of Shechem as a city-state and the date of MB IIA is G. E. Wright's "The Archaeology of Palestine from the Neolithic through the Middle Bronze Age," *JAOS*, XCI (1971), 289. On the Amorites, see pp. 20-21 above, and related footnote 42.
the Euphrates in Syria, are known to have been introduced by the Hyksos as they began their conquest which finally brought them into control of northern Egypt as well as Palestine.\(^{51}\) This fortified area included a courtyard temple, sometimes called a palace,\(^{52}\) which was rebuilt at least three times during the Hyksos period. At about 1650 B.C., the whole temple area was leveled, and the city line was moved to the north where a huge cyclopean wall was built. At that time, and over the earlier courtyard temple, a huge fortress-temple was built (this is the one discovered by Sellin, as noted above). This temple apparently was seriously damaged by enemy action sometime ca. 1600 B.C., and the temple later was rebuilt, including two massechôôt flanking the new entranceway.

Around the middle of the 16th century B.C., Shechem, along with all other known Palestinian cities, suffered violent destruction by means of two attacks only a few years apart. It is likely that the first came late in the reign of Amosis I (ca. 1570-1546) as part of his campaign to oust the Hyksos from Egypt and to drive them farther north. The second probably came during the time of Amenophis I (ca. 1546-1526) in his efforts to consolidate Egyptian control over Palestine.


\(^{52}\)L. E. Toombs, "Shechem (City), Addendum," *IDB*, IV, 315.
After a gap in occupation of some 100 years (ca. 1540-1450 B.C.), the temple was rebuilt on a smaller scale, with a change in orientation which cannot be explained. Wright suggests that this temple was built "as a more typical Canaanite temple-type in the Late Bronze Age." That is, the main room of the temple was rectangular, with the entranceway on the long side. Excavation shows that this temple was still standing when Shechem was taken over peacefully by the invading Israelites in the 13th century, for Shechem, like Megiddo, was not destroyed as were such cities as Lachish and Debir (Josh. 10:31 ff.) and Hazor (Josh. 11). Shechem and Megiddo both survived until the late 12th century, a fact which coincides with the biblical account of the complete destruction of the city of Shechem by Abimelech in the period of the Judges (Judges 9:45). This temple, like its immediate predecessor, was also a fortress-temple. Since it survived until the time of the Judges, it is quite likely that it was used by Labaya as part of the defense of the city during his reign. Also, he must have worshipped his ancestral god in its sanctuary (see EA 252:12-13). This fortress-temple may well have played an important part in the total military defense of the city.


54 Wright calls it "Fortress-temple 2a" (Shechem, p. 122). This makes the temple destroyed by Abimelech, "Fortress-Temple 2b."
power of Labaya as he extended his territory beyond the immediate bounds of Shechem, giving rise to the complaints against him by his rival princes.

Not all the evidence discovered at Shechem through the many seasons of excavating there has yet been synthesized, interpreted and then published. However, the mass of materials on the site which has been published has clearly shown that "The Lab'ayu Phase" or the Amarna period, following the final consolidation of Egyptian power throughout Palestine in the mid-15th century, "was one of active and organized resettlement accompanied by intensive architectural activity." By means of extensive filling and leveling of the earlier Middle Bronze II and Late Bronze I destruction, "Shechem appears to have been rebuilt with an overall city plan in mind." The main construction was generally more elaborate and substantial than that which followed this period, and obviously reflected a high level of prosperity. This is simply illustrated by the following description of an unusual public area or square constructed during this period; it is located adjacent to the East Gate:

The gateway of this period was flanked on the south by a guardroom consisting of two chambers. West of the guardroom lay an area of undetermined extent.

55 Ibid., p. 76.


57 Ibid., p. 9.
paved with a carefully-laid surface of large cobble stones. It may have functioned as a parade square for troops. From the square a roadway of large paving stones led into the gate...This impressive installation, which no doubt served a public function and was built at state expense, indicates the presence of a strong government in a prosperous city, most likely that of the house of the notorious Lab'ayu of the Amarna letters. The succeeding building phase is a reconstruction on the same plan as, but in a less pretentious style than the LB guardroom. The paved square is missing.58

While the main mound of Shechem may be estimated to be about ten or twelve acres, the exact size in any one period, including the Amarna period, can never be known with certainty. That it was unusually large, however, is obvious because around the western and eastern edges of the mound some of the largest and most formidable fortifications in ancient Palestine have been discovered. These fortifications were necessary because the city itself was built just where some of the most important highways converged in ancient times, and the open valley in which the city lay made defense most difficult. In spite of its inherent weaknesses by virtue of its location, Wright observes:

Nothing comparable to this site in size and strength existed during the second millennium B.C. between Jerusalem and ancient Gezer to the south, Megiddo and Taanach in the great Esdraelon plain to the north and Beth-shan at the opening of that pass into the Jordan valley to the northeast.59

So, while it is impossible to compute the size of this city-

58 Bull and Campbell, "Sixth Campaign," p. 3.

59 Wright, Shechem, p. 4.
state, it is quite certain, on the basis of the archaeological evidence along with the Amarna account of the exploits of Labaya, prince of Shechem, that "it is probable that during the period of its greatest power Shechem controlled an area of the hill country at least 1,000 square miles in extent." 60

The early history of Shechem not only involves archaeological and extra-biblical sources, but it is inseparably bound up with the biblical patriarchal traditions. Since these traditions predate the Amarna age, they must have some relationship to the cultic practices and traditions which were connected with the site. 61

It is true that Shechem "is the first Palestinian site which is mentioned in Genesis," 62 and its prominence in the early biblical traditions easily leads to the conclusion that "Shechem may very well have been the first

60 Loc. cit.


62 Nielsen, Shechem, p. 213. While Nielsen presents a full discussion of the text-critical problems in Genesis which deal with Shechem (pp. 213-286), he makes little or no use of the archaeological findings now available, so his work is of limited value for our study.
real Israelite city." Thus, it would seem appropriate to review the biblical patriarchal traditions for whatever insight they may offer for the understanding of the Shechem of the time of Labaya.

The first patriarch, Abraham, is said to have come to the māqôm, "place," at Shechem (probably more accurately translated, "the sanctuary at Shechem," as does the New English Bible version at Gen. 12:6); and there he built an altar. Later, his grandson Jacob bought some ground near the city, and also built an altar (Gen. 33:18-20). While the biblical tradition may be interpreted as meaning he was the founder of the sanctuary at Shechem, it may only mean that Jacob was continuing in the cultic tradition already reflected in Abraham's prior visit. Similarly, it may be said that Jacob also founded the sanctuary at Beth-el since he set up a massebah there (Gen. 28:10-22, especially v. 22).

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64 Wright, "Shechem," p. 359.
65 Note, however, the use of māqôm at least four times in the account (vv. 11, 16 and 17), each of which in context could mean something like "sanctuary" in view of Jacob's experience there. Also, māqôm occurs again with a similar meaning in the account of Jacob's later visit to Beth-el, at which time he names the "sanctuary" El-beth-El (Gen. 35:7). Abraham too had been in the area of Beth-el earlier (Gen. 12:8), and had built an altar there. The dream of Jacob during his first visit to Beth-el, while using a stone for a pillow, certainly must reflect the ancient custom of incubation, the belief that "the will of a god was revealed especially in dreams dreamed in sacred places" (T. H. Gaster, Thespis [New York, N. Y., 1966],
It is impossible, of course, to establish as a historical fact that the ground which Jacob purchased from the "sons of Hamor" is the same as the sacred area on the western side of the tell to which we have referred above. However, excavations at this point certainly show that cultic practices and traditions continued for many centuries in this area, surviving many temple destructions and reconstructions. Wright observes that if this possibility is true,

we would have to date [Jacob] to the nineteenth century B.C., . . . when in the western sector the sacred area lay on the edge of the city before it was incorporated within city fortification.66

The altar which Jacob erected at Shechem may have been a massēbāh or sacred pillar,67 and if so, it could be presumed to have been at least similar to the massēbōt which the excavators of Shechem have found in the temple area.68 Jacob's naming of his altar, "El, the God of Israel" (Gen. 33:20), is a curious parallel to the fact that as late as the period of the Judges, the temple at Shechem was known as "the temple of El-berith" (Judges 9:

p. 331). Gaster cites (loc. cit.) a number of studies which deal with biblical, Babylonian, Hittite, and Graeco-Roman examples of incubation.


68 Wright, Shechem, pp. 86, 118-119, et passim.
Even more significant, and directly related, is the name "Hamor" in Gen. 33:19 and Gen. 34, especially since it is connected with the name "Shechem," which in these specific contexts is used as a personal name. It is a well-known fact that ḥāmōr, in its various cognate forms, is a common Semitic term for "ass, donkey." Since the discovery of the Mari tablets in the excavations at modern Tell Hariri, begun in 1933 and directed by the French archaeologist, André Parrot, it is clear that the Mari covenant ritual was often concluded by the "killing of a young ass, donkey-foal." The Mari idiom which is thus

69 Judges 9:4 refers to it as "Ba'afal-berith."

70 The identification of Tell Hariri as the site of ancient Mari was suggested by W. F. Albright as early as 1932. For an excellent survey of the excavation and the basic interpretation of its results, see G. E. Mendenhall, "Mari," BAR, 2, pp. 3-20. This study has been updated by Abraham Malamat's article, "Mari," BA, XXXIV (1971), 2-22. Malamat includes an excellent select Mari bibliography which deals with the full spectrum of studies on Mari, from excavation reports to the interpretation of their findings.

71 This translation is adapted from Albright, ANET, (p. 482 text and n. 6). Here he translated the famous Mari text ARM II, 37, published by C. F. Jean in Archives royales de Mari, II, Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Orientales: textes cunéiformes, Vol. XXIII (Paris, 1941). For a recent study of this and related Mari covenant ritual terms, see Moshe Held, "Philological Notes on the Mari Covenant Rituals," BASOR, 200 (1970), 32-40. Held effectively demolishes the contention of Ludwig Koehler (Kleine Lichter [Zurich, 1945], p. 52 ff.) who was followed by E. A. Speiser (Genesis, Anchor Bible, Vol. I [Garden City, N. Y., 1964], pp. 112-113), and M. Noth (The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas [Edinburgh, 1965], pp. 110-111), that Mari hayaram and Hebrew āyir are to be construed as "mature ass" rather than as "donkey foal." Held also takes sharp issue with G. E. Mendenhall's approach to the general problem which he took in his article, "Puppy and Lettuce in Northwest-
translated, ḥayarum qatalum, therefore has the more or less abstract meaning, "to enter into a compact," or "to make a covenant." So, although two different Semitic words for "donkey" (ḥamōr and ḥayarum) are used in two different but apparently related contexts (Shechem and Mari), the general interpretation of the biblical reference to the Shechemites of Jacob's time as Bēnē-Ḥamōr ("Sons of Hamor"), is summarized in quite reasonable terms by Wright:

The "Sons of the Ass" at Shechem, then, are probably to be understood as members of a confederation which had been sealed by the rite of "killing an ass."

Semitic Covenant Making," BASOR, 133 (1954), 26-30. Held sees the Mari ḥassum as meaning "she-goat" rather than "lettuce" as does Mendenhall ("Philological Notes," pp. 39-40). If Held is right, then CAD, VI, 128, where ḥassu is translated "leafy bough," must be corrected. On a striking Akkadian parallel to the biblical Hebrew term for "covenant" (bērīt), see W. F. Albright, "The Hebrew Expression for 'Making a Covenant' in Pre-Israelite Documents," BASOR, 121 (1951), 21-22.

Held shows that neither ḥayarum (ayarum) nor qatalum are Akkadian, but instead "belong to the West Semitic stratum of the Mari dialect" ("Philological Notes," p. 34). The CAD, VI, 118, also indicates ḥāru (ayarum) as West Semitic.

See the biblical Hebrew idiom, kārat bērīt, "to cut/make a covenant" (BDB, p. 503). For the classic study of covenant and law, see G. E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburgh, 1955), reprinted from BA, XVII (1954), 26-46, 50-76, and now printed again in BAR, 3, pp. 3-53.

Genesis 33:19.
Hamor as the "father" of Shechem suggests that either the founding of the city, or else something constituent of its very being, had to do with a covenant or treaty.  

This conclusion may be supported in the continuing story of the relationships between the Shechemites and Jacob's family as recorded in Genesis 34. Whatever may have been the historical facts involved in the Dinah story, the murder of all the Shechemite males by Jacob's sons was nothing less than a tragic violation of a solemn covenant, for which Jacob excoriated his sons in no uncertain terms (Gen. 34:30). Although Jacob had great fears for the consequences of this broken or violated compact, the biblical record does not indicate that they were realized. Unless, of course, further violent confrontation between Jacob and the Shechemites, resulting in conquest by force of Shechem, is actually reflected in Jacob's deathbed promise to Joseph: "I have given to you rather than to your brothers one Shechem ('one mountain slope' [RSV]; 'one ridge of land' [NEB]) which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow" (Gen. 48:22). Even if this record is accepted as a description of Shechem's being conquered by force, this is the only account of a forcible conquest of Shechem in the biblical text. The fact is that when Joshua led the conquest of Palestine, entrance into and

75 Wright, Shechem, p. 131. See also Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan (Garden City, N. Y., 1968), p. 271, n. r.
occupation of Shechem was made without any struggle.\textsuperscript{76}

Behind the choice of Shechem as the locale for the famous amphictyonic covenant of Joshua 24 there would appear to be more than coincidence. It is certainly true that biblical tradition inseparably bound together covenant and Shechem. The inclusion within the Shechem Covenant ritual of Joshua 24 of such elements as "a great stone" (could this 'eben gedolah possibly equal massēbāh?), and the sacred terebinth or oak in the sanctuary area (Josh. 24:26) may show that these covenant traditions continued unabated from Jacob's time to the Israelite settlement of Shechem under Joshua. This would, of course, include the period of Labaya's life and rule since he lived just about a hundred years before the Israelite conquest.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{76}See Joshua 12 for the list of 31 cities conquered and their kings killed by Joshua's forces, but with no mention of Shechem. In fact, the few cities and kings from central Palestine which are mentioned form a curious exception to the otherwise strange fact that nothing is recorded in the biblical text about a conquest of central Palestine, Labaya's territory. See G. E. Wright, Biblical Archaeology (Philadelphia, 1957), p. 76.

\textsuperscript{77}Martin Noth suggested that it was during the Amarna period that the rather long conquest began, noting "the second half of the 14th century B.C." (The History of Israel [New York, 1958], p. 80; this is Stanley Godman's trans. of Noth's Geschichte Israels [Göttingen, 1950]). However, archaeological evidence, which Noth bluntly discounts by saying that literary evidence is just as valid (ibid., p. 82), makes the 13th century more likely as a date for the Exodus and the ensuing conquest; see J. Bright, History, pp. 120-122. For the most recent critical survey of scholarly debate concerning the conquest and settlement of Palestine by the Israelites, see M. Weippert, Settlement. In contrast to the position we have taken above, on the side of archaeological findings, Weippert feels that the position of the Alt-Noth School concerning the occupation of Palestine
The reasons behind such an apparently non-violent "conquest" of the central highlands of Palestine have long puzzled scholars, and no finally certain answer may ever be possible. There can be no doubt, as we have implied above, that the patriarchal period included not only the Abraham-Jacob clans, but a large movement of Semitic peoples including Hyksos, Amorite, Habiru and other ethnically and culturally related peoples. John Bright has noted, consequently, that "the conquest was to some degree ... an 'inside job'":

Through literary analysis of the biblical text, and in view of the history of the vast movements of peoples in the patriarchal period, many scholars have concluded that not all the Israelite tribes had, in fact, gone down into Egypt. Rather, it is likely that the largest part of the tribes actually remained in Palestine, especially in the central highlands area.

has "in its main features, stood the test of the far-reaching criticism both of its general features and of specific details by the 'American Archaeological School'" (p. 145), although he is not ready to accept all the conclusions of the Alt-Noth School either. Another important study is G. E. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," BAR. 3, pp. 100-120, which approaches the matter from the sociological angle.

78 Bright, History, p. 134.

So, when the Israelite occupation of Shechem is considered, several facets must be involved. First, the covenant renewal at Shechem (Joshua 24) probably involved a reuniting of the various Israelite tribes, including both those who had remained there from Jacob's time onward, and those tribes who had taken part in the exodus from Egypt. Secondly, as the biblical text itself admits, the exodus group itself included both distinctly Israelite elements and a "mixed multitude" (Ex. 12:38), so it would appear that the amphictyony which was crystallized at Shechem has completely reversed the biblical tradition, not only contending for two exoduses from Egypt, but also holding that Joshua long antedated Moses, leading an attack on the central highlands during the Amarna period. Then, the tribes led by Moses subsequently entered Canaan from the south, sometime around 1200 B.C. (Hebrew Origins, pp. 21 ff.) For a criticism of Meek's view, see Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 141 ff.

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The basic discussion of the theory that Joshua organized the tribes into an amphictyony or twelve-tribe confederacy on the pattern of the Greeks and others is found in M. Noth's Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels (Stuttgart, 1930). In his later History of Israel (pp. 85-108), he reiterates his basic position that the Israelite tribes did not really become "Israel" until they were united by the Shechem covenant. For a critical evaluation of the general approach of Noth and his mentor, Albrecht Alt, see John Bright, Early Israel in Recent History Writing, Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 19 (London, 1960), pp. 79-110. Wright probably represents a mediating position when he states: "I am inclined to think that such a league was originally created under Moses at Sinai, but would agree with Noth on the importance of Shechem as the place where the Palestinian form was created, or reconstituted, as I would prefer to put it" (Shechem, p. 140). See further Wright's "The Literary and Historical Problem of Joshua 10 and Judges 1," JNES, V (1946), 105-114. For still another approach to the problem of the conquest, which concentrates on the internal evidence of the text but with almost no use of archaeological evidence, see Yehezkel Kaufman, The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine, trans. M. Dagut (Jerusalem, 1953).
included a wide range of peoples, with great differences and similarities. As Bright puts it:

The Israelite tribal league, as it existed in the days of the Judges, undoubtedly embraced whole clans and cities whose people, for the most part of the same general stock as Israel's own ancestors, had long been present in the land and had participated neither in the exodus nor the wilderness march.\(^{82}\)

Thus, it is quite possible that Shechem itself may have been under the continuing control, from Jacob on, of Israelite tribes who had no part in the exodus from Egypt since they had never been there.\(^{83}\) Of course, this possibility can never be proved to the satisfaction of all. Besides that, if it is accepted as a valid assumption, then the relationship of Labaya, in terms of kinship, to the Jacob clans, must also be assumed. For this latter possibility, neither Labaya's letters nor the letters concerning him in the Amarna corpus give us any clues. The only possible connection between Labaya and the Israelite tribes would come through the acceptance of the position that the Habiru of the Amarna letters were the same as the Hebrews and that Labaya was one of the Habiru. The identification of the Habiru with the Hebrews is generally rejected today, however.\(^{84}\)

\(^{82}\)Bright, History, p. 132.

\(^{83}\)W. F. Albright seemed to have had no doubt on this point; see his "Amarna Letters," p. 20.

It is clear that the history of Shechem is the story of an unusual, if not unique, city. It is thus the type of city one would expect to be the home and capital of a man such as Labaya. Indeed, in view of what we now know of the city, both through archaeology and by means of written evidence, the full importance of the city in the history of Syria-Palestine is probably yet to be discovered. Who knows what the discovery of even more evidence, both archaeological and written, could and (hopefully) will reveal of Labaya and his connection with the descendants of Jacob?
CHAPTER IV

LABAYA, PRINCE OF SHECHEM

The Amarna Letters refer to approximately fifty cities which may be located within the general geographical area called "Canaan" or Syria-Palestine. Of these, about half appear to have had their own rulers, usually native princes (albeit appointed by and under the control of the Egyptian crown), so these princedoms are generally regarded as city-states. Each of these city-states was located within one of the three larger administrative districts, with each district having a headquarters city in which the Egyptian commissioner (rābisu) resided. These administrative centers, Kumidi, Gaza, and Sumur, most likely had some basis in the conquest and consolidation of Syria-Palestine under Thutmosis III. However, the actual

1 See Map 38 in Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, The Macmillan Bible Atlas (New York, 1968), for a map which shows the spread of the cities from Zoar at the southern end of the Dead Sea to Qatna, located just north of modern Homs in Syria. For some description of the geography involved, see pp. 9-16 above.

2 See pp. 99-100 above, including n. 69 for Amarna references to the cities as listed in Knudtzon, EA.

3 See pp. 36-40 above. For the listing of the Canaanite cities conquered by Thutmosis III, see Kurt Sethe, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie (Urk. IV), VIII (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 780-781; ANET, pp. 242-243; ARE, II, § 402. For one of
origins of the system already may have been part of the Canaanite pattern which the Egyptians encountered. 4

Reference has already been made 5 to Albrecht Alt's classic study of the fact that most of these cities in Syria-Palestine were located in the plains and lowlands. 6 This means that there were few cities in the hill country, at least during the Amarna period. 7 As we have seen, 8 the main reasons for the existence of fewer political centers in the hill country were the rough terrain and the heavy growth of forests still found in this area in the second millennium, making for much more limited settlement than in the best translations of the list, including attempts at biblical and modern identifications, see Y. Aharoni, Land of the Bible, pp. 147-151.


5 See pp. 78 ff. above.

6 Albrecht Alt, "The Settlement of the Israelites," pp. 188-204. For the latest study and criticism of the problem of the Israelite settlement, see Manfred Weippert, The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Palestine.

7 Weippert (ibid., p. 146) notes: "The city lists of the Egyptian kings as well as the place names in the Amarna texts show that the mountain regions were scarcely colonized. Only in this way did they furnish room for the peaceful settlement of nomads with small cattle in search of land." The context shows that he is referring especially to the Israelite settlement, although the analogy surely applies to the slightly earlier Amarna period.

8 See pp. 84-85 above.
Because the hill country was more sparsely settled, the city-states that did exist there did not encounter the same limitations of space and thus the confinement of their authority as did the cities located closer to each other on the plains. Aharoni makes this important observation:

The principalities in the hill country were therefore much larger than those on the plains, even encompassing a number of towns and a more varied population. These were the Amorite kings referred to in the Bible (Num. 13:29; Deut. 3:9; Josh. 5:1; 11:3) in juxtaposition to the Canaanite kings in the valleys.10

At the same time, however, one must keep in mind the fact that no town or city was really very large by modern standards, whether in the plains or in the hill country. This was especially true of the main fortified mound area of a city to which all the citizens in the surrounding residential quarters fled during attack. For example, the mound of Megiddo, modern Tel el-Mutesellim ("the mound of the commander"), has a surface of only about thirteen acres.11 Similarly, Jerusalem, the city which looms so large in the mind and theology of Jews, Christians and


10Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 163.

11G. W. van Beek, "Megiddo," IDE, III, 335.
Muslims, had an area of only "some fifteen acres" and the mound at Gezer covered only about eighteen acres. Thus, it seems reasonable to accept W. F. Albright's estimate that the entire population for all Palestine during the Amarna Age "in no case can...have exceeded a quarter of a million." He noted further that this estimate is vividly reflected in the Amarna letters by the kind and quantity of military aid which was requested by the various city leaders:

We cannot but be impressed with the smallness of the garrisons which were considered adequate by the local princes when clamouring for aid; the prince of Megiddo wants a hundred men, but three other chieftains, including the princes of Gezer and Jerusalem, are satisfied with fifty each.

Thus, a force of one hundred men quite possibly could have compared favorably with the number involved in the attacking force sent out by an average city. Perhaps the best comparison of a town's militia would be seen in our modern local National Guard units, or even State Police who are often sent out to quell local disturbances. Similarly, such a unit might be stationed nearby, whence they could be

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12 John Gray, A History of Jerusalem (London, 1969), p. 27; Millar Burrows notes that during the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, the walled city covered only 8 or 9 acres ("Jerusalem," IDB, II, 846).

13 Gray, History of Jerusalem, p. 27, footnote, indicates that Hazor seems to be the exception to the rule, covering some 170 acres, which is still only slightly more than a quarter square mile.


15 Loc. cit.
summoned by means of courier.

As has been seen above, Labaya, as prince of Shechem, was one of the most powerful princes in Syria-Palestine during the Amarna period. The basic political unit which he governed was a city-state, much like others found everywhere in Syria-Palestine. This government apparently had existed for a long time before Labaya, having been handed down to him by his father and grandfather who were vassal-princes before him (EA 253:11 ff.). However, it was through Labaya's leadership that Shechem became the great city of the central highlands of Palestine, at least during the Amarna age. He took advantage of the geography, the topography and the economics of his area, and extended his control to include one of the largest areas of any vassal prince of his time.

Of the dozen or so Amarna letters which more or less directly concern the life and career of Labaya of Shechem, only one, EA 254, offers any tangible evidence concerning the dating of the letters, and thus of Labaya himself. Unfortunately, even this one bit of dating material cannot be read with absolute certainty due to the damaged state of the tablet. Consequently, it has been discussed widely, with varying conclusions. The dating

16 See pp. 89-90 above.
17 On the history of the city of Shechem, see Chapter III above.
18 Helck, Die Beziehungen (1962 ed.), p. 188; Koning, Studiën over de El-Amarnabrieven, pp. 119-120; Meyer,
is based on the docket which was added to EA 254 by an Amarna scribe, using red ink and writing in hieratic script. Knudtzon read the docket as rnpt 10 + 2..., and showed his uncertainty by putting the "10" in italics.19 Following Knudtzon, de Koning read it as the 12th year of Amenophis III, while Meyer and Helck read it as the 12th year of Amenophis IV (Akhenaten).20 But, by a careful analysis and comparison of the hieratic signs still visible on the docket, Albright was able to read them as \([30] + 2\).21 This reading has been accepted by E. F. Campbell, Jr., who has cited evidence from other letters to support the reading as Year 32 of Amenophis III.22 Without

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19 EA, p. 812, followed by Ebeling, EA, p. 1317. Also, see Knudtzon's autograph No. 142, p. 1005, which clearly demonstrates the reading problem.


21 W. F. Albright's review of de Koning's Studiën over de El-Amarnaabriefen, JNES, VI (1947), 59; see n. 20 above.

22 Campbell accepts it with marked hesitation (Chronology, p. 70), but on pp. 103-104 he accepts it as "the only plausible possibility from a noncoregency point of view" (ibid.). For related arguments concerning his rejection of the coregency of Amenophis III and Akhenaten, see his "The Amarna Letters and the Amarna Period," BAR, 3, pp. 57-62. See Redford, History, p. 154, n. 282, where he accepts "Year 32" as "probable."
going into the details of his reasoning, suffice it here to note that Campbell says that the Abdi-Heba letters EA 287 and 289 "can be placed confidently"\(^{23}\) within the years one and four of the reign of Amenophis IV. Since these letters mention the activities of the sons of Labaya, but without any reference to their father, it must be presumed that by this time Labaya was already dead. If we accept a thirty-eight year reign of Amenophis III (1417-1379 B.C.), and the reading "Year [3]2" on the docket of EA 254, this still leaves as many as seven years to account for the events between EA 254 and 287. This, as Campbell admits, "places a certain strain on the situation,"\(^{24}\) especially since he feels that "the letters of Lab'ayu must be placed as close as possible to those of Abdi-Heba."\(^{25}\)

In spite of the uncertainties involved, Campbell is probably correct when he sets forth the following possible limits on the dating of Labaya:

Lab'ayu was still alive in the thirty-second year of Amenophis III, but was out of the picture seven years later...

The Lab'ayu correspondence is approximately as early as any. The closely dateable material then extends through the period of Lab'ayu's death around the thirty-third or thirty-fourth year, through the rise of Lab'ayu's sons and their alliance with Milkiulu of Gezer at the end of Amenophis III's reign, and through the Abdi-Heba correspondence in the early years of Akhenaten.\(^{26}\)

\(^{23}\)Campbell, *Chronology*, p. 102. See pp. 96 ff. for details.

\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 103

\(^{25}\)Loc. cit.

\(^{26}\)Ibid., pp. 103-105.
This is obviously a quick general over-view of only the last part of Labaya's life. It is the intention of the study which follows to try to reconstruct the sequence of known events in the life of Labaya on the basis of the very limited information which the Amarna letters give about him. As a part of this effort, and in order to add illumination wherever possible, special attention will be given to the geographic and interpersonal involvements concerning Labaya and his fellow vassal princes.

Prince Labaya, the Man

In 1931, A. T. Olmstead wrote:

Labaya can scarcely be called a nationalist, for though his father and grandfather had ruled in Canaan before him, his name appears in a letter from Arzawa, in southeastern Asia Minor, which is written in near Hittite, and this may have been the home of his ancestors.27

The letter to which Olmstead refers is EA 32 where in line 1, Knudtzon read lab-ba-[i]a, and in lines 4 and 10 he read lab-ba-ia-an, the forms of the name bearing Hittite case-endings as one might expect in a letter having clear Hittite provenience and influences.28

27 History of Palestine and Syria, p. 185.

28 EA, pp. 274 and 276. Knudtzon admitted that he could not attempt a consistent translation of the letter, so he left the translation pages blank. However, S. A. B. Mercer, in his The Tell El-Amarna Tablets (Toronto, 1939), pp. 189 and 191, did give a translation which he noted was based on the 1930 study of the text by B. Hrozny, "La deuxième Lettre d'Arzava et le vrai Nom des Hittites Indo-Européens," JA, CCXVIII (1931), 307-320.
tion given above by Olmstead seemed obvious enough, and so it was accepted generally by scholars for a long time. In spite of the strange spelling of the name "Labbaia," it was simply seen as a variation of the name "Labaya." Thus, both forms were considered to refer to one and the same person, Labaya, prince of Shechem. 29

However, an examination of Mercer's translation of EA 32 raises another question aside from the strange spelling of "Labaya." In this letter, "Labaya" is portrayed as a "go-between" in a marriage contract between the daughter of the Hittite king and the Egyptian king. In the course of this "match-making," he would have had to travel some 300 miles or more north to Arzawa. 30 This is hardly commensurate with the impressions we get of the Labaya of the Labaya letters (EA 252-254). At the least, this would certainly be a step down for an otherwise very independent Labaya!

It took the genius of W. F. Albright to make clear the fact that the "Labaya" of EA 32 has no connection with the "Labaya" of our study (EA 252-254, et passim). 31 For

29 Weber in EA, p. 1075; Mercer, El-Amarna, p. 189.

30 Campbell, Chronology, p. 40, n. 29. Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, Bible Atlas, Maps 43 and 66, show Arzawa as lying almost in the extreme southwestern part of Anatolia or modern Turkey. However, for recent arguments in favor of a northwestern location, see J. G. Macqueen, Anatolian Studies, XVII (1968), 169-187.

31 See his article, "Two Little Understood Amarna Letters from the Middle Jordan Valley," BASOR, 89 (1943), pp. 7-17.
one thing, the reading la-ba-ia of the name occurs only in EA 32, while all other instances of the name in the Amarna letters appear as either la-ab-a-ya or la-ab-a-ia, so the names must not be identical. Further, Albright suggested that the reading in EA 32 probably should be Kal-ba-ia which not only solves the problem of the missing aleph which is found in the other forms, but it also gives good sense when translated: "Dog-man." It is to be noted that this name occurs at least six times in the Ugaritic texts.

Albright took the name Labaya (in our study it is Anglicized throughout, with the aleph omitted) to be based on the root lb, from which *labu might be deduced. Thus, it is the source of Hebrew lb', Ugaritic lbet and Arabic labu'a(t), lab'a(t), meaning "lioness." So, Albright translated "Labaya" as "Lion-man," "lion-like."

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32 Ebeling's Glossary (EA, p. 1564) should be corrected since it erroneously cites a reading la-ba-a-ya.

33 On the readings of the sign kal/lab, see von Soden, Das akkadische Syllabar, No. 173; René Labat, Manuel d'Epigraphie akkadienne (Paris, 1952), No. 322.


35 G. D. Young, Concordance of Ugaritic (Rome, 1956), p. 36.


37 ANET, p. 485, n. 5.
Huffmon has interpreted the element lb' as "either theophorous or an actual divine name comparable to the Akkadian deity Lab(b)a."\(^{38}\) Paul Gilchrist has noted that Moshe Held disagrees with Albright's interpretation of the name, contending instead that it is non-Semitic in origin.\(^{39}\) Part of his position is based on the fact that in both Arabic and Ugaritic the root lb' has the feminine meaning, "lioness." In Akkadian, according to the CAD,\(^{40}\) labbu (lab'u, labu) "is a poetic word for lion, contrasted with the more common nešu." It seems probable that in the light of the Hebrew development of the term, in which it is used in both the masculine and feminine sense, that "Labaya" is best interpreted as the Canaanite for "Lion-man" or the like. It is doubtful that names may ever be pressed into unbending grammatical molds. Suffice it to note here that his name appears to indicate a Semitic background for Labaya.

In further investigation of the ethnic background of Labaya and his family, it should be noted that at least one son of Labaya is named, so that name should be analyzed, among others:

\(^{38}\)Huffmon, Amorite Personal Names, p. 225.
\(^{39}\)Gilchrist, "The Amarna Correspondence from Central Palestine," p. 13.
\(^{40}\)CAD, IX, 25. Further, labbatu (labatu) in the sense of "lioness" in Akkadian is "attested only as an epithet of Ištar" (loc. cit., p. 23). The hapax-legomenon, 1biya', in Ezek. 19:2 is a feminine form; see BDB, p. 522. The Hebrew root 'ry, "lion," seems to be found only in the masculine form, according to BDB, p. 71.
if possible. In EA 255 and 256, we have letters from the son, Mut-Ba'lu, who appears to be the ruler of Pella. As Albright has demonstrated, there seems little reason to doubt that this name is Semitic, and that it means something like "Man of Baal." It would appear that this is an Amorite genitive compound name, for, as Huffman observes, "there are no clear cases in which an Amorite name with mut- is not of the genitive compound type." At the same time, he notes that the spelling mu-ut (which is found in the EA 255-256 occurrences of the name) probably reflects definite Akkadian influence since mu-ut is the normal form for the nomen regens in Akkadian. But, before the name is described definitely as "Amorite," we must again note the caution of Albright:

The linguistic difference between Amorite as reconstructed from personal names ..., and Canaanite is so slight that far-reaching conclusions are futile.

Also, there seems to have been little difference between the two peoples culturally. Whatever differences existed were the result of Mesopotamian influences on the Amorite element, and the impact of the Mediterranean and Egyptian

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42 Huffman, Amorite Personal Names, pp. 119, 234-235.

43 Ibid., p. 119. The evidence is indecisive; the name Mut-Ba'lu thus may just be a Canaanite name.

material culture upon the Canaanites.\textsuperscript{45} So, the name "Mut-Ba'lu" might well be termed "Canaanite-Amorite."\textsuperscript{46}

Anyhow, the many movements of peoples from various ethnic backgrounds into Syria-Palestine must have resulted in mixture with the native "Canaanite" population. Thus, it is surely a fiction to try to limit any person to one of these backgrounds, in spite of his name and its possible linguistic derivation. This is especially true of Labaya who was at least a third generation prince of Shechem, and his son, Mut-Ba'lu, who was at least a fourth generation resident of Syria-Palestine.

It is not our purpose or intent here to psychoanalyze Labaya, even if the material concerning him were sufficient to legitimately attempt to do so, and if the writer were qualified for the task. However, in EA 252, one of the three letters which Labaya wrote to the king of Egypt, we do get an unusual glimpse into his personality and mind.

Even a casual reading of randomly selected Amarna letters quickly discloses that the usual attitude expressed by the vassal princes when they wrote to their king was one

\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., p. 335.

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., p. 354, n. 27. Bright notes (of an only slightly later period): "By the time of the Israelite occupation (thirteenth century) no clear distinction between Amorite and Canaanite can be drawn" (\textit{History of Israel}, p. 55). See also pp. 114 ff.
of abject servility and obedience. 47 More often than not, they seemed to be grovelling in the dust before the king, willing to be trodden under foot like dirt. Even Labaya seems to take this attitude of self-abasement in EA 253 and 254. However, while he began EA 252 with a short and apparently formal protest of loyalty: "At the feet of my Lord I fall" (line 4), 48 he quickly became very defensive of himself and his rights. It is apparent that in this letter Labaya is replying to an official court message to him. This message must have included questions concerning procedures he had followed in defense of his city. Also, the letter implies that the court had received reports about Labaya which were less than complimentary to him. Since we do not have the king's letter to Labaya, we can only surmise its contents from his reply in EA 252.

The situation appears to have been something like this: In spite of the fact that he had previously made a peace-treaty with some unnamed enemies, this treaty even having been consummated before and witnessed by a rabû, a high Egyptian official, 49 the enemies had broken their

47 See pp. 90-91 above. For typical examples of protestations of loyalty in the Amarna letters, see CAD, I, pt. 2, 251, s.v., ardu. For selected examples of declarations of servility by vassal princes, see EA 60:1-7; 84:3-6; 195:4-23; et passim.

48 ANET, p. 486.

49 As W. F. Albright has shown in his "An Archaic Hebrew Proverb," pp. 29-32, this letter was written in almost pure Canaanite. The scribe seemed to know little Akkadian, and so he used the Canaanite rabû, "great one,"
treaty. Indeed, they had attacked and captured his city. More than that, his ancestral god had been captured also (EA 252:12-13; 29-30). In addition, he claimed to have been misrepresented to the pharaoh in some way, although the content of the slander is not clearly stated (EA 252:13-15). It may be that he was on the defensive because he had overstepped his bounds by making attacks on his enemies' territory as part of the defense of his city.

Another possible interpretation of the "missing letter" against which Labaya was defending himself is that he may have been admonished by the king for being too lax in his defense of his city, rather than too ambitious. Perhaps this was the source of the accusation made against him by his contemporaries that he had given over the land of Shechem to the Habiru (EA 289:21-24). Whether this was instead of the Akkadian rābisu, "commissioner," an important Egyptian area official (see pp. 97 ff. above). Here again we have evidence, as Albright noted elsewhere, that "the Canaanites found the intricacies of Egyptian officialdom hard to define" ("Amarna Letters," p. 8).

50 On whether the city in question was Shechem, see pp. 109-111 above.

51 On the peculiar Akkadian idiom which is here translated "slandered," see Albright, "An Archaic Hebrew Proverb," p. 30, n. 13. The idiom is garsāya aklu, literally, "my pieces have been eaten." The Canaanite gloss given in line 14, 빗י, probably appears in Hebrew as יָּשָׁר, "to watch stealthily, lie in wait;" see BDB, p. 1003.

52 This approach was graciously suggested to the writer by his adviser, Dr. Jay D. Falk.
a just accusation, we cannot be certain. At any rate, Labaya tried to clear himself by asserting emphatically that the city was taken by force. He claimed that he had openly made a treaty with this enemy, whether the Ḫabiru or others, but since it was made with the supervision of the rābīsu, it clearly was not against the interests of the crown. But, now the treaty had been violated by the attack against his city. So, he asserted his rights in defending himself and his city, no matter what the king might say. Of course, there is no way of knowing whether his vociferous claims were really going to be carried out or whether he was just making political talk. It must be noted that he did not name any rival prince as the enemy that was involved, so this could mean that the enemy was either the Ḫabiru or a group like them, rather than a well-known ruler of a neighboring city-state.

His ire having been raised, Labaya did not hesitate to speak his piece. In defending himself, he maintained that as a prince and vassal of the king, he had certain rights. In his fervor, he went so far as to use a proverb about the ant to make his point.\(^53\) Indeed, it may be in order to interpret his use of this rather pointed proverb as "open defiance of the king's orders,"\(^54\) for the attitude expressed by Labaya must have reflected an action he was

\(^{53}\) Albright's study of this proverb has already been noted above; see p. 109, n. 4.

not supposed to do, so he felt it necessary to justify it. For him, self-defense was just as natural as it was for the ant, as he noted: "How could I hesitate this day when two of my towns are taken?" (EA 252:20-22).\(^55\) Becoming more defiant, he continued: "Even if thou shouldst say: 'Fall beneath them and let them smite thee,' I should still repel my foe, the men who seized the town and my god, the despoilers of my father, (yea) I would repel them" (EA 252: 23-31).\(^56\)

At least in this letter, Labaya showed his true feelings, and asserted his position as prince, as guardian of his cities, and as one who had his own ideas about his career. Seemingly, in this letter he was still "his own man," although in his other letters (EA 253, 254), his attitude is just the opposite. In fact, it sounds rather strange to hear him say in EA 254:LH-46: "If the king should write to me, 'Plunge a bronze dagger into thy heart and die!, how could I refuse to carry out the command of the king?"\(^57\)

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\(^{55}\) This is Albright's translation in ANET, p. 486. E. F. Campbell, Jr., has translated "this day" as "these days" since the scribe, again showing his inadequacy in Akkadian, mixed an idiom and used a plural demonstrative adjective with a singular noun ("Shechem," p. 195, n. 8).

\(^{56}\) ANET, p. 486. He later revised his translation to read: "I will resist my foes(s), the men who captured the 'city of god,' the despoilers of my father" ("Amarna Letters," p. 19). In this translation, he took the Akkadian al ili as a construct phrase meaning "city of god" and referring to "the temenos (sacred enclosure) of Shechem" (loc. cit.).

\(^{57}\) ANET, p. 486.
Labaya, prince of Shechem, could indeed act the part of a "lion-man" as he roared his defiance of the crown. His attitude may have reflected a "king-complex," not only because he was a "king" over larger territorial holdings than was generally true of other vassal princes, but because of his own attitude toward himself and his position. So, his verbal battle with the pharaoh was more than the petulant defiance by an inferior of his superior. Instead, it was the reflection of the mind-set of one who was accustomed to making and following his own life or death decisions. At the same time, when it was expedient to do so, he could be completely subservient to his suzerain, as in EA 253-254.

On the other hand, all the other extant references to Labaya seem to justify the general indictment voiced by Campbell: "he was a real scoundrel, and his contemporaries are universal in their opposition."\(^58\) His own contemporaries certainly would be the most logical source of an appraisal of him. At the same time, it must be remembered that they were as self-seeking as Labaya was, but perhaps not quite as able to make a success of their efforts.\(^59\) As the head of a more than ordinary city-state, he would have


\(^{59}\) On the rivalry between princes and the violation of one another's territory, Weippert suggests that "the Amarna letters show that this was an every-day occurrence in the city-state territories of the plains and valleys" (Settlement, p. 146, n. 6).
been the object of both the jealousy and fear of the other vassal princes. But, as the letters show, he did not hesitate to capitalize on that fear and on his superior resources as he encroached upon and even openly attacked the territories which surrounded his own.

Was Labaya of Shechem a Ḫabiru?

The Ḫabiru play a rather large part in the Amarna letters, about one-third of all known references to them being found in these texts. As noted above, it is only in the letters from Abdi-Ḫeba of Jerusalem (EA 285-290) that the Akkadianized form, Ḫa-bi/pi-ru, occurs in the Amarna tablets, the remaining references to this people being some form of the Sumerian logogram SA.GAZ.

Since Rib-Ḫaddi, prince of Byblos, wrote the greatest number of the Amarna letters, some seventy in all, it is to be expected that he would make many references to the Ḫabiru. This is true especially since he suffered much at the hands of Abdi-Asirta, prince of Amurru, who was using Ḫabiru mercenaries in his armed attacks. Thus, in a letter to the pharaoh, Rib-Ḫaddi accused his enemy, saying: "Behold now, Abdi-Asirta has taken Shigata for himself and has said to the people of Ammiya: 'Kill your lord so that you

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60 See Bottero, "Ḫabiru," RAL, IV (1972), pp. 15-21, for the latest listing of published texts.

61 See p. 47 above.
may become like us and be at peace!' So they turned themselves over according to his words, and they became like GAZ/Ḫabīru" (EA 74:23-29). Rib-Ḫaddi applies the name "Ḫabīru" to the prince who was a rebel against the crown as well as to his mercenary troops and those inhabitants of the cities who joined the rebellion. Greenberg very well may have a point when he conjectures that the use of the abbreviated logogram, GAZ, may be a deliberate pun with negative meanings intended and understood, such as SA.GAZ/šaggasu, "murderer."

In the same letter (EA 74:29-41), "the propaganda of Abdi-Asīrta" by which he hoped to rally support of the people to join with the Ḫabīru in the insurrection, is quoted fully by Rib-Ḫaddi for the king's benefit: "And behold, now Abdi-Asīrta has written to the host in the temple of Ninurta, 'Muster yourselves, and let us attack Byblos—behold, there is no man who can rescue it from our power—and let us drive the mayors from the midst of the lands, and let all the lands turn themselves over to the Ḫabīru, and let an alliance be formed for all the lands so that the sons and daughters may have peace forever. And

62 This translation is adapted from that in Greenberg, Ḫab/piru, p. 34, and in Youngblood, "Rib-Ḫaddi," p. 127.

63 Greenberg, Ḫab/piru, p. 90.

64 Ibid., p. 34.
even if the king comes out, as for all the lands there will be hostility toward him, so what can he do to us?" 65

In this statement, Abdi-Asirta clearly emphasized his own disloyalty to Egypt, as well as the opposition to the throne and to the loyal princes which was symbolized by, if not inherent in, "the Habiru."

Greenberg has pointed out that an understanding of the relation of the Habiru to Abdi-Asirta "is complicated by the evidently free interchange of the two." 66 Not only were their conquests identical, but Rib-Haddi went so far as to refer to Abdi-Asirta as "the Habiru, the dog" (EA 91:5). 67 All references clearly show that in the hostility

65 This translation is basically that of Youngblood, "Rib-Haddi," p. 127. He takes the logogram E.NIN.URTA as "the temple of Ninurta" rather than a place name since it is not preceded by URU (contra G. E. Mendenhall, "The Message of Abdi-Ashirta to the Warriors, EA 74," JNES, VI [1947], 124; W. L. Moran, "Amarna Šumma in Main Clauses," JCS, VII [1953], 78). On the other hand, Knudtzon, EA, p. 375, already had leaned toward Youngblood's interpretation, and Weber, EA, p. 1160, admitted the possibility also. It cannot be the same as URU.E.NIN.URTA of EA 290:16 (so already Weber, EA, p. 1160) which is identified as a town northwest of Jerusalem by Kallai and Tadmor in their article, "Bīt Ninurta=Beth Horon," pp. 138-147. The temple of Ninurta of EA 74 must have been in the area of Byblos, and may have been the logical rallying point of troops since Ninurta was the youthful god of battle.

66 Greenberg, Hab/piru, p. 71.

67 The Amarna text reads L[U]G.AZ.MES.UR, but in spite of the plural indicator MES, the verbs in lines 4 and 6 point to the singular meaning of Habiru, and thus to Abdi-Asirta (ibid., p. 38). This was noted already by Knudtzon (EA, p. 429) and Weber (EA, p. 1181). In the German edition of Die Landnahme, Weippert suggests the reading UR.MES, and thus kalbū, "the dogs," which would support the plural
of the Habiru against Rib-Haddi, it is Abdi-Asirta who played the main role, and that the situation changed little when Abdi-Asirta was succeeded by his sons (EA 104: 17-24; 116:67 ff.). Thus, Greenberg concludes:

It is clear that in Byblian usage the label (SA.)GAZ embraced all the enemies of Rib-Addi: native princes, governors, and townspeople who had turned against Egyptian authority. That there existed a particular group among these to whom the designation was proper, and from whom the entire rebel faction might have received its appellation, is barely evidenced.68

Campbell also notes that Rib-Haddi was not saying that Abdi-Asirta was a Habiru by some family connection so much as that "the reference to him and to his following as 'Apiru is simply a label implying enmity."69

It is in the Biryawaza letters (EA 194-197) that it is evident that the Habiru "were a group apart from the rebelling natives."70 In EA 195:24-30, Biryawaza lists

meaning of GAZ/Habiru as referring to a group (p. 75).
However, Weippert's English edition (Settlement, p. 72) reads it as UR.KU (even in footnote 65 which is supposedly quoting Text 110 of Bottéro, Habiru! Bottéro does, however, translate as plural, chiens, also (loc.cit.). In defense of the singular reading, Youngblood ("Rib-Haddi," p. 355) notes that GAZ is usually written with the plural sign in the Byblian Letters, to say nothing of singular verbs used in it. On the use of kalbu as a term of denunciation, see CAD, VIII, 72. For similar use of the biblical Hebrew cognate, see 2 Kings 8:13; 1 Sam. 17:43, et passim.

68 Greenberg, Hab/piru, p. 72.
a group of Ḫabiru alongside a group of Sutâ, both groups apparently being loyal to him, part of his armed forces. However, in EA 197:7-30 he refers to the Ḫabiru as associated with the enemy, which in this case was part of the native population.

It is thus clear that the SA.GAZ were a separate element; they could ally themselves either with the natives or with the Egyptians. As a rule they were to be found on the side of the natives because these, rather than the Egyptians, were in dire need of auxiliaries. Moreover, from the fact that the term SA.GAZ could cover all those in revolt, it is evident that the group comprised a considerable number of persons who had defected from the Egyptian cause.71

The wide range of meanings inherent in "Ḥabiru" is further seen in EA 185 and 186 where they are hired brigands who looted various Syrian towns for their employer, Amanḥatbi, prince of Tushulti, who was obviously less than loyal to the crown. Many were simply available for hire, whether by a loyalist or by an enemy of the crown.

The situation in Palestine was much like that in Syria. In the Abdi-Ḥeba of Jerusalem letters we find the same desperate complaint that the Ḫabiru are taking over the land, also under the direction of or under disloyal local chieftains. Albright noted that Abdi-Ḥeba "was inclined to lump his enemies among the 'governors' (i.e., the native princes) with the 'Apiru,"72 using the term "Ḥabiru" in the sense of "enemy."

71 Loc. cit.
The mercenary soldier aspect of "Habiru" is also seen in the letters from Biridiya, prince of Megiddo (EA 242-246) when he notes (EA 246: rev. 5-10) that the Habiru have been hired to fight against him.

References to the Habiru in the Amarna letters frequently occur in connection with forms of the Akkadian verb epēzu, "to do; to make," especially in a passive form of the verb with various Canaanite affixes. Thus, various individuals or people are spoken of as "becoming Habiru" or "being made Habiru." Campbell is probably correct when he says that to interpret this phrase as meaning "to rally to the side of the Habiru" is "pushing beyond what is said." Instead, he sees the implications in the phraseology as simply meaning, "to defy the authority of the crown," and that the term Habiru often was used as a label signifying "outlaw" or "rebellious." Campbell notes:

This understanding of the term...makes it possible to explain why there is very little 'Apiru movement in the Amarna letters and much more reference simply to 'Apiru activity. Cities rebel and become 'Apiru...If this view has anything to commend it, then it can be added that the 'Apiru are not a foreign element in the land, coming from outside, but an indigenous element.

74 See CAD, IV, 235, where the meaning "to side with a person or a country (EA only)" is given.
76 Ibid., p. 68; Campbell, Chronology, p. 86, n. 48.
77 Campbell, "Amarna Letters," p. 68. He notes that he is following Dhorme's original argument (1924) that the Habiru were not the invading Hebrews.
George E. Mendenhall has taken a similar, if not stronger, position, asserting: "There is not the slightest hint of any outside invading forces being involved in the Habiru activities of the Amarna period." Indeed, he posits quite the opposite idea:

Both the Amarna materials and the biblical events represent the same political process: namely, the withdrawal, not physically and geographically, but politically and subjectively, of large population groups from any obligation to the existing political regimes, and therefore, the renunciation of any protection from those sources.

On the other hand, while granting that the basic struggles of the Habiru in Canaan were internal in nature, W. Harrelson contends that "at least a portion of the people referred to as 'Apiru are invaders who are attempting to take over the land as the opportunities permit." However, Harrelson does not give any textual evidence to support his assertion, and still admits that his premise is only a probability and highly debatable.

The Amarna letters give a somewhat different picture of the SA.GAZ/Habiru from that reflected in all the other texts which refer to them from the Sumerian period

78 Mendenhall, "Hebrew Conquest," p. 106.
79 Ibid., p. 107. While Mendenhall sees the Habiru activities as "a peasant's revolt" (loc. cit.) Weippert (Settlement, p. 74) rejects this description in view of the fact that many of the vassal princes were themselves involved in the rebellion against Egypt.
81 Loc. cit.
onward. It is only in the former that the name is applied to elements of the native, settled population, whether local rulers or inhabitants of the city-states. The other sources show them as a definite social group spread throughout the ancient Near East. The members of the groups were foreigners\(^82\) of diverse ethnic origins.

Greenberg makes this appropriate summary:

> It was not in their origins that the hapiru were united, but in their foreignness, and their peculiar manner of subsistence. That the hapiru were ethnically or tribally structured seems to be excluded by our present evidence.\(^83\)

Because of their alien backgrounds they never seemed to be a part of the generally settled society. Consequently, they seem to have experienced a great deal of rejection as a social class, and they were relegated to the roles of servants, mercenaries, or soldiers of fortune. Many also turned to brigandage and marauding.

Admittedly, the content of the letters is such that there is no real occasion to mention the national origins.

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\(^82\) This is generally implied, but most clearly evident in the Nuzi documents. See T. J. Meek, Hebrew Origins (New York/Evanston, 1960), p. 10, n. 29.

\(^83\) Greenberg, "Hab/piru and Hebrews," p. 196. Weippert agrees when he observes that the texts show "there can be no question of an ethnic unity such as a 'nation' of 'apiru." (Settlement, p. 70). Thus, Olmstead's old assertion that "the Habiru of the Amarna letters appear to have been all Aramaeans" (History of Palestine and Syria, pp. 158-159) must be discounted; so also Breasted's view of the Habiru as "Aramaean Semites" (History of Egypt, p. 387).
The question of their indigeneity is difficult, although Mendenhall and Campbell make this assumption. The fact is that Syria-Palestine was in no sense a political unity, but rather it consisted of city-states whose main connection with each other was the fact that they were supposed to be under the control of Egypt. So, if a person fled from Acco, Megiddo, or Jerusalem to Labaya's territory which was especially favorable as a refuge because of its relatively sparse settlement and its inaccessibility, he was actually a foreigner there, and not indigenous. Thus, as a result of leaving one's home,  

84 Mention must be made of the Idrimi Inscription from Alalah, which may be dated just before the Amarna period, ca. 1530-1500, and which does point to the origin of at least one group of Habiru. In his inscription, Idrimi says that when he fled to the town of Ammiya in Canaan, he found people there from various localities of his home area in northern Syria. He then adds that he lived for seven years among the Habiru (the text has sābē,MES Ṭ.A.GAZ, which may point to Habiru mercenaries). If the sentences are connected, as they must be, it would appear that the foreigners from northern Syria who were living in Canaan must have been members of the Habiru. On the Idrimi Inscription, see: Sidney Smith, The Statue of Idri-mi (London, 1949); W. F. Albright, "Some Important Recent Discoveries: Alphabetic Origins and the Idrimi Statue," BASOR, 118 (1950), pp. 11-20; A. Goetze, "Critical Review of S. Smith, The Statue of Idri-mi," JCS, IV (1950), 226-231; Greenberg, Hab/piru, pp. 20 and 84; Bottero, Habiru, pp. 37-38; Rowton, "Topological Factors," p. 383; n. 54.  

85 This important distinction was suggested to the writer by Dr. Jay D. Falk. See also Bright, History, p. 117; Greenberg, "Hab/piru and Hebrews," p. 196.
which often meant fleeing from one's town because of some trouble, one could be considered a Habiru, for life now became most unsettled and uncertain. In most instances, the Habiru seem to have lived on the fringes of society, and so appeared to be rootless and often unruly.

There is no direct evidence whether the Habiru were a settled group or one which floats from one area to another. The two references to them which include the post-determinative -ki (EA 289:24; 298:27) probably do not mean permanent settlement so much as the fact that the specific places in question (Shechem and Muhhazi) came under a Habiru-group control. The fact is that both conditions probably apply; some did live in settled communities, while others were wanderers, such as mercenaries, soldiers of fortune, or swiftly moving brigands. It is this wandering group which seemed to find it easy to run afoul of the law, often because they had sold their services to someone who needed help in some plot.

In the Amarna letters, especially, "Habiru" is used to denote not merely the social group we have just discussed, but also more widely in a pejorative sense to mean rebels, robbers, or even enemies. It could indicate one who was disloyal to the crown, to a city, or even to a person. Sometimes the concept of disloyalty recedes into

86 Greenberg, Hab/piru, pp. 48-49, hesitatingly suggested that it might mean that they were settled in the places named.
the background and that of enmity becomes more prominent. The Ḫabiru were called "enemies of the King" (EA 185:56-57), and Amanḫatbi who was connected with them was called an enemy as well (see line 64). The negative idea of "enemy" definitely was included in such recurrent phrases as "all the Ḫabiru have turned upon me" (EA 79:10-11); "to go over to the Ḫabiru" (EA 73:32-33), or "to become like the Ḫabiru" (EA 74:25-30). 87

87 In his article, "'Vox Populi' in the El-Amarna Tablets," RA, LVIII (1964), 159-166, Pinhas Artzi has used the Amarna phrase, "to become like the Ḫabiru" to support his thesis that the turmoil in Syria-Palestine was really a result of developing primitive democracy, an assertion of "people-power" at the grass-roots, rather than the generally accepted idea that it was the result of rebellion by power-conscious vassal princes. Thus, he asserts, "to become a Ḫabiru" had a "new" political meaning when used by Abdi-Ăširta in EA 74: it meant "to become willingly a Ḫabiru and form a new status and State for themselves" (ibid., p. 165). Admitting that this grassroots movement was used by and incited by Abdi-Ăširta, Artzi contends that it really had its origin in "the lower strata of society," and that it aimed toward "a radical change in social, economical and political sense" (loc. cit.). He is probably correct in stating that Abdi-Ăširta "knows that the 'people' are already 'Ḫabiru-ised' from a variety of reasons: there is a deep-rooted hate against local leadership, against the Ḫazannu-rahû-ṣibû- şikbi system, a hate that has surely its social-economic roots" (ibid., pp. 165-166). However, when Artzi assumes that Abdi-Ăširta seized upon this hate and the situation it created as the opportunity to act "as a leader who is very well versed in ancient 'democratic' tradition" (loc. cit.) and thus to convene a democratic assembly (puhrum) or "new State," he is surely reading more into the evidence than is really there.
In the Amarna letters, then, it appears that the term "Habiru" is generally negative in meaning. It could be applied to anyone, prince or commoner, and described the actions or status of the person or group rather than any ethnic or national connection. The groups or individuals referred to as SA.GAZ/Habiru may have been identified ethnically by their contemporaries. But, since many, if not most of them, seemed to be wandering foreigners of quite diverse origins, dependent on their wits for survival in environments which often were hostile to them, the negative aspect of their life-style seems to have become the most remembered connection with the name. Because of this negative aspect, the name was then applied to those in the settled population who rebelled against the authority of the local rulers or their Egyptian overlord. It was also used to describe individual princes by their rivals in the seemingly incessant conflicts about which we read in the texts.

On the question whether Labaya of Shechem was one of the Habiru, there can be no mistaking the assured, affirmative answer given by Albright:

Though the 'Apiru were generally just as nameless in the Amarna Letters as other people of the lower classes, we can follow the career of one 'Apiru and his apparently nameless sons. This fortunate excep-

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Rowton, "Topological Factors," p. 387, makes a case for two kinds of Habiru: servants/mercenary soldiers and wandering bands of freebooters. His evidence, taken from Mari, could parallel what we find in Amarna as well.
tion is Labaya (Lab'ayu) "the lion man," who controlled the hill country of central Palestine during the first half of the Amarna period.89

In order to understand his identification of Labaya as one of the Habiru, we must look first at Albright's own description or definition of the term. In the same source quoted above, he wrote:

[The Habiru were] a large and apparently increasing class of stateless and reputedly lawless people in Palestine and Syria. . . . It has now become certain that they were a class of heterogeneous ethnic origin, and that they spoke different languages, often alien to the people in whose documents they appear.

. . . In the Amarna Tablets the 'Apiru generally appear as the foes of both native princes and Egyptian officials, as men who raid and destroy settled areas. Each prince accuses his enemies of being in league with the 'Apiru, and it would seem from a number of passages that they sometimes call their most hated enemy by the same opprobrious term.90

The basic description given by Albright is little different from the conclusions stated earlier in this study. Because they were of heterogeneous origins, they often were different from the people among whom they happened to live in Palestine. But, by virtue of this very fact, they were not really unlike the general, settled population of Syria-Palestine, for, as we have seen,91 there was no real ethnic or political unity in Canaan, at least at this period. Because of the invasions and influences by Hittites, Hurrians, Hyksos, and even Egyptians, it

90 Ibid., pp. 14-16.
91 See p. 166 above.
is unlikely that "pure" Canaanite stock existed. The very names of the people betray their ethnic mixture.  

The most important aspect of Albright's description is his stress on the Habiru as a social class, a point he makes by stating that they constituted a "class of stateless and reputedly lawless people." This certainly supports the broader implications of the term as they have been accepted above by the present writer.

Albright's appraisal of Labaya as a Habiru seems to be based partly on the pejorative meaning of this term in the Amarna letters. He equated the anonymous "'Apiru chief" of EA 366:11-30 with Labaya. Here he deduced that Labaya was the leader of the Habiru group against which Shuwardata was complaining, making his deduction on the basis of two clues. First, the area under attack by the "'Apiru chief" was "precisely the territory held or directly threatened by Labaya." Second, in the later letter (EA 245) Zurata, prince of Acco, one of the "'Apiru chief's" allies against Shuwardata, is portrayed as both a friend of Labaya and as an enemy of the crown since Zurata

92 Greenberg, "Hab/piru and Hebrews," p. 196.


freed Labaya in return for a bribe.95

There can be no doubt that Labaya was aligned with the Habiru, or better, aligned them with himself, and that as a result he was recognized as their leader, at least in his area. This is substantiated by the implications in Abdi-Heba's question to his suzerain: "Or shall we do like Lab'ayu, who gave the land of Shechem to the 'Apiru?" (EA 289:21-24).96 It is to be noted that Albright came to a similar conclusion in his interpretation of EA 252:28-30, in which Labaya asserted: "I will resist my foe(s), the men who captured the 'city of god,' the despoilers of my father."97 Albright admitted, in commenting on this passage, that Labaya's father "may even have been prince of Shechem, in which case he . . . presumably joined the 'Apiru after his father's ruin" (italics added).98

This assumption about the family background of Labaya was given good support by Labaya himself when he wrote: "Behold, I am the servant of the king, as was my father and my father's father--servants of the king from

95 Loc. cit. This incident will be discussed further in this study in the section dealing with Labaya's career and his end.

96 ANET, p. 489.

97 On the difference between this translation by Albright in his "Amarna Letters," p. 19 and that which he gave in ANET, p. 486, see p. 156 above, and n. 56 which relates to it.

long ago" (EA 253:11-15). However debatable his loyalty to the Egyptian government may have been, it appears that Labaya was prince of Shechem not only by appointment of the Egyptian king, presumably following an oath of fealty, but also by right of hereditary succession to the throne. As a vassal prince whose family ties went back two generations, Labaya certainly qualified as "a native," and someone with residential stability. This surely must militate against his being a true part of the rootless and propertyless social group which the Habiru are generally concluded to have been. Also, it makes it difficult to know just what he meant or what his reasoning was when Albright wrote that Labaya's "beginnings were insignificant," especially since he seems to be basing this appraisal on Labaya's refusal to write in subservient tones in his letter (EA 252) to the pharaoh.

Albright's viewpoint that Labaya was a Habiru was supported for him further in his translation of EA 254:

31-37: "The king has written about my father-in-law. I did not know that my father-in-law was continuing to make raids with the 'Apiru. And truly I have delivered him

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99 This was already noted on p. 110 above.
100 ANET, pp. 238 and 246.
into the hand of Addayu. Albright commented: "This statement does not necessarily mean that the unknown father-in-law—or Labaya himself for that matter—was not originally an 'Apiru; it may merely be an effort to prevent the bad reputation of the latter among the Egyptian officials and the Canaanite princes from interfering with his own ambitious plans." While it must be agreed that Labaya made this statement in order to protect his own plans and future, it would appear to the present writer, however, that to read it as a Ḥabiru in an ethnic or social sense is going farther than the evidence seems to allow. "To make raids with" (from the Akkadian alāku, "to go, move, move about") cannot carry with it the meaning of social or ethnic ties. Both Labaya and his father-in-law may have "become like Ḥabiru" through their associations with them or by joining in their activities, yet this did not mean that he was one because of his origins, or his social status at any period of his life.

We have seen previously that the name "Ḥabiru," associated as it was with those that were rootless wanderers, living by their wits, and opportunists in both the

102 Loc. cit. This is a change from his earlier translation in ANET, p. 486, where instead of "father-in-law" he had "son." Here, however, Albright read the signs syllabically: i-mu-ia. This reading will be discussed further when the identity of Labaya's sons is explored later in this study.


104 CAD, I, pt. 1, 300 ff.
good and the bad sense of the word, became a term of de-
nunciation. In Labaya's case, it certainly could have
described him well since he did have dealings with the
rootless, marauding element in his society, and since he
apparently used this segment of society to accomplish his
aims of expansionism. Thus, although he cannot be said
to be a Ḥabiru because of ethnic origins (which could not
be identified anyway), he certainly was a Ḥabiru in the
sense of "outlaw" or "malcontent." Certainly, in regard
to the broadest use of this term, as meaning "enemy,"
Labaya was the supreme example for the rulers of his
neighboring city-states. Little wonder that his name
became a synonym for Ḥabiru (see EA 366); so, when
Shuwardata wanted to denounce Abdi-Heba, he called him
"another Labaya"! (EA 280:30-35).

The Chronology of Labaya's Career

There is no indisputable evidence in the letters
concerning Labaya to allow assured conclusions to be drawn
concerning the sequence of events. Thus, there can be no
dogmatic approach to the matter. However, on the basis
of the various other city-states with which he was in-
volved, especially those which he conquered or destroyed,
it may be possible to conjecture a possible "itinerary,"
and therefore something of a chronology. This attempt
will be made on the basis of the assumption that Labaya,
as an expansionist would do, would have moved out first
against those towns nearest him, and then gradually extended his reach into other, more distant, territories. Much of this will, of course, have to be a subjective judgment, especially when places equidistant from Shechem are involved. In such cases, judgments will be made on the basis of inter-city relationships and territories involved in each action of Labaya.

In trying to discover the actual sequence of events in the career of Labaya, we must keep in mind that except for Labaya's own word concerning his relationships with Gezer (EA 253-254), the record as we have it in the letters is primarily posthumous. With the exception of a few incidental references in other letters, most of the references to his exploits come out of the boasts of his sons concerning their father as recorded in EA 250:11 ff., after his death. This letter was from Ba'lu-UR.SAG who was trying to substantiate his loyalty to the king, in spite of the pressures of Labaya's sons. These pressures concerned the city of Giti-padalla which had been conquered by their father. The sons were accusing Ba'lu-UR.SAG of betraying their father and giving the city into the control of the king (EA 250:10-14). In urging him to rebel against

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Ba'lu-UR.SAG, according to Albright, means, "Ba'al is a warrior" (ANET, p. 485, n. 8). Campbell notes that "it is not certain what Canaanite word would serve for this idea" ("Shechem," p. 202, n. 19). See also Rainey, EA 359-379, p. 88, where he concurs with Albright.
the crown, the sons of Labaya then cited for Ba'lu-UR.SAG these examples of their father's conquests: Shunama, Burquna, Harabu and Giti-rimuni (EA 250:40-46).

City-states Nearest to Shechem

On the basic assumption that Labaya would begin his outreach with the towns nearest to his base, Shechem, it is likely that the first town to fall to his control was Burquna, mentioned in EA 250:43. Unfortunately, it is not easy to locate it positively,106 for it occurs nowhere else in the letters. Nor does it occur in the biblical text. It apparently appears on the city list of Thutmosis III as No. 117, b-r-q-n.107 Campbell states that it "lies eleven miles southeast of Megiddo, near modern Jenin."108 This must mean that he connects it with modern Burkin which is located about four kilometers southwest of Jenin.109 Assuming that this is the correct location of this town, it would be only about fifteen miles from Shechem, and undoubtedly a great temptation to the grasping Labaya.

106 See EA, p. 1311.
107 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 151. This was already noted by Weber (EA, p. 1311).
Although it was important enough for Labaya's sons to mention it as one of the places he seized, the town of Harabu (EA 250:44) is not known to us aside from this single reference. We can only conjecture whether it was near Shechem and concerning the direction of its location.\textsuperscript{110} In EA 281:13, Shuwardata mentions a place with a similar name, [H]arabuwa(?), but the broken tablet makes the name uncertain.

It is not specifically stated anywhere just which, if any, Canaanite city was the rightful territory or domain of Ba'lu-UR,SAG. Yet, it is clear from the complaint of the sons of Labaya that he must have been in control of the city of Giti-padalla soon after the death of Labaya, if not before. Labaya's sons complained: "Why hast thou given the town of Giti-padalla into the hand of the king, thy lord— the city which Lab'ayu, our father, captured?" (EA 250:11-14).\textsuperscript{111} The location of Giti-padalla has been disputed among scholars, although Albright's identification

\textsuperscript{110}As admitted by Campbell in his "Shechem," p. 204. However, Weber had cited Dhorme who placed it near Jenin and connected it with a similar name mentioned by Eusebius. Weber pointed out the occurrence in the Midrash Ber\textsuperscript{5}sit Rabbah of the name Araba, located near Beth Shean, according to Clauss (EA, pp. 1311-1312).

\textsuperscript{111}ANET, p. 485. Apparently he ruled "a district in the northern coastal plain of Palestine, south of Carmel" (loc. cit., n. 8). Whether he meant that he was the prince of the city, Albright did not make clear. Helck, Die Beziehungen, 2nd ed., p. 187, n. 127, disagreeing with Albright, wonders if Ba'lu-UR,SAG might have been the ruler of Hazor.
of it with the modern town of Jett, some eight kilometers north of Tul Karim, on the eastern edge of the Sharon Plain, is generally accepted today.\textsuperscript{112} It is to be identified with \textit{k-n-t}, No. 70 on the Thutmose III list.\textsuperscript{113} Aharoni notes further:

This identification is beyond doubt in view of its appearance on the Shishak list (No. 34, \textit{d-d-p-t-r}) between Aruna (No. 32) and Yaham (No. 35).\textsuperscript{114} Giti-padalla, as already noted by Weber, is a compound term whose first element is equivalent to the biblical Gath.\textsuperscript{115} It probably means "winepress of [someone named] Padalla."\textsuperscript{116} The name does not occur elsewhere in the Amarna letters, nor is it found in the biblical text. Located at the site of modern Jett, it would have been a most important center just at the juncture of the Sharon Plain and the beginnings of the Carmel Range. The various

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Albright, "The Late Bronze Age Town at Modern Djett," BASOR, 104 (1946), 25-26. See also A. F. Rainey, "Gath-Padalla," IEJ, XVIII (1968), 1-14, for a discussion of the importance of the site in the Amarna letters, especially as it relates to Labaya.
\item Ibid., p.1; Simons, Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists, pp. 115-119; Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 149.
\item Ibid., p. 163, n. 107. See the specific location on Map 38, Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, Bible Atlas; Rainey, "Gath-Padalla," p. 1, n. 1, where the map coordinates are given. For the problem of the unusual spelling of "Gath" by the consonants \textit{d-d} in the Shishak list, contrasted with \textit{k-n-t} on the Thutmose III list and the EA \textit{gin-ti/gim-ti} renderings, see Rainey, "Gath-Padalla," pp. 3-4, n. 14.
\item EA, p. 1311.
\item Albright, "Late Bronze Town at Modern Djett," p. 25.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
geographers of ancient Palestine\textsuperscript{117} have noted that the Sharon Plain was heavily forested in some sections,\textsuperscript{118} as well as swampy in others, during ancient times. Such conditions would naturally make it impossible to take armies directly overland, so the heavily-equipped armies of the Egyptians would have been limited to the established highways. The same conditions would also be an advantage to any of the king's enemies, affording concealment just as effective as the hill country. Thus, since Giti-padalla was on the Via Maris which skirted the Sharon Plain because of the terrain, the control of this city would be most important to Egypt. It is easy to see why Labaya would want to take this town, both for his own military power and as a deliberate act against the crown. It certainly would have given him an important outpost which looked in the direction of other desirable cities and territories, both to the north and to the south.

Having once made an inroad into the Sharon Plain, it would seem reasonable to assume that Labaya would have moved southward to Giti-rimuni (EA 250:46). This town probably is to be identified with the biblical Gath-Rimmon.

\textsuperscript{117}See Denis Baly, The Geography of the Bible (New York, 1957), pp. 133-137; Aharoni, Land of the Bible, pp. 22-23, 45-46; Smith, Historical Geography, pp. 112 ff.

\textsuperscript{118}The Septuagint translates "Sharon" by Drumós, meaning "Oak Forest." See Smith, Historical Geography, p. 112; Brawer, "The Land of Israel," pp. 11-12. See biblical references Isa. 35:2; 65:10.
(Josh 19:45, 21:24), Tell Jarisheh, located at the mouth of the Yarkon River, on the coastal branch of the Via Maris. The name probably means something like, "Wine-press by the Pomegranate," unless Rimmon is taken as a proper name. With both Gath-padalla and Gath-rimmon located on the Via Maris, so necessary for the movement of troops and commerce through this area, the control of these cities made it possible for Labaya to dominate the entire Sharon Plain for some time. But, as we shall see later, his intrusion into the area of the Via Maris in the north brought Labaya into serious trouble with the Egyptian powers.

Invasion of the Shephelah

The "Shephelah" (Hebrew, "Lowland") is the region consisting of the foothills which lie between the Philistine or Maritime Plain on the southern coast and the hills

119 Victor R. Gold, "Gath-Rimmon," IDB, II, 356; Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 45; also see Map 40 in Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, Bible Atlas. Campbell ("Shechem," p. 204) states that it was six miles south and east of Megiddo, near Taanach. This follows Weber who accepted Dhorme's location of the site as being near Taanach (EA, p. 1312). Wright and Filson, Historical Atlas, Map IX, show a Gath-Rimmon at this location also, but they show such a place-name on the Yarkon River north of Joppa (as indicated above by Gold and Aharoni), although showing uncertainty: "Gath-Rimmon(?)". It should be noted that Josh. 21:24-25 seems to indicate two cities by that name.


121 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 163.

122 Loc. cit.
of Judea to the east. The many references in the biblical texts to cities located in this area show that it was a most important part of Palestine. Supporting this is the fact that many battles were fought here, especially over the control of these cities, so that the area has rightly been termed "a famous theatre of the history of Palestine."

Of the cities of the Shephelah which are mentioned in the Amarna letters, it is interesting to note that at least three of them are directly or indirectly connected with the life and career of Labaya: Gezer, Gath, and Keilah. It is quite probable that since these cities were in rather close proximity to each other, once Labaya began his conquest here, he moved quickly from one to the other.

Labaya and the City of Gezer

Because of its location on the Via Maris at the junction with the highway which leads up to Jerusalem, Gezer may well be described as "the gateway of Jerusalem." It was elevated just enough above the surrounding

123 For a brief description of the Shephelah, note Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 23. For a more complete discussion of the geography and a historical survey of the events in the Shephelah, see Smith, Historical Geography, pp. 143-147; Baly, Geography, pp. 142-147.

124 Smith, Historical Geography, p. 143.

125 Samuel Abramsky, Ancient Towns in Israel (Jerusalem, 1963), p. 129.
plain so that it dominated the views to the north, east and west. Thus, it was sought by all invading armies as an important lookout post.\textsuperscript{126} Only to the south is its view obstructed by hills which are higher than its own two hundred foot elevation.

Standing as it did on the dividing line between hill country and plains, Gezer was surrounded on three sides by fertile farm and grazing lands, complemented by an abundant water supply from the nearby springs.\textsuperscript{127} Its very favorable location made Gezer one of the most prosperous and extensive cities of Palestine. Estimates of the size of the main mound vary between 27 acres\textsuperscript{128} and 30 acres.\textsuperscript{129}

Gezer is located some thirty miles southwest of Shechem, just a bit farther south of Shechem than Megiddo

\textsuperscript{126}In his description of the history of Gezer, Smith paints a most interesting, imaginative picture of the events that transpired there: "What hosts of men have fallen round that citadel of yours! On what camps and columns has it looked down through the centuries...Within sight of every Egyptian and Assyrian invasion of the land, Gezer has also seen Alexander pass by, the legions of Rome in unusual flight, the armies of the Cross struggle, waver and give way, Napoleon come and go, and British yeomen come and stay. If all could rise who have fallen around its base—Ethiopians, Hebrews, Assyrians, Arabs, Turcomans, Greeks, Romans, Celts, Saxons, Mongols, and English—what a rehearsal of the Judgement Day it would be!" (Historical Geography, p. 154).

\textsuperscript{127}H. Darrell Lance, "Gezer in the Land and in History," BA, XXX (1967), 36.

\textsuperscript{128}W. G. Dever, "Excavations at Gezer," BA, XXX (1967), 49.

\textsuperscript{129}Lance, "Gezer," p. 36.
was to the north of it. Excavations at the site were begun in 1902 under the direction of Robert A. S. Macalister. Working for almost seven years continuously, using a force of around two hundred workers, Macalister nearly accomplished his intention "to turn over the whole mound." In the process, he was able to uncover an almost unbelievable amount of material, from large architectural structures to written documents on sherds and clay tablets. In 1912, just three years after he ended his work at Gezer, Macalister published the results of his work in three massive volumes, illustrated by more than 10,000 photographs and drawings which he had made himself.

Unfortunately for the excavators who were to follow Macalister, his method of excavation made it virtually impossible to reconstruct the history of the site at many points. His method was to use each old trench as the dumping place for materials taken from succeeding new trenches, thus mixing materials from all strata. It is with sadness that Dever comments:

130 Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, Bible Atlas, Map 38.

131 Dever, "Excavations at Gezer," p. 49. This article gives a good, brief survey of the explorations which have taken place at Gezer and are still in progress. See also R. G. Bullard, "Geological Studies in Field Archaeology," BA, XXXIII (1970), 98-132, which used the terrain at Gezer as the basis for his study.

132 This classic work was entitled, The Excavations at Gezer, and was published by John Murray for the Palestine Exploration Fund (London, 1912).
The tragedy of the Gezer excavations is simply that a mass of rich material was unwittingly torn out of historical context and published in such a way as to make it largely useless for historical reconstruction. Yet if Macalister had observed and recorded the find-spots of objects, especially pottery, had published a more representative selection and had related the finds to the plans—whether or not he understood the significance of the material at the time—we could have used our more precise knowledge of the date of certain key items to redate most of the architecture in the various levels, and thus could have salvaged much of the material dug by him. As it is, it is irrevocably lost.133

The work of unraveling the confusion which Macalister created at Gezer was the object of the next intensive program which began there as recently as 1964. This continuing series of annual digs at the site since that date has been sponsored by the Hebrew Union College Biblical and Archaeological School in Jerusalem, founded by the late Nelson Glueck.134

While the archaeological evidence indicates that Gezer was occupied as early as the fourth millennium B.C., it first became an important city at the beginning of the second millennium, at which time it came under Egyptian control. Since the name of the city does not appear on the "execution texts" of the early second millennium,135

134 For later published reporting on the excavations at Gezer, see William G. Dever, et al., "Further Excavations at Gezer, 1967-68," BA, XXXIV (1971), 94-132. This summary indicates "that there are at least 26 strata on the mounds [at Gezer], more than the number of any other published site in Palestine—and in striking contrast to the mere eight strata discerned by Macalister!" (ibid., p. 132).
135 See p. 27, n. 63, above.
it may be assumed that at that time it was loyal to the crown. However, some kind of rebellion must have taken place against Egypt afterwards because the name of Gezer (q-d-r) is among the 119 Canaanite towns which were conquered by Thutmosis III. 136 A fragmentary cuneiform letter discovered at Gezer by Macalister in 1908-09, 137 was dated by Albright to the 15th century. 138 This letter appears to be from the pharaoh to the then prince of Gezer, and indicates that all was not well in their relationships. This situation must have continued or at least been repeated, for in a brief mortuary inscription by Thutmosis IV, he records that he settled Syrians (Kharu) who were captured at Gezer, probably because of some disciplinary action by the king. 139

The relative importance of Gezer during the Amarna period is seen in the fact that it is mentioned in at least nine of the letters (as Gazri). An additional five letters were written by Milkilu who is identified as "the prince of Gezer" in a letter written to him by the king of Egypt

136 Gezer is No. 104 on the list (Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 151).
137 Macalister, Gezer, I, 30 ff.
139 ANET, p. 248.
In two of his own letters (EA 253-254), Labaya connected himself directly with Gezer and its affairs, albeit in anxious self-defense. Both letters seem to imply prior correspondence from the king. While Labaya was much less defiant in these two letters than he was in EA 252, it may be inferred that he was defending himself against some serious charge, perhaps even one of having committed treasonous acts. This may explain his lessened defiance. For instance, he wrote: "Who am I that the king should lose his land because of me? Behold, I am a faithful servant of the king, and I have not rebelled and I have not sinned" (EA 254:8-12). Perhaps his treasonous acts against Egypt involved seditious statements which he had made while in Gezer, for in both EA 253:20-25 and EA 254:21-29 he refers to statements he had made concerning the king. However, he does not at these points admit to his statements as being in any sense disloyal. But, perhaps he protests too much!

Assuming that these statements were made while Milkilu was at home in Gezer, Milkilu could have used these statements against Labaya and for his own self-
advancement by reporting them to the king.\textsuperscript{142} James F. Ross suggests that since Milkilu had made a trip to Egypt (EA 270:12-13), presumably at the request of the pharaoh, it was during this absence that Labaya entered Gezer.\textsuperscript{143} This, of course, is conjecture since there is no direct connection between these events reflected in the letters themselves. The reason for his entry into Gezer, however, is more than hinted at by Labaya. First, he openly informs the king that he had entered the city, and then he admits having said publicly: "Shall the king take my property, and not likewise the property of Milkilu?" (EA 254:25-27).\textsuperscript{144} By this action he must have meant that he was making a public issue of a disparity in treatment between himself and Milkilu, and so was reacting negatively, in public, against the crown. Still, it is not clear whether this meant that some property had been taken forcibly from Labaya by the king's troops,\textsuperscript{145} or that Milkilu had been granted special unilateral "relief from tribute."\textsuperscript{146} The latter seems more likely in the context of the protest made by Labaya, for he seemed to be emphasizing his loyalty

\textsuperscript{142}This interpretation was suggested to the writer by his adviser, Dr. Jay D. Falk.


\textsuperscript{144}ANET, p. 486.

\textsuperscript{145}Ross, "Gezer," p. 65.

\textsuperscript{146}Campbell, "Shechem," p. 197.
in paying the tribute and anything else which the commissioner had requested (EA 254:13-15). In the climax of his complaint, he seemed to imply that Milkilu was somehow involved in his mistreatment by the pharaoh, perhaps as an informer against him to the king: "I know the deeds of Milkilu against me!" (EA 254:28-29).

It is generally assumed that Labaya and Milkilu of Gezer were allies of sorts, although the textual evidence is far from conclusive. In EA 249:16-17, 29-30, these vassal princes are mentioned together by the writer, although because of the bad state of the tablet, it is not clear just how extensive their partnership may have been. In EA 263:33-34, Tagu, the father-in-law of Milkilu (EA 249:8-9), and Labaya are named together also, but again the broken context of the tablet does not allow for any definite interpretation. The fact that an alliance between Milkilu, Tagu and the sons of Labaya seemed to be of great concern to Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem in EA 289:

147 Ross ("Gezer," p. 64, n. 7) indicates that he follows Knudtzon (EA, p. 813) in interpreting this concluding sentence of Labaya's speech as part of his main public speech, and not as a remark directed primarily to the pharaoh. This seems to the present writer to be a valid appraisal, for this sentence would make sense in a public utterance, especially if Labaya was trying to gain public support for his position from the people of Gezer.

148 Although Campbell (Chronology, p. 134) seems to make EA 249 an "orphan" letter, without definite authorship, Knudtzon (EA, p. 799, n.e.) indicates that Ba'lu-UR.SAG might be read as the author in EA 249:2; so also EA, p. 1310, n. 1.
may indicate that some kind of working relationship did exist for the most part. It apparently continued even beyond Labaya's death. Labaya and Milkilu apparently were much alike, friendly when it was expedient, but still ready to stand up to each other when one seemed to have the advantage. This seems to have been the common approach to "friendship" among the vassal princes. A very similar relationship seems to have existed between Shuwardata and Abdi-Heba in the situations described in EA 280 and 366.\textsuperscript{149}

At least one tablet seems to show that Milkilu was a bit more crafty, something more of the "politician," than Labaya seems to have been. In this letter written to Milkilu by Amenophis III (EA 369),\textsuperscript{150} the Egyptian king's attitude toward Milkilu is clearly one of friendliness. He even goes so far as to say to him, "To thee life has been decreed."\textsuperscript{151} Of course, it must be remembered that the main concern of the letter was the pharaoh's request for concubines, precious metals, and "every good thing," showing that he was not above playing politics with Milkilu, including overlooking his faults as long as he got what he wanted from him.

\textsuperscript{149}See ANET, p. 487.

\textsuperscript{150}First published by G. Dossin in "Une nouvelle lettre d'El-Amarna," RA, XXXI (1934), 125-136. Dossin noted that since the pharaoh invokes the god Amon, he must have been Amenophis III and not Akhenaten who would have referred to Aten instead.

\textsuperscript{151}ANET, p. 487. Rainey translates lines 22-23: "To you life has One (lit: they) sent" (EA 359-379, p. 39).
Milkilu's letter EA 271 probably is to be dated in the last years of Amenophis III's reign, but relatively early in the career of Milkilu. The fact that his reign overlapped that of Labaya is seen from EA 254. It would appear that if EA 254 is to be dated in Year 32 of the reign of Amenophis III, the events of EA 271 and 366, written by Milkilu and Shuwardata, respectively, happened during the last seven years of Labaya's life. That is, if we accept the assumption that "the chief of the Habiru," referred to by Shuwardata (EA 366:12, 21) was Labaya, and that he was thus the leader of the Habiru against whom Milkilu was appealing for help (EA 271:13-16). Such an assumption could be based on the further word of Shuwardata who wrote of him after his death that Labaya "seized our towns" (EA 280:30-32). There is no reason to doubt that Labaya had every intention of taking Gezer if at all possible. But, fate intervened, leaving Milkilu as the primary threat to the smaller towns once Labaya had been killed in ambush, as will be seen below.

Gezer continued to be ruled by Milkilu who lived on after Labaya and into the lifetime of Labaya's sons. It is

152 Campbell, Chronology, p. 98.
153 Ibid., p. 109
154 See pp. 144-146 above.
155 For example, see Albright, "Amarna Letters," p. 18. On this problem, see further p. 171 above.
not difficult to believe that, in the manner of Labaya, he was ever alert for new territories to conquer, and to exploit the jealousies existing among the other vassal princes. It appears that he quickly organized "a new coalition of malcontents,\(^{156}\) and added the rulers of Ashkelon and Lachish (EA 287:14-15) to his regular allies, Shuwardata and Tagu (EA 289:11 ff.; 290:5 ff.). Strangely, the sons of Labaya also joined with him (EA 250:53-55; 289:5-6, 25-29).\(^{157}\) Perhaps their common disdain for Egyptian control, which they seemed to share as much with Milkilu as with their father, was what drew them together.

There is no record of the death of Milkilu, but there are no further references to him after the letters of Abdi-\(\text{U}\)eba of Jerusalem (EA 285-290). Of the successors of Milkilu, the Amarna letters include letters from two: Yapahu, the writer of EA 297-300, who may have been a son of Milkilu (EA 300:22), and Ba\('\text{I}\)u-\(\text{Si}\)pti, perhaps the brother of Yapahu, and the writer of EA 292-295.\(^{158}\) Since both

\(^{156}\) Ross, "Gezer," p. 66.

\(^{157}\) In their translations of EA 289:26, both Albright (ANET, p. 489) and Campbell (\"Shechem," p. 200) insert \(\text{Labaya}\) in the sentence, making the phrase "sons of Labaya." Campbell (ibid., n. 15) contends that "the scribe apparently left out the name by mistake. There is little doubt what it should be. Three lines later the scribe omits the preposition before Jerusalem." Without inserting a name, no sense can be made of the sentence.

\(^{158}\) Campbell, Chronology, p. 126, n. 39, notes that Albright's collation of the British Museum texts, done in 1949, showed that the name of the writer of EA 294 is a mystery, apparently beyond deciphering.
writers mention the Egyptian commissioner, Maya (EA 292: 33; 300:26), they must have lived during the reign of Amenophis IV, and appear to have been quite loyal to the crown. The stability of this period may have been the result of military pressures which Amenophis IV brought to bear on the chaotic conditions which he had inherited from his father. The passing of both Labaya and Milkilu certainly helped settle conditions, also!

One of the most important rulers of the Shephelah region, and a contemporary of Labaya, was Shuwardata who wrote some ten Amarna letters (EA 65, 278-284, 335, and 366). Albright noted that Shuwardata is an Indo-Aryan name, and that he must have been prince of the Hebron district in the southern hill country, just south of Jerusalem. Recognizing that Shuwardata was very much involved in the activities of Keilah, Campbell still is not

159 On the date of Maya, and for the argument that he was more than an ordinary rābiṣu, see Campbell, Chronology, pp. 75-77.


161EA 335 was considered to be from Shuwardata by O. Schroeder, who re-edited the text in his "Zu Berliner Amarnatexten," OLZ, XVIII (1915), 293-296.

162ANET, p. 486, n. 13. He stuck by his earlier position that "the territory of Shuwardata, which bounded that of both Jerusalem and Lachish and must have touched, or nearly touched, a corner of the territory of Gezer, included most of the southern high hill-country of Judah. His capital was certainly not at Keilah, but somewhere on the watershed ridge, presumably at Hebron" ("A Case of Lèse-Majesté," p. 37, n. 31).
willing to pinpoint Keilah as his capital.\textsuperscript{163} Aharoni, on the other hand, is of the opinion that Gath (\textit{EA, Ginti}) was Shuwardata's capital.\textsuperscript{164} He bases his conclusion on Abdi-Heba's \textit{EA} 290 in which Abdi-Heba accuses Milkilu of Gezer and Shuwardata of using soldiers from Gezer, Gath and Keilah for the purpose of conquering territory belonging to the city Rubute, and a place called Bit-NINIB.\textsuperscript{165} Since Milkilu was the prince of Gezer, and since Keilah was one of the towns which had formerly been under the control of Shuwardata and now had been returned to him (\textit{EA} 279-280), Aharoni asks:

Would it not be logical, therefore, to assume that Shuwardata was none other than the King of Gath, which appears in this text after Gezer? In support of this it is worth remembering that at the end of the letter Milkilu, Shuwardata and Gath are evidently referred to again, although the text is broken. Nothing prevents the assumption that this was the Gath which, at a later time, became one of the five Philistine capitals.\textsuperscript{166}

The city of Gath probably is to be identified with modern Tell es-Safi, according to Aharoni,\textsuperscript{167} although he


\textsuperscript{164}Aharoni, \textit{Land of the Bible}, p. 161.

\textsuperscript{165}On the interpretations of this place name, see pp. 86-87, n. 31 above.

\textsuperscript{166}Aharoni, \textit{Land of the Bible}, pp. 161-162.

\textsuperscript{167}Ibid., pp. 162, 250-251.
admits that its location is still much debated. It was most surely an important site in both the Amarna and Israelite periods, being located on one of the main passes leading to Jerusalem, through the Shephelah. It was one of those cities constantly in conflict with the interests of the prince of Jerusalem, and with the later Israelites as well.

Although Shuwardata states that several of his cities became hostile to him (EA 281:10-11), they are not named, unless one is the unidentifiable [H]arabuwa (EA 281:13). Keilah is the only city he identifies as having been taken from him, by Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem (EA 280:21-24), but it was later won back (EA 280:14-15). Obviously, at this point the relations between Shuwardata and Abdi-Heba were strained, but in EA 366:20 he indicates that Abdi-Heba is his ally against the Habiru-chief. If the latter is indeed to be identified as Labaya, little more can be said than that Shuwardata and some of his cities were subjected to the attacks of Labaya and his forces. It is not possible, with the evidence now available, to identify these cities. Logically, we may presume that one of them was Shuwardata's capital, whether it was Gath (which seems more reasonable) or Keilah. Perhaps both cities were involved, regardless of which was his capital.

168 Ibid., p. 250.
The Closing Days of Labaya's Career

We have seen how Labaya probably invaded the cities nearest him, and then moved south via the Sharon Plain to the Shephelah where he attempted to take control of several cities. After this, it seems likely that Labaya moved northward toward Megiddo and Shunem in his strategy to control central Palestine. It seems logical to assume that he moved into this northern area last since it was through the actions of both of the princes of this area, along with the support given them by Egypt, that Labaya's career was brought to a sudden and violent end.

Labaya and the City of Megiddo

While the Amarna letters present much information concerning the exploits of Labaya, prince of Shechem, there seems to be only one letter extant which was written during his lifetime that mentions him specifically by name. This one letter is EA 244, written by Biridiya, prince of Megiddo.\(^\text{169}\) As we have noted several times above, the only other contemporary reference to him seems to be that

\(^{169}\) A doubtful exception is the possible reference to an alliance between Labaya and Milkilu in EA 249:16-17. Here, however, the context is so broken that it is not clear, and the name "Labaya" cannot be read with any certainty. The reconstruction Labaya in EA 237:2 in the letter of Bayadu (on the problem of the authorship, see Campbell, Chronology, pp. 108, 134) may be a reference to the seizure of Labaya, but the general content of the letter is such that almost nothing of a specific nature can be derived from it. Campbell does accept, however, EA 237:2 as a direct reference to Labaya (ibid., p. 108).
of Shuwardata of Gath who, instead of using his name, apparently referred to Labaya when he twice spoke of "the chief of the SA.GAZ/Habiru" (EA 366:12, 21). Thus, most of the information we have about Labaya seems to have been written in bitter retrospect, and in connection with his sons who lived up to their father's reputation with marked success.

The name, "Biridiya," has been described by Albright as being of Indo-Aryan origin, as was true of the names of other vassal princes such as Shuwardata. This accords well with the fact that in areas of Hurrian settlement of Syria-Palestine "the highest-ranking patricians (mariyanna) tended to have Indo-Aryan names, while the common people were overwhelmingly Hurrian in name." This Indo-Aryan group seems to have migrated into western Asia in comparatively small numbers. But, through a deep pride

263:33-34, there is another broken context where Tagu, and presumably Labaya, (la-ab-a-y[a]) occur, with some partnership relationship implied. See Campbell, Chronology, p. 115. Both EA 237 and 263 may be placed at the end of Labaya's career.

This follows the general interpretation today, as indicated by Albright, "Amarna Letters," p. 18. The text has LÜ.SA.GAZ. Mercer, who numbered this text 290a (El-Amarna, pp. 723-725) translated it "the SA.GAZ-people." Rainey (EA 359-379, pp. 29, 31) renders it šāpiru, with no attempt at interpretation of its meaning.


Ibid., P. 13. See further O'Callaghan, Aram Naharaim, pp. 56 ff., 149 ff.; Bright, History, pp. 63-64; also pp. 21-23 above, with related n. 45.
in their background and a great sense of their nobility, they preserved their names in spite of an obvious inter­mingling with the larger Hurrian stratum of Syrian-Palestinian society.

Megiddo, the city over which Biridiya was prince (EA 242:4), is mentioned only once in the Amarna letters outside the Biridiya correspondence. This is in EA 234:19, by Zatatna of Acco, and then the mention is only a passing one. Nevertheless, Megiddo was one of the important city-states of Palestine, not only in the Amarna age, but throughout all of its history. Indeed, the name has become incorporated into one of the most famous eschatological terms, "Armageddon," the place where some see a battle between the forces of good and evil taking place at the end of time.

Like Shechem and many other important towns of Syria-Palestine, Megiddo had its beginnings in the Chalcolithic period. It was at this time that Palestine was beginning to become important as the geographical link between east and west. Because of its location, overlooking the Valley of Jezreel or Esdraelon, G. W. van Beek notes:

A more strategic site than Megiddo is difficult to find. From its summit can be seen the entire breadth of the Plain of Esdraelon to the hills of Galilee on the N, and much of its length along Mount Carmel on the W to where the W extension of the Galilee hills hides the Mediterranean from view, and eastward to-

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173 Revelation 16:16. The term is an obvious corruption through the Greek of the Hebrew, Har Mōgiddō, "Mountain of Megiddo."
ward Mount Gilboa and Little Hermon, between which is the watershed where the plain drops away to the Jordan Valley, with the Transjordan hills beyond.\textsuperscript{174}

It is easily seen, then, that it was no accident that Megiddo became such an important city. For one thing, it was located on the \textit{Via Maris}\textsuperscript{175} where one branch went eastward toward Qatna and the Euphrates Valley, and the other branch went westward toward the coast and on up into Phoenicia.\textsuperscript{176} Control of the site, thus, was important to any power that wanted to influence international relationships and communications. So, many strategic battles were fought here, as, for example, the great battle by Thutmosis III during his first campaign into Syria-Palestine.\textsuperscript{177}

Excavations at Megiddo, begun in 1903\textsuperscript{178} have revealed some twenty strata of occupation, covering more than 3,500 years. Of most importance to the present survey is the evidence from Strata IX and VIII, covering the period from \textit{ca.} 1550-1300 B.C. This is the time-span fol-

\textsuperscript{174}van Beek, "Megiddo," \textit{IDB}, III, 336.

\textsuperscript{175}Aharoni, \textit{Land of the Bible}, pp. 41-49. For an earlier but still useful discussion, see Smith, \textit{Historical Geography}, pp. 279-280. Note also Abramsky, \textit{Ancient Towns in Israel}, pp. 17-18.

\textsuperscript{176}See Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, Bible Atlas, Map 10, which also shows the other "secondary" roads which pass through or near Megiddo, east-west and north-south.

\textsuperscript{177}See pp. 37-38 above.

\textsuperscript{178}For a brief sketch of the archaeology of the site, see van Beek, "Megiddo," pp. 336-342, and the sources cited in his bibliography.
lowing the expulsion of the Hyksos, and including the Egyptian conquest of Palestine. Excavated evidence reveals a number of important features from the Amarna period, including the remains of a temple built on what appears to have been a long-time temple site, one that may have been "considered sacred during all Canaanite occupations."179 This parallels the history of the sacred site discovered at Shechem.180

Kathleen Kenyon describes another apparently important building from this same stratum, noting that its size is "on a scale suggesting that it may have been the palace of the local client ruler."181 It is probably reasonable to assume that this was the palace occupied by Biridiya during his reign. The artifacts recovered from this period point to a high level of prosperity, a fact which may have been behind Labaya's apparent persistence in trying to take the city (EA 244), as well as an indication generally of conditions in this period. Labaya certainly would have agreed with Thutmosis III who, about one hundred years earlier, had declared: "The capturing of Megiddo is the capturing of a thousand towns!"182 The fact is that Megiddo was a principal base of Egyptian control.

179 Ibid., p. 338.
180 See pp. 121-123 above.
182 ANET, p. 237.
and force during all of its some 300 years of rule in Syria-Palestine.

Generally speaking, as Campbell put it, "Egypt pursued a policy of letting the vassals work out their own affairs, at least as long as tribute poured in." This would assume that many of these problems between the vassals did not have a direct impact upon the interests of the crown. However, whenever the problem did directly affect the affairs of the king, he apparently had no reluctance about entering into it. This must have been the case with regard to Labaya's relationship to Megiddo and its ruler, Biridiya. Apparently it was much more serious in the eyes of Egypt than vassal rivalry. Aharoni probably is correct in noting that when Labaya moved northward, destroyed Shunem and put Megiddo under siege, "this intrusion into the area of the Via Maris interfered with the interests of pharaoh, who lost patience with him."  

\[^{183}\text{Campbell, "Shechem," p. 194.}\]

\[^{184}\text{Campbell illustrates this specifically by means of Rib-Ḥaddi, prince of Byblos, who misjudged just who his enemies were, and as a result, found himself in trouble with the crown. He notes: "Rib-Adda was not as right as he thought he was, and it seems clear that his greatest difficulty was understanding what the silence and inactivity of the Egyptian court on his behalf really meant. He tries every means he can think of to get the court to act, even to threatening alliance with Aziru, but his stubborn persistence in loyalty to the king gets him no reward but his own death (139:37-40)" ("Amarna Letters," pp. 68-69).}\]

\[^{185}\text{Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 163.}\]
Consequently, Labaya was ordered to report to Egypt to give an explanation for his actions. As we shall see later, this led to an ambush in which Labaya was killed, before he ever appeared in Egypt to answer the charges against him.

There can be no doubt that the desperate letter for help from Biridiya to the king (EA 244) describes a real siege, although Biridiya simply speaks of Labaya's action against him and his city as "enmity" (EA 244:12). This must be what Biridiya meant when he complained that he and his people no longer were free to go out of the city-fortress to tend their crops (lines 13-16).\(^{186}\) Also, he had argued that without immediate help from the pharaoh, "the city [was] doomed through death due to pestilence and disease" (lines 30-33).\(^{187}\)

\(^{186}\) On the problems connected with the Canaanite idiom dealing with the harvesting of crops which is used here, see Campbell, "Shechem," p. 193, n. 4.

\(^{187}\) Ibid., p. 193. Albright differed slightly in his version: "The city is destroyed by death from pestilence and disease" (ANET, p. 485). Knudtzon read the text: Šum-ša-me qa-am-ra-at-me alu ki i-na(!) muti i-na mu-ta-a-an i-na u[p]-ri (EA, pp. 790, 792). While Ebeling lists up-ri in his Glossary under upru, "dust" (EA, p. 1540), he notes that it is really ein andres Wort, a position obviously taken by both Albright and Campbell as indicated by their italics for disease. But, since each of the nouns in the text is preceded by ina, perhaps Knudtzon is on the right tract when he translates: Wenn zu Grunde gegangen ist die Stadt durch Tod, durch Seuche, durch Staub, especially since eupru often means "debris" and a conquered city was usually leveled and covered with or by debris/dust. See CAD, IV, 187b, where ina epirim is used with the verb iqebberu, "buries" (quoted from Text AOB 1, 24 r. v 18).
The letters do not tell us what finally happened to Megiddo. Kenyon has concluded that the Late Bronze I city, Phase VIII (Biridiya's city), "probably [came] to an end about 1350 B.C. with the inevitable destruction."¹⁸⁸ This would be dated sometime after Labaya's demise. Although, as we have noted, Labaya was called to Egypt for his "deeds" against Megiddo, we do not know whether Egypt came to Biridiya's aid militarily, or whether he was able to defend his city by other means. Egyptian aid, however, may have been sent, especially since crown interests seem to have been involved in this instance. On the other hand, the determination of Biridiya to protect his city by day and night, as he so firmly stated in EA 243:10-18, may be a clue to the city's survival. In this letter, there is no mention of Labaya as the enemy. Unless, of course, Biridiya's reference to the hostility of the SA.GAZ (lines 19-21) is taken to include Labaya who was sometimes connected with them.¹⁸⁹ The fact that Biridiya organized "a posse"¹⁹⁰ (EA 245) which captured Labaya would give further evidence that Labaya was unsuccessful in his designs upon Megiddo.

Although the next occupation period, Stratum VII,

¹⁸⁸ Kenyon, Archaeology in the Holy Land, p. 215.
¹⁸⁹ See p. 195 above.
included another destruction, Megiddo seems to have been rebuilt almost immediately. This new construction deviated only slightly from the lines of the earlier city, and no cultural break is apparent. It continued to exist for nearly a thousand years more. The last great battle in its history was fought near it in 609 B.C. In this battle the Egyptians not only defeated Judah, but killed its reforming king, Josiah (2 Kings 23:29). The site was finally abandoned ca. 400 B.C.

The conflict between Biridiya and Labaya went beyond Megiddo itself, for it included incidents connected with the town of Shunem (EA 250:43, Shunama). This town was located some ten miles directly east of Megiddo, and flanked the eastern edge of the Esdraelon Valley. Shunem was first mentioned in the city-state list of Thutmosis III, and later in the Shishak list. Test excavations at the site, which is now called Solem, have shown that it has great antiquity, going back as early as the Middle Bronze Age, and being occupied through the Islamic period.

The town of Shunem is the main subject of EA 365 in which Biridiya reports to the Egyptian King of his conscript-
ing corvée workers, which may be taken to mean that he was rebuilding the city following its destruction by Labaya. However, Alt concluded that the town was not rebuilt, and in consonance with his earlier translation of this letter, contended that the town was plowed up instead. Albright's translation is a bit ambiguous since he speaks only of the corvée as doing "work in the town of Shunama." Alt further contended that such destruction of Shunem made it possible for the tribe of Issachar to occupy that territory (Josh. 19:18). By renouncing her political independence, he said, this tribe was able to

195 So van Beek, *loc. cit.*


197 A. Alt, "Neues über Palästina aus dem archiv Amenophis IV," *PJB*, XX (1924), 34-35. On p. 34, n. 3, see where he interprets the Amarna irrišu as being explained by the Canaanite gloss ihrišu. He was followed by Mercer who translated "till" (El-Amarna, p. 649), as well as by Aharoni (Land of the Bible, p. 161). Rainey (EA 359-379, p. 24) renders line 11: er-ri-su / ah-ri-su and translates it "am cultivating" (similarly in line 21). See CAD, VI, 96, for *ḥarāšu*, "to plow," a West Semitic loanword.

198 The Amarna term for "corvée, forced labor," is mazzu, which must be equivalent to the Hebrew mas (Albright, *ANET*, p. 485, n. 7). See BDB, pp. 586-587. This term is used a short time after the Amarna period to describe the tribe of Issachar which settled in this area (see Gen. 49:15). Note W. F. Albright, "The Topography of the Tribe of Issachar," *ZAW*, XLIV (1926), 225-236.

199 *ANET*, p. 485.
settle here among non-Israelites sometime early in the fourteenth century. 200

Shunem is referred to a number of times in the biblical text. Perhaps the most important events which occurred here in later times were in connection with Saul's battle with the Philistines (1 Sam. 28:4), and the visits of the prophet Elisha who often stayed over at the home of a certain woman of wealth (2 Kings 4:8 ff.).

It is apparent, then, that Labaya had great ambitions for the annexation of new towns and territories. His forays extended from Shunem in the north to the area of Keilah in the south, a distance of at least eighty miles; this does not even take into consideration places not named in the record, which Labaya may have threatened. Little wonder that he became the dread of all the other vassal princes. To be called "another Labaya" (EA 280: 33-34), as was Abdi-Heba, was hardly a compliment!

The Death of Labaya

It seems certain that Labaya finally went too far in his encroaching upon the cities and lands of the other vassal princes. His actions not only irritated his fellow princes, but they must have included some aspects which were interpreted by the crown to be against the best

200 Alt, "Settlement of the Israelites," p. 218. He noted that this is expressly stated in Gen. 49:15 and implied by the silence concerning the tribe in Judges 1.
interests of Egypt. At long last the king had to put a stop to it all. Perhaps by this time Egypt felt that Labaya had become so involved in his efforts to conquer the northern section of the Palestinian highlands, as well as Megiddo and Shunem, that he was becoming too great a military threat to the government. Or, perhaps he had added insult to injury by committing some act of treason or sedition against the crown, such as that implied in his defense of himself in EA 253-254.201

Whatever the reason for the dissatisfaction and even anger of the king with Labaya, it is possible to reconstruct some of the events of the last days of Labaya. Part of this reconstruction involves the letter EA 245, which is generally assumed to be the second part of a letter of which the first part has been lost. On the authorship of this partially preserved letter, Campbell sets forth the following argument as pointing toward Biridiya of Megiddo:

The handwriting is that of the scribe in his other letters; Yashdata [who is mentioned], in a letter of his own (248), reports that he is with Biridiya; and the situation recalls Biridiya's letter 244.202

The general reconstruction of the events described in the missing first part of the letter must be something on this order: As the result of some dissatisfaction, as

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201 See pp. 153-156 above.

noted above, the pharaoh had ordered Labaya to report to Egypt in person for an explanation of his activities. Perhaps he had refused to go willingly, so he was taken prisoner by other vassals, probably including Biridiya of Megiddo, who then began the journey toward Egypt with Labaya in custody. Such a request to report to the "home office" in Egypt was not an unusual requirement, for Aziru of Amurru had been ordered to make such a trip (see EA 162, 164-167), to answer the many questions which the king asked in EA 162.

It is at this point that the story of Labaya's last days becomes clearer, for it is told by Biridiya on that part of EA 245 which is extant. However, there are enough breaks in the tablet to create some problems yet. It would appear that Biridiya had taken Labaya into custody, but then had given him into the hands of a colleague, Zurata of Acco203 who was to conduct Labaya as a prisoner from Megiddo to the port of Acco. At Acco, Labaya was to be put aboard a ship to be taken to Egypt (EA 245:24-30). Ancient Acco was located about thirty miles northwest of Megiddo, with good roads to it through the Esdraelon Valley.

203A. S. Kapelrud, "Acco," IDB, I, 24. The city of Acco (EA, Akka) was No. 47 on Thutmose III's list (Egyptian (-k-3) and is identified with modern Tell el-Fuhkhhar (see Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 148). Zurata was the prince of Acco, and thus the logical person to take Labaya to his own port for extradition to Egypt; see EA 232:3-4; 85:21; 245:24, 31, 33, 41, 43; Also, EA, pp. 1027, 1301.
to the coast. The harbor itself, one of the few good ones along the Palestinian coast, was situated in a natural bay.

It seems strange, yet without explanation in the account by Biridiya, that Zurata did not take the major highway, the northwestern fork of the Via Maris. This branch led through the Esdraelon Valley to the coast and on up north toward Phoenicia, conveniently passing through Acco en route. One possible explanation could be that this took place during the rainy season when the Kishon River often flooded much of the valley and made the roads difficult, if not impossible for travel, especially by chariot. A biblical illustration of what happened in this general area is the battle between Barak and Sisera (Judges 4:15; 5:19-22). It might be that Labaya had chosen this season of the year for a military campaign on a nearby city, knowing that if things went against him, he would have the difficulty of travel on his side anyway.

Whatever his reason for doing so, Zurata must have taken the local road straight north from Megiddo, through Shimron, with a stop at Hannathon en route to Acco.

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204 For a clear picture of the major and secondary or local routes in Syria-Palestine in this period, see Map 10 in Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, Bible Atlas.

205 See Smith, Historical Geography, p. 256, for a description of the situation surrounding the battle of Barak and Sisera. Also, see p. 248, n. 3, for discussion of difficulty of travel in the area during the rainy season, because of the type of soil, etc.

206 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, pp. 56-57; Weber, EA, p. 1308. The road through Hannathon must have had more
Mentioned in Joshua 19:14, Hannathon may be identified with Tell el-Bedeiwiye, a site which was occupied from ca. 2000-900 B.C.\(^{207}\)

The fact, as Biridiya recounts it, that it was at Hannathon that Labaya bribed Zurata to let him go free (EA 245:33-35), could explain why this route to Acco was taken. At least it may be conjectured that since the city of Hannathon was only about fifteen miles from Megiddo, Labaya may have had some friends or "connections" there, from whom he could get money with which to bribe Zurata. It seems unlikely that Labaya would have been allowed to have this money with him when he was turned over to Zurata by Biridiya at Megiddo. Thus, soon after they had begun the trip toward Acco, it would appear that Labaya had convinced Zurata (perhaps on the basis of "weather conditions"!) to take the road through Hannathon where "suitable arrangements" might be made. Labaya probably did not have to do much convincing of Zurata (if any at all!) for Biridiya noted that Zurata had been bribed earlier to let

than ordinary local significance, however. The letter, EA 8, describes the ambush and plundering of the caravan of the king of Babylonia by the rulers of Acco and Shimron, as the caravan passed through Hannathon. The ambush party seems to have included the son of the same Zurata who accepted the bribe to let Labaya free (EA 8:17 ff; EA 245).

\(^{207}\) G. W. van Beek, "Hannathon," *IDB*, II, 523. He also notes that some identify it with modern el-Harbaj at the southern end of the Plain of Acco. See Albright's articles: "Some Archaeological and Topographical Results of a Trip through Palestine," *BASOR*, 11 (1923), 11; "Contributions to the Historical Geography of Palestine," *AASOR*, 2-3 (1923), 23-24.
Ba'lu-miẖir free! (EA 245:43-45). Why, if he knew that Zurata had already freed a political prisoner for a bribe, Biridiya trusted him in another such assignment, is difficult to imagine. Even if Zurata was his younger brother (EA 245:40), this should not have let him forget that he could not really be trusted!

In his report of the bribing, Biridiya stated that after Zurata had received the money from Labaya, he "sent him home from Hannathon" (EA 245:31-33), which must mean that he simply released him. Labaya seems to have taken the route directly south which would have taken him to Shechem, had not fate intervened. Biridiya notes that upon receiving the news of Labaya's release, he tried to join the posse which had been organized to search for the fleeing Labaya (EA 245:1-12). However, while en route to join the posse, Biridiya's horse seems to have been shot out from under him, although he gives no explanation of how or why this happened as it did. Could it be that some cohorts

208 Ba'lu-miẖir is the author of EA 257-259, and probably EA 260 also. If he did write EA 260, it would appear that he was the prince of Tienni (see line 14). On variations in the spelling of his name, see Campbell, Chronology, p. 115, n. 15; Rainey, EA 359-379, p. 88.

209 See Campbell, "Shechem," p. 198, n. 11, for the probability that the Canaanite gloss tura for Akkadian nasāhu in EA 245:8 must mean "to shoot, and so is a cognate with Hebrew yarah. Knudtzon apparently did not understand the passage, so he did not translate it. Mercer (El-Amarna, p. 643), however, translated lines 8-9: "And my mare came out of the stable (tura)"(!). See now Rainey (EA 359-379, p. 87), who concurs with Campbell. Albright translates similarly: "was felled" (ANET, p. 485).
of Labaya had ambushed Biridiya and his companion, Yashdata? Or, could it have been a pitched battle in which Biridiya's forces faced the probably now smaller forces still backing Labaya? At any rate, with the death of his steed, Biridiya sat behind Yashdata on his horse, and they continued their journey. But, by the time they arrived at the point where Labaya himself was, they found that Labaya had been killed, presumably in a "shoot-out" (EA 245:13-14).

The site of the assassination of Labaya is not reported by Biridiya. However, this information is given by Balu-UR.SAG in the letter in which he complained about the pressures put on him by Labaya's sons after the death of their father (EA 250). In this letter, the sons of Labaya demand of Balu-UR.SAG: "Declare war against the people of the land of Gina, because they slew our father" (EA 250:16-18). This blanket accusation surely was too broad, for the posse of men raised to capture Labaya were the ones involved rather than all the inhabitants of the area. But, such are the usual retaliatory measures followed in feuds and wars. Gina is to be identified with

210 Perhaps Yashdata was another brother of Biridiya, who does refer to "brothers" in EA 245:2. See EA, p. 1309.

211 ANET, p. 485. Since the modern name is Jenin, we are using "Gina" (as does Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 163, et passim) rather than Albright's "Qena" in the translations.
modern Jenin, the biblical Beth-Haggan of 2 Kings 9:27 and the En-Gannim of Joshua 19:21, 21:29. Gina would have been situated on the most direct route between Megiddo and Shechem, part of the road being called, "Way to Beth-Haggan." It is in 2 Kings 9:27 ff. that an amazing parallel to the killing of Labaya is to be found: "When Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled in the direction of Beth-haggan. And Jehu pursued him, and said, 'Shoot him also,' and they shot him in the chariot at the ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there." While the direction of pursuit is different, with Jehu pursuing Ahaziah from Jezreel, which is some five miles almost due east of Megiddo, and Biridiya coming south from Megiddo, the place of the assassinations seems to have been virtually the same spot.

While a long career of stirring up trouble and confusion suddenly came to an end with the violent death of Labaya, the influences he set into motion did not stop with

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212 W. L. Reed, "Beth-Haggan," IDB, I, 393. So already Weber, EA, p. 1311. The Kina (Egyptian ky-n') found in Thutmosis III's description of his battle at Megiddo is usually taken as referring to Gina/Jenin (see ARE, II, § 430).

213 See Map 10, Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, Bible Atlas.

214 Ibid., Maps 40 and 134. The biblical quotation is from the RSV. The Hebrew text lacks "and they shot him," but the versions supply this obviously needed detail.
his passing. Not only did he seem to be a pattern for other princes since Abdi-Heba was accused of being "another Labaya" (EA 280:33-34), but more important, he seems to have trained his sons well in the art of following in their father's footsteps!
CHAPTER V

THE SONS OF LABAYA CARRY ON

There can be no doubt that Labaya had at least two sons. In EA 250, Ba'lu-UR.SAG specifically refers to "the two sons of Labaya" some eight times (lines 6, 11, 16, 26, 30, 36, 40, and 54), and once, in a phrase paralleling the expression in line 6, he speaks of "the two sons of a rebel against the king" (line 5).\(^1\) Also, in one of his letters, Biridiya refers to "the two sons of Labaya" (EA 246:rev.: 5-6). The question naturally arises whether they can be identified by name. The evidence from the Amarna letters is not decisive, but some conclusions may be drawn from them.

The author of EA 255, Mut-Ba'lu, boldly asserted: "Behold, [Lab]aya, my father [served] the king, his lord" (lines 14-16). While "there must remain a slight doubt"\(^2\) about the reading of the name "Labaya" in line 15, this

\(^1\)ANET, p. 485.
\(^2\)This statement is made by Campbell on the basis of the blurred quality of the signs ("Shechem," p. 206).
reading is now generally accepted. In his study of EA 256, Albright demonstrated that Mut-Ba'lu was the ruler at Pella. Situated in Transjordan, almost due east of Shechem, Pella controlled the trade route to Mitanni which traversed the Jordan Valley at this point. Although the name Pella is not found in the biblical text, it was an important site with a long history. It is mentioned in the Execration Texts, and in the Palestinian city-list of Thutmosis III (No. 33, p-h-r). The city seems to have been destroyed before the Israelite conquest.

In his Chronology, p. 97, Campbell is much more positive about reading La-ab-a-ia, on the basis of Knudtzon's autograph which shows clear traces of this reading (see EA, p. 1005, No. 143), and on the even clearer evidence for the la sign in Schroeder's autograph.

Albright, "Two Little Understood Amarna Letters," p. 9, n. 9. Knudtzon (EA, p. 816), followed by Weber (EA, p. 1318), read the place name in line 8 as bi-ḥi-ši. Dhorme, however, noted that the signs may be read as pį-ḥi-lim, and identified it with Fahil (see his "Les nouvelles tablettes d'El-Amarna," RB, XXXIII [1924], 9). Rainey (EA 359-379, p. 93) suggests that Ebeling's Glossary be corrected by inserting Pehelu in EA, p. 1579, based on the reading pę-he-li. Aharoni transliterates the Amarna form as PilJili(m) in his Land of the Bible, p. 148.

Although it was published too late to be used in this study, note must be made of the following definitive first volume on the archaeology and history of Pella: Robert II. Smith, et al., Pella of the Decapolis, Vol. I. The 1967 Season of the College of Wooster Expedition to Pella (Wooster, Ohio, 1973). For a brief survey of the site, see S. Cohen, "Pella," IDB, III, 710.

ANET, p. 329, n. 8.

and it was not rebuilt until the Greek conquests under Alexander the Great (ca. 332 B.C.). Its name, Pahel, was changed to Pella since it reminded the Greek colonists of the famous capital city of Macedonia, named Pella. It is quite certain then, that one son of Labaya was the prince of this city.

The identity of the second son of Labaya is much less certain. Indeed, the one passage which formerly was seen as a reference to him may refer instead to someone else entirely, probably his grandfather. In one of his letters, EA 254, Labaya states: "The king wrote concerning DUMU-mu-ya. I did not know that DUMU-mu-ya associates with the Ḫabiru..." (Lines 31-35). Knudtzon read the logogram as a personal name element, thus translating the word, "Dumuia," which did not, of course, identify him. Most interpreters since Knudtzon, however, have taken the logogram to stand for the Akkadian maru, "son," and so have translated the three signs above as "my son." However, after reconsideration of the signs involved, Albright concluded later: "I see no escape from rendering i-mu-ia as

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9EA, p. 813. Weber notes, although he is not certain, that it is possible that a son of Labaya is named here (EA, p. 1316): Ist meine Auffassung von Dumuia als einem Sohne des Labaja richtig, dann kennen wir vielleicht die Namen seiner beiden Söhne.

father-in-law, corresponding to normal Middle Babylonian e-mu-ia," this conclusion stemming from the close similarity, especially in the Amarna script, between the signs for DUMU/māru and i. This latest position by Albright would appear to present the fewest problems, especially from the point of view of reading the signs. At the same time, however, there is no other Amarna evidence for the father-in-law of Labaya, although it would not have been impossible for Labaya's father-in-law to be involved with the Habiru along with Labaya.

It would appear, then, that Mut-Ba'lu is the only one of Labaya's sons who can be identified by name and locality with any degree of certainty. It may be, on the other hand, that the unnamed son inherited his father's princedom at Shechem. However, Labaya's untimely end as a fugitive from the crown, and the fact that no letter from such a son-successor has come to light should seem to militate against such a theory.

Since EA 250 and 246:rev. 5-6 both refer to the two sons of Labaya as though they were acting together, it may be wondered whether in fact there were three sons of Labaya, the latter two somehow not having a territory of their own. In other words, is it possible that Mut-Ba'lu

11 Albright, "Amarna Letter," p. 19, n. 7. The sign for DUMU is whereas the sign for i is ; these are, of course, late Assyrian forms and the Amarna forms vary somewhat. See Signs 142 and 144 in Labat, Manuel D'Epigraphie Akkadienne.
had two brothers and that the latter were the ones referred to in EA 246 and 250? As will be seen, these unnamed brothers definitely were partners with Milkilu and Tagu, so perhaps they acted as free-lance agents, exerting their power and influence in this way. Also, when Mut-Ba'lu writes (EA 255-256), he seems to write as an independent, with no reference to a brother. That is, unless it is possible that the missing Ayab (Ayyāb) of EA 256:6 is his brother:12

After their father's death, the sons of Labaya were in some sort of alliance with Milkilu. According to one of their victims this alliance was intent on destroying the land of the king (EA 250:5-8, 53-56).13

12 EA 364 (see Rainey, EA 359-379, pp. 22-23 for the latest transliteration and translation of this text, designated Louvre A0 7094) is from Ayyāb to the Egyptian king, but it gives no real information. Albright identified Ayyāb as the prince of Astartu (biblical Ashtaroth) in Bashan, Transjordan (ANET, p. 486, n. 11). See also his "Two Little Understood Amarna Letters," p. 11, n. 18; p. 12, n. 33.

13 ANET, p. 486. As translated here by Albright, these lines clearly state that Milkilu was still alive at the time of the writing of the tablet. This stands in direct contradiction to his rendering of the virtually impossible lines 28-39, part of which Albright translated: "after Milkilu and Lab'ayu died" (line 39). Although he acknowledged the difficulty involved, Campbell (Chronology, p. 109, n. 4) tried to justify Albright's rendering on the basis of the Ugaritic hlaq/mt. However, the usage of halāqu, occurring several times in EA 250:8, 28-39, is far from clear. The problem is whether it is used in the basic meaning of "destroy" or with the idea of "die." While the idea of "to destroy or wreak havoc" makes sense in all occurrences in this letter, Campbell rightly questions the use of "to die" in each instance, especially in line 39 where it would contradict the stated fact of Milkilu's
In EA 250:53-55, it is said that the messenger of Milkilu of Gezer is constantly at the side of the sons of Labaya. The definite implication is that they are already allied to Milkilu or under pressure to do so. In EA 289, this alliance between Milkilu and the sons of Labaya is clearly spelled out. More than that, Milkilu also has an alliance with the sons of Arzawa\(^{14}\) and with Tagu, Milkilu's father-in-law (EA 289:11-12, 19).\(^{15}\) By means of this general alliance, Milkilu and Tagu have taken the city of Rubutu (EA 289:13). It is not clear in the text just where this town was located, but because it is referred to only in the Abdi-Heba letters from Jerusalem, most scholars have tried to locate it in that area.\(^{16}\) Albright located it "somewhere in the region southwest of Megiddo and Taanach,"\(^{17}\) while Aharoni identifies it as "the biblical Rabbah in the northern Shephelah between Gezer and Jerusalem."\(^{18}\) This could make it the Rabbah of Joshua 15:60. 


\(^{15}\) See EA 249:8-9 where Tagu is referred to as \(\text{imi'uyu}, \) "his (Milkilu's) father-in-law."

\(^{16}\) See Weber's summary of opinions to his time (EA, p. 1342).

\(^{17}\) ANET, p. 488, n. 18.

\(^{18}\) Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 157; see V. R. Gold, "Rabbah (of Judah)," IDB IV, 3.
Rubutu appears on the list of Thutmosis III (No. 105, r-b-t), immediately following Gezer (No. 104). 19 Aharoni makes the following observations:

Since there is no other Canaanite tell between Gezer and Aijalon six and a half miles away, one may suggest an identification of Rubute with the biblical Beth-shemesh located slightly farther to the south. It is surprising that there is no reference in Egyptian sources to the important Canaanite city that flourished at Beth-shemesh. 20 The roster of Judean towns mentions Rabbah (Josh. 15:60) with Kiriath-Baal, while Beth-shemesh is absent from the list. 20 It is not at all unthinkable that the city's name was Rabbah-Rubute, even though it was also known by the title Beth-shemesh ("House [temple] of the Sun") to emphasize its Canaanite background. 20

If this identification of Rubutu is accepted, as it surely must be, it would have been near and perhaps even part of Abdi-Heba's territory. This would explain his obvious anxiety about losing it through the continuing expansion of the alliance between Milkylu and the others. Adding further insult to the situation would be Tagu's involvement but his apparent immunity from censure by the crown for such action since he held the trusted position of supplier of troops for the Egyptian outpost at Beth-Shean (EA 289:18-20). 21

19 Aharoni, Land of the Bible, p. 151.


Shuwardata seems to have been involved in the grand alliance also. In EA 289:26-28, Milkilu is said by Abdi-Heba to have written to Tagu and the sons of Labaya: "Ye are (members of) my house. Yield all of their demands to the men of Keilah." Keilah was Shuwardata's city. Perhaps Milkilu was trying to placate or win over Shuwardata's forces. Milkilu's words apparently were taken as a threat against him by Abdi-Heba, especially since he continued to quote the words of Milkilu: "and let us break our alliance (with) Jerusalem" (EA 289:29).

Their participation in Milkilu's alliance indicates that the sons of Labaya were in earnest about continuing the career of their father, and perhaps even to avenge his death. This seems to be supported further by the harassment and pressure, already noted above, which the sons of Labaya put on Ba'lu-UR.SAG (EA 250).

The place of residence, and thus the place of operation, of Ba'lu-UR.SAG is not easy, if possible to establish. It is generally accepted that his capital was Giti-padalla (modern Jett). There can be no question but

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22 *ANET*, p. 489. The absence of the name "Labaya" from the text in line 26 is explained by Campbell as a mistake, and that "there is little doubt that it should be [there]" ("Shechem," p. 200, n. 15). Albright inserts it in his translation also.

23 See pp. 176-177 above.

24 See pp. 178-179 above, including notes 111 and 112 especially.
that Ba'lu-UR.SAG was influential in much of the same territory in which Labaya was active, and so Labaya's sons would enter the picture as well.

Just how Ba'lu-UR.SAG came into control of Gitipadalla is not at all clear. Perhaps he seized it immediately upon the death of Labaya, for, according to his sons, Labaya seems to have been in control of it by means of capture. Since Labaya's sons were so near at hand and were constantly pressuring Ba'lu-UR.SAG to avenge the death of their father against the people of Gina (EA 250:16-18), and to take a hostile stance against Egyptian control (lines 40-42), it seems clear that Labaya's sons were operating in the central highlands so familiar to their father.

The main purpose of Ba'lu-UR.SAG's letter (EA 250), however, was not to report the hostile attitudes and activities of the sons of Labaya, but to emphasize his own loyalty to the crown by his steadfast refusal to submit to their pressures. He not only made it plain to the king that he did not want to make war against the people of Gina who had killed Labaya, the enemy of the king, but he said: "But I answered them: 'The god of the king, my lord, preserve me from making war against the king, my lord. The king, my lord, I serve'" (EA 250:48-51). The irritating pressures put upon him by Labaya's sons seem to have become unbearable, so he requested the king to send one of his
officials to Biryawaza, prince of Damascus,²⁵ for armed help against the sons of Labaya (EA 250:22-27). Biryawaza seems to have been one of those native princes who played a larger than ordinary role in Egyptian administration.²⁶ Campbell goes so far as to state:

There is strong evidence to suggest that Biryawaza was trusted by Egypt to a degree beyond most of his contemporaries. He held authority over governors throughout most of southern Syria and perhaps even Galilee.²⁷

Still, whether Ba'lu-UR.SAG ever received the help he so desperately asked for in EA 250, we do not know.

The sons of Labaya seemed to know no limits in trying to avenge the death of their father, and to recapture the several cities which had been held by Labaya. Their intense activity certainly cannot be gainsaid. Even Biridiya of Megiddo who apparently had been able to withstand the incursions of Labaya earlier, finally had to write to the king that he was in dire straits because of the two sons of Labaya "who have given their silver to the 'Apiru..." (EA 246:rev. 5-7).²⁸

²⁸Ibid., p. 205. Campbell describes EA 246 as "presumably the last preserved letter from him to the court" (loc. cit.).
Whether Mut-Ba'lu of Pella was a third son of Labaya, as suggested above, or whether he was one of the only two sons which Labaya had, as may be implied by EA 250, there can be no doubt that he was quite open in idealizing and following his father's pattern. In EA 255, he minces no words in denying the accusation apparently made against him in Egypt that he had been raiding Babylonian caravans on their way through his city, Pella, toward Mitanni. As proof of his integrity, he said quite boldly, in effect, "Just as Labaya, my father, faithfully served the pharaoh and sent every royal caravan safely on to Mitanni, so do I! Therefore, continue to send any and all caravans through my town without worry, even if the caravans are being sent to Babylonia. I will see personally that they have safe-conduct through!" (see EA 255:15-25).

Perhaps this position, stated by Mut-Ba'lu, shows that Labaya did not openly rebel against the suzerainty of Egypt. Or, maybe his difficulties were much more intense and direct with his fellow vassals, as our study of his relationships with them above seems to show. Indeed, Labaya himself had claimed that he was fulfilling all of the obligations necessary to the crown from a vassal prince: "I am a faithful servant of the king, and I have not rebelled and I have not sinned, and I do not withhold my tribute, and I do not refuse the requests of my commissioner" (EA 254:10-15). Such extravagant claims could scarcely be made if they were completely untrue. Yet, as many Amarna
letters show, few princes were above claiming more loyalty to the crown than may actually have been true at the moment. Personal expediency seems always to have been their first concern, a phenomenon which, unfortunately, has ever been a part of politics anywhere.

There is no doubt that Mut-Ba'lu had every intention of continuing the same kind of activities in Pella and its surrounding area as his father Labaya had followed in the central highlands around Shechem. In fact, it may be that his position as ruler of Pella in the Transjordan had been part of the long-range political planning of his father, for we have no way of knowing just how Mut-Ba'lu came into his position. A plausible conjecture might be that Labaya had installed him as ruler of Pella through his wide-spread power and influence. Perhaps he had even taken the city by force and then had put Mut-Ba'lu on the throne. An important point made by Smith is the ease of communication between Samaria (the area of Labaya's city) and Eastern Palestine or Transjordan. 29 This inter-communication was possible because of the many valleys that connect the regions. Also, in this northern area, there are many spots at which the Jordan River may be forded with comparative safety. So, it is possible that the matter of the caravans passing through Pella on their way to Mitanni (EA

29 Smith, Historical Geography, pp. 223-224. This reference was pointed out to the writer by Dr. Jay D. Falk.
255) reflects a long-standing control of the general area by Labaya himself. This, then, may be the control which Mut-Ba'flu promises will continue, in line with a now-traditional loyalty to the crown.

One last suggestion must be made concerning the influence and activities of the sons of Labaya, conjectural though it may be. Nearly thirty years ago, Albright suggested that when NIN.UR.MAH, the ruler of Zaphon and the author of EA 273-274, referred to the hostilities practiced in her area by the SA.GAZ, she meant the sons of Labaya. This would be a logical conclusion since she mentioned the sons of Milkilu, with whom Labaya's sons would have been acquainted, as well as the SA.GAZ men who have been connected by some with Labaya. Also, Pella, the city of Mut-Ba'flu, was only about fifteen miles north of Zaphon, so the proximity made contact most likely. Still, because no specific ties with Labaya and his sons are made in these letters, the conclusion that the SA.GAZ men are the sons of Labaya must remain a matter for future enlightenment. The use of SA.GAZ may have simply been the famil-

30 Albright, "Two Little Understood Amarna Letters," pp. 15-17. The logogram must mean, as Albright suggested, "Lady of the Lions." Beyond her letters, nothing else is known about her.

iar reference to those who are enemies, which we have seen above.

Taking all the information and possibilities together concerning the sons of Labaya, it is possible to see them very actively engaged and perhaps in control of much of the central hill country of Palestine as well as the northern Transjordan in the area of Pella. This was noted already by Weber\textsuperscript{32} as a possible parallel to the joint operations of the sons of Abdi-Asirti in the north, with the sons of Labaya controlling the southern area. Of course, in such joint operations, it is always necessary and natural to have a "head-man," even among brothers. Perhaps in the case of the sons of Labaya, Mut-Ba'lu of Pella, who at least had a definite center of operations, was the leader. This would not eliminate any alliances with other vassal princes such as Milkilu, but it would make their own personal and family interests that much stronger. The need for a leader among brothers in alliance, or perhaps better, the resultant rise to the top of one brother in such combined efforts, is further illustrated by Idrimi of Alalah (15th century B.C.) who refers to a definite rank of brothers of the king after he returned to his home and assumed kingship.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32}E\textsc{a}, pp. 1308-1309.

\textsuperscript{33}See S. Smith, The Statue of Idri-mi, pp. 72 ff.
Just how long this power of the house of Labaya lasted, there is no way of knowing. Perhaps it did not go beyond a decade after Labaya's death. Equally difficult to answer is how it finally came to an end. Did it die out simply because the sons had no sons to take their places and to continue this tradition? Was it simply the old story of "riches to rags in three generations?" Perhaps Ross is correct in assuming a military campaign by Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) as the means whereby stability was brought to Syria-Palestine, thus ending the chaotic conditions which had been created by princes such as Labaya and furthered by his sons. Campbell notes that letters which may be dated to the later years of Akhenaten's reign are either "confined to Syria, or else are colorless and uninformative." This appraisal he reads as pointing to a general period of comparative tranquility in Syria-Palestine. The end of an era had come.

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CONCLUSION

The very nature of our attempt to investigate the history of Syria-Palestine during the middle of the second millennium B.C. required that some limitations be placed on our examination of this broader subject. Thus, the first step toward narrowing the topic was that of making the Amarna letters and the Amarna Age the general area of study. This was then illustrated by focusing on the life and career of one of the most powerful personalities in Syria-Palestine during this period, Labaya, Prince of Shechem.

Since the specific can be fully understood only within the general context, it was felt necessary to review the background of the history of Syria-Palestine as it was during the middle of the second millennium. This meant that a survey of how Egypt came into control of Syria-Palestine was required. A vital part of this was a summary of the politico-economic ties which resulted. An understanding of these ingredients made it possible for us to see Labaya of Shechem as a part of the whole situation in which he lived and worked, and thus to have something of a clearer understanding of him and his confreres.

Out of this synthesis, several conclusions may be
drawn. Not all of them are new or necessarily startling, but they do summarize some of the positive results of this study for the writer.

First, it is clear that the political and social problems in Syria-Palestine during the Amarna Age were not the result only of the petty attitudes and jealousies between the vassal princes who wrote the many Amarna letters to the Egyptian pharaoh. Many of these problems must be traced back to events and situations having their origins in the earlier history of Syria-Palestine, as we have seen.

For one thing, a basic contribution to the situation in the Amarna period was the mixed ethnic population of Syria-Palestine. This heterogeneity was the result of the general movement of peoples in the entire ancient Near East during the last half of the third millennium and the first half of the second millennium.1 Consequently, such widely diverse peoples as the Hyksos, Amorites, Hittites, Mitannians, Babylonians, Egyptians and others came into Syria-Palestine, bringing both their positive contributions and their hostilities. Most came as "invaders," whether through war and conquest, or through commercial activity, and so each left its mark upon the life and culture of the "Canaanites." Eventually, there was a great deal of inter-

change which took place among these diverse groups through intermarriage and cultural give-and-take. Thus, it was not always easy, if possible, to distinguish the individual's cultural or ethnic origins. This was true of many of the Canaanite vassal princes whose names reflect varying ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

This ethnic diversity was true also of the social class which we have come to know as the "Habiru," as our study has shown. The large amount of documentary materials which relate to the Habiru\(^2\) shows a wide range of national and ethnic origins as they began to appear on the scene in Upper Mesopotamia during the Protodynastic Period and following. People were leaving their homes in many areas of the ancient Near East and were entering the ranks of the Habiru all through this period. As they entered a new land or cultural setting, they retained their ethnic identity. Thus, the Habiru were constantly gaining new members, making it impossible to identify the Habiru as a whole as any one specific ethnic group. At the same time, however, smaller groups within the Habiru were identifiable at times, as illustrated by the experience of Idrimi who recognized fellow countrymen from northern Syria among the Habiru in Canaan shortly before the Amarna period.\(^3\)

\(^2\) See the chart of all known textual references to the SA.GAZ/Habiru in Bottéro's article, "Habiru," pp. 15-21.

\(^3\) See p. 166, n. 84 above.
Having left their native environment for a new country or area, very often the Habiru became a wandering, rootless people, although a few did become part of the settled communities into which they moved. However, because of the activities often connected with that segment which seemed to prefer a rootless or wandering way of life, the designation SA.GAZ/Habiru came to have increasing pejorative connotations. Thus, it came to be applied to anyone, prince or commoner, who rebelled against authority or rules.

The city-state system was another innovation which was brought in by the invaders, whether by the Amorites, or by the Hyksos. This system of government was both bane and blessing. It afforded protection for those city-states which were closely grouped together and allied with each other, but it also opened the door for the more widely scattered cities to embark upon aggressive ventures. The differing situations, in Alt's opinion, were related to the geography involved. However, we have concluded that the political leaders who were involved made an even greater difference. We are convinced that Labaya's terri-

4 On Goetze's contention that the city-state had its origin in the Amorite invasion, see p. 21 above, and the sources cited there. On Alt's position that it was the Hyksos who were responsible, see p. 79 above; also, Alt, "Settlement," pp. 182-185.

5 Loc. cit.

6 See pp. 88 ff. above.
tory was larger than most, not so much because it was located in the hill country where city-states were widely separated or weaker, but because Labaya was a strong, ambitious vassal prince who made deliberate attempts to extend his domain.\(^7\)

The study of the history of the Amarna Age shows a highly developed system of administration which was used by Egypt to control its far-flung empire, especially Syria-Palestine.\(^8\) An integral part of this control was the vassal prince who ruled over each city-state. But, this very fact was also the source of many of the problems which led to the writing of many, if not most, of the Amarna letters. Understandably, most of the vassal princes chafed under Egyptian control. In addition, and perhaps to compensate somewhat for this irritation, many of the princes were constantly at odds with other princes, often accusing each other of being traitors to the crown.\(^9\) This was the situation in which Labaya was involved, although, as we have seen, he seemed to bring much of the antagonism of the other princes upon himself. In spite of the general effectiveness of the Egyptian administration of its empire, bribery and corruption were rampant, both among the Egyptian

\(^7\)See pp. 175 ff. above on the political aims and ambitions of Labaya of Shechem.

\(^8\)See pp. 78 ff. above.

officials and the vassal princes. This, of course, only aided the rivalry and contributed to the low morale found in many places.

The apparently unanswered pleas for help which the vassal princes wrote to the Egyptian government, and which form the bulk of the Amarna letters, generally have been interpreted to mean that the pharaohs, Amenophis III and Amenophis IV (Akhenaten), were weak militarily, and thus unable to send the requested aid. Contrary to this position, we have concluded that the Amarna period was not a period of military weakness or pacifism.¹⁰ This conclusion applies especially to Akhenaten who has been described most often as a philosopher-pacifist, rather than as a king who was concerned about the welfare of his nation. We agree with Ross who has stated:

Contrary to assumptions made when scholars first studied the Amarna letters, Akhenaten was able to bring about a certain stability in Canaan, in contrast to the turbulent situation in the last days of his father.¹¹

Thus, we see at least the latter half of the Amarna period as a time in which the military power of the crown was still dominant even in Syria-Palestine. The evidence inherent in our study seems to support this conclusion. Indeed, the very death of Labaya of Shechem¹² is a case in

¹⁰See pp. 72 ff. above and sources cited there.
¹¹Ross, "Gezer," p. 68.
¹²See pp. 206-214 above.
point. Although his death was not part of the plan, apparently, the fact that he was in custody, under official orders to report to the king in person because of his actions, seems to show that Egyptian control was very effective, even as far away as the central highlands of Palestine. This is not to deny that much went on that was not in line with Egyptian governmental policy (a fact that is true in any civil organization). But, the facts do appear to point to continuing strength and effectiveness during the reign of Akhenaten. Only by means of real power and control over the military would he have been able to overthrow the entrenched priesthood of Amon in order to establish his religious reforms. This is further supported by the fact that Aten-worship was not discontinued and the Amon-cult restored until a number of years after Akhenaten's demise.

Also, whether they liked it or not, the vassal princes of Syria-Palestine had to endure the control over them by the Egyptian throne. Even Labaya, with his "king-complex," could not separate himself from it and go his own way as he apparently would have liked to do. And, neither could his sons, for their strong pressures on the loyalist Ba'lu-UR.SAG were to no avail. The crown was not to be denied its position of control.

Our study has shown that Labaya, Prince of Shechem,

13See pp. 223 ff. above.
was a most unusual, if not unique, person among the princes. He certainly demonstrated great leadership ability, and so made his city-state one of the most important and powerful of his time. Indeed, it was this leadership ability that incurred the fear, jealousy and anger of his fellow vassal princes, and earned for him the title of "Habiru" which some of them gave him. While we have seen that the Habiru were a social group of very diverse origins, the sources do not enable us to identify Labaya as emerging from this class. Rather, because of the attitude of hostility with which the general populace viewed the Habiru, when Labaya was classed with them, it was in the sense of his being an enemy, both of his fellow vassal princes and of the crown. There is no denying that Labaya was not always on the best of terms with either his fellow princes or the crown for he openly tried to enlarge his sphere of political control. Because he was often successful in his efforts to expand his territory, apparently by means of Habiru who were enlisted as mercenaries in his forces, his jealous and fearful princes had still another reason to refer to him as a "Habiru." Not only was he a rebel, but as a leader of rebels and malcontents, they considered him to be like them, if not one of them in fact.

In our study we have attempted a chronology of the career of Labaya on the basis of a possible sequence of the towns which the Amarna letters indicate that he conquered
or with which he had some contact. Since it was the nearest to Shechem, his home base, it would seem logical that he would begin with the conquest of Burquna, located about fifteen miles to the north. Not far away was the next city he likely would try to take, Giti-padalla (modern Jett). Located at the point where the Sharon Plain and the Carmel Range meet, this town would have been of great strategic importance for Labaya, both as a center for further conquests and for protection of those territories he already held. To consolidate his control of this area west of Shechem, we have conjectured that Labaya next took Giti-rimuni, situated on the coastal branch of the Via Maris. The control of these two centers would have made him master of most, if not all, of the Sharon Plain.

With the Sharon under his control, it seems only natural to think that Labaya would have moved southward into the Shephelah. Here were the important cities of Gezer and Gath, as well as Keilah, all of which would have added much to his political stature if he controlled them. Although both Milkilu of Gezer and Shuwardata of Gath (EA 271 and 280) apparently complained to the crown about Labaya's invasion of their area, it does not appear that Labaya was actually able to take Gezer even after he entered it. Also, it is not certain whether Labaya was able to take

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See pp. 175 ff. above.
both Gath or Keilah, but in view of Shuwardata's complaint that Labaya seized his towns (EA 280:30-32), it is possible that he did. At any rate, he was a real threat to both Milkilu and Shuwardata.

Perhaps the greatest military challenge of all to Labaya was the conquest of Megiddo, the city which controlled the pass through the Esdraelon Valley. We do know from the desperate letter sent to Egypt by Biridiya, prince of Megiddo (EA 244) that Labaya had Megiddo under siege for some time, creating serious problems for Biridiya. It appears, however, that Biridiya finally was successful in his resistance against Labaya's forces, perhaps through Egyptian assistance. Labaya was able to take the town of Shunama, located just ten miles east of Megiddo on the edge of the valley.

All in all, Labaya proved himself to be quite a formidable military leader. His conquests enabled him to exercise much control from Shunama in the north to Keilah and Gath in the south, a territory some eighty miles in length. His ambitions were such that he did not hesitate to invade the larger and important cities, seemingly caring little about the effect such action had on his fellow princes or the crown. Ultimately, of course, his ambitions were cut short by direct intervention of the crown. His capture, as we have seen, led to his untimely end in ambush.

In reviewing the life and career of Labaya, espe-
cially as we consider the great impact he apparently had on his sons as they followed in his footsteps, one cannot but wonder what he might have accomplished had he lived in another time and place. In our day, he might be a leader for independence in one of the underdeveloped nations of the world. Or, perhaps if conditions were just a bit different, he might become a dictator or demagogue. Unfortunately, the record about him is too limited to make a true judgment of him. We cannot doubt, however, that he made a place for himself in Syria-Palestine during the Amarna Age that few others, if any, of the other vassal princes did. While he wrote only a few letters himself, in contrast to the many which other princes such as Rib-Haddi of Byblos wrote, he seems to have made a much larger impression on other princes if we note the references to him by these princes. Such evidence is inconclusive and incomplete, for it is probable that only a small part of the original Amarna corpus is now extant. But, who knows what the excavator's shovel will yet turn up of letters related to this great collection of correspondence between Egypt and Syria-Palestine? Hopefully, even more letters from and even to Labaya will some day be discovered, enabling future scholars to clarify many of the problems which until now are beyond resolution.
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<td>Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology</td>
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<td>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</td>
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