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A STUDY ON SOME SEMITIC TOPONYMIC TYPES OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM BC IN THE SOUTHERN LEVANT

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The present study is based on the onomasticon of the Southern Levant in the second millennium BC. The results from onomastics are compared with the corresponding archaeological data and with the parallel literary sources. There existed a frequently found toponymic type STEM + *-ōn* that was common in the area of Phoenicia and the coastal area of modern Israel. Another widely spread toponymic type *bêṯ* + adjunct appeared in the Galilee and the Judean Hill Country, the analogue of which is found in Syro-Mesopotamia. It is notable that these two particular types are not found in the Hill Country of Ephraim. As for the origin of these two toponymic types, the archaeological evidence, in accordance with the toponymic material, hints at migrations or at least at linguistic influence from the north to the Southern Levant during the first part of the second millennium BC.

1. INTRODUCTION AND TOPIC OF THE RESEARCH

The question of the toponyms in the Southern Levant originating from the second millennium BC is an interesting but complicated issue. Linguistic groups are not the primary topic of inquiry in this study, even though toponyms are always named by people. Instead, we concentrate on actual names, although we are naturally obliged to touch on linguistic groups to some extent as well.

A number of different ethnonyms are documented in several historical written sources. We find such ethnonyms as the Canaanites, Amorites (Amurru), Israelites, Hurrians, Hittites, and Philistines that are known not only from biblical texts but from various extrabiblical sources, as well (e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006; Aḥituv 1984).[1] In theory, all of these groups may have influenced the onomasticon of the Southern Levant. The Amurrus ~ Amorites presented in this study are West Semitic people who lived in northern Syria during the Bronze Age as determined by Streck (2000; 2011: 452–453) (see Fig. 1). In addition, such ethonyms as the Jebusites, Hivites, Perizzites, and Girgashites are listed in

1 It is not always clear what is meant in using the ethnonym Hittite in the Hebrew Bible. In the area of the Southern Levant it could also mean Hurrians or any northern population in general.

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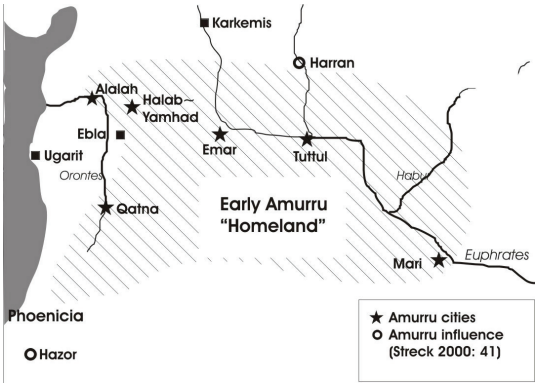

Figure 1 The traditional Land of *Amurru*.
Amurru cities: *Qatna*, *Ḥalab ~ Yamḥad*, *Tuttul*, *Emar*, *Mari*, *Alalaḥ* (see Streck 2000: 47–48).
Associated cities: *Ḥaṣor*, *Ḥarran.*

the Hebrew Bible (Josh. 3:10). Furthermore, such unidentified ethnic groups as the ʿApiru and the Šasu are mentioned in extrabiblical Egyptian sources (see Aḥituv 1984).[2]

Some ethnonyms are used in the present article rather than technical terms, in order to avoid the disagreements of different scholarly schools: the term *Phoenicians* is meant to correspond the population of such Lebanese city states and their vicinities as Tyre, Sidon, Gebal ~ Byblos, and Arvad. *Amurru ~ Amorites* means here people whose core area consisted of such North Syrian city states as Qatna, Alalaḥ, Yimḥad, Emar, Tuttul, and Mari (see Fig. 1). The term *Southern Canaanite language* means the Northwest Semitic language of the non-Hebrew people who lived in the area of modern Israel, the West Bank, Jordan Valley, and Gaza Strip outside of Lebanon. This language is known only fragmentarily. The term (*actual*) *Canaanites* means Northwest Semitic people who lived mainly in the area of modern Lebanon, Israel, the West Bank, Jordan Valley, and Gaza Strip. They are differentiated from the Hebrews, Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites. All of them spoke tongues which belonged to the family of the Canaanite languages.

However, as stated above, the exact linguistic background or ethnicity of a toponym is not the principal focus of the present study. It is sufficient to mention that the studied *toponymic types* are, generally speaking, of Northwest Semitic origin; that they are traced back to the second millennium BC; and that some ethno-historical outlines can be found by studying the spread and origins of these toponymic models.[3]

It is obvious that different linguistic groups (see discussion below) left their marks in the onomasticon of the Southern Levant during the second millennium BC. As mentioned above, it is well known that many of these groups were linguistically Northwest Semitic (e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006: 16–18). Some others possibly spoke Hurrian or Indo-European languages. At least Hurrian and Indo-European personal names of rulers are found in the Southern Levant (see, e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006: 63; Naʾaman 2005: 4–8; Aharoni 1979: 67, 150). The Hurrians spoke

2 The term *ʿApiru* may mean a social class of wandering armed bands rather than an ethnos; cf. Akk. *ḫāpiru*(*m*) 'vagrant', which according to Gelb et al. (1964) was probably a West Semitic loanword in Akkadian (Black et al. 2000 s.v. *ḫāpirum*); ~ ??? cf. Arab. *ʿifr* 'strong, powerful' (see the discussion in Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. עפר). *Šasu* was probably a nomadic tribe, most likely living in the northern parts of Sinai (Rainey & Notley 2006: 93).
3 The Northwest Semitic languages are the Canaanite languages, Ugaritic, and Aramaic. Because we do not know exactly enough what the Amorite (Amurru) language was, the more general term West Semitic is used, even though Amorite could be classified as a Northwest Semitic language as well; see, e.g. Streck 2011: 452–453.

an agglutinative language that belonged to the Hurro-Urartian linguistic group (Gelb 1944). The language of the Philistines is practically unknown, although there have been attempts to identify it as an Indo-European tongue (see Shai 2006; Maeir et al. 2008). In any case, the "Sea People" Philistines may have been linguistically "canaanized" after their invasion of the Southern Levant, which took place at least in Eqron (Gitin et al. 1997: 15). Another possibility is that the Philistine language was preserved only as a language of the upper class. The original Canaanite population probably continued to use their own Northwest Semitic language even after the Philistine invasion. It is clear that some of these ancient linguistic groups, especially those which had the status of superstrate, such as the Hurrians, did not leave many traces in toponyms. However, they may be visible in literary documented anthroponyms (Naʾaman 2005: 4–8). It seems that there also exist a few toponyms that originate from some unknown linguistic source, probably from the time preceding the migrations of the Semites (see section 6.4 below).

2. ROLE OF THE DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES OF SCIENCE

Onomastics has traditionally been understood as a part of linguistics, but historians and archaeologists have been interested in it, as well (Saarikivi 2006: 7). Linguistic studies tend to focus particularly on lexical, phonetic, and morphological characteristics and structures of toponyms. Historians concentrate on distributions of different toponymic material compared with related historical documents and archaeological material. Archaeologists try to synchronize archaeological data with the results of onomastics. It is often archeologists who have found ancient inscriptions containing toponyms. Because of the disciplines' differences in research foci and methods, their possibilities for obtaining results also vary. Onomastics is valid in determining the linguistic background of toponyms, but its weakness is often in dating the material. Archaeologists, on the other hand, have proper instruments for classifying and dating material cultures, but not much possibility to independently say anything about linguistic or ethnic groups (see, e.g. Shennan 1989; Trigger 1994).[4] One should also remember that ancient literary documents are often not fully reliable from a historical perspective. Historians need the aid of other disciplines in order to evaluate their sources. In any event, if archaeological evidence and the results of onomastics agree with each other, the archaeological evidence might be considered a relevant proof, especially for dating purposes. In such cases, results of these two disciplines support each other. Because there exist many literary sources, such as the Amarna letters, Egyptian inscriptions, and the tablets from Mari and Ugarit; and because archaeological investigation has been widely conducted since the days of Charles Clermont-Ganneau in the nineteenth century and continues with the work of modern scholars (see, e.g. the authors of NEAEHL 1992–2008), the history of the Southern Levant is especially suitable for comparing these different approaches. All three disciplines are utilized in the present study.

From the point of view of the present article we can define an *ethnic group* to be something that has influenced the history and culture of the Southern Levant and a *linguistic group* to be something that has formed its onomasticon. Therefore, linguistic groups are more relevant than ethnic groups for our study. As for ethnicities, Barth (1969) has written that ethnic identities can be considered as *boundary identities* defined by members of a group and its neighbors. This

4 Ethnonyms are often problematic. The English word *Dutch* means Neatherlanders, but in German *Deutsch* Germans. Medieval Russians used the ethnonym *nemets* in the meaning 'Germans' and 'Scandinavians'. The ethnonym *French* originates from a Germanic tribe called *Franks*.

makes it difficult for modern scholars to determine ancient identities, because we are neither members nor neighbors of the groups in question.

Because the definition of ethnicity is complicated and often overlaps with linguistic identities, we do not treat this subject and do not try to define the exact ethnoses or linguistic groups behind the toponyms in this study. Furthermore, because the Semitic languages in the Southern Levant were apparently rather closely related to one another, and some of them are poorly known, we neither distinguish nor name those different Semitic linguistic groups who were the name givers of the toponyms.[5] It might be possible to do so, but in that case the justifications would need to be presented to such an extent that it could not be done in one limited article.

On a technical note, the Hebrew transliteration used in this article is a simplified version of ISO 259. Consonants are fully transliterated according to ISO 259, but long *ē*, *ī*, *ō*, *ū* and short *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* are not always distinguished. However, *ā*, *a*, semivowels and diphthongs usually follow the system of ISO 259.[6] It is notable that the vowel length of the Masoretic Bible sometimes is complicated and even irregularly expressed (Joüon & Muraoka 2013: 35–36, 41–50). Some widely known biblical names as Jerusalem, Ephraim, and so on are written in their common English forms.

3. BRIEF REVIEW OF RESEARCH HISTORY

The toponyms of the Southern Levant are well documented, and are listed by various scholars (Aharoni 1979; Borée 1968; Rainey & Notley 2006; Monson 1979). From the point of view of the present article, the large study of Anson Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 9–224, see especially 14–21) is very useful. Yohanan Aharoni (1979: 105–129) has presented the principles of onomastics rather widely. Yoel Elitzur (2004: 11–12) has pointed out the importance of proper linguistic analysis as a tool of onomastics, especially concerning phonetic substitutions when toponyms were adopted from one language into another. He also convincingly presents principles for identifying ancient names of archaeological sites. Although Mitka Golub (2014) examines personal names, not toponyms, her study is important to mention here because of both its methodological suitability for toponymic onomastics and its results. Various scholars have examined West Semitic personal names, including Tigay (1986), Fowler (1988), Zadok (1988), Layton (1990), Hess (2007), Albertz & Schmitt (2012), Avigad & Sass (1997), Aḥituv (2008), and others. There have also been several relevant toponymic studies of Egyptian and Syro-Mesopotamian sources, such as Shmuel Aḥituv (1984) (Egyptian sources), Juan Marin (2001) (Syro-Mesopotamian sources), Khaled Nashef (1982) (Middle Babylonian), and Brigitte Groneberg (1980) (Old Babylonian). However, the toponyms of the present research area have not been examined to a satisfactory degree; that is, not all the methods of onomastics have been fully utilized.

5 Such Canaanite languages as Edomite, Ammonite, and South Canaanite dialects (e.g. the language of the Eqron inscription) are not very well known.

6 Usually, the phonetic history of the Semitic languages reveals the length of vowels in biblical texts, but it does not necessarily do so in the case of all the West Semitic toponyms. Therefore, vowel length is not always distinguished in the present study (see Joüon & Muraoka 2013: 38–50).

4. METHODS AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS

4.1 Methods

One should study toponyms utilizing the following linguistic methods (see Rahkonen 2011: 215–219 and the literature cited therein):

1) *Lexicon*: Sometimes even within the same language, different words, typical of different dialects, are used in place names. Especially when studying closely related languages, it is important to note that different synonymic words in toponyms may appear regularly, creating distinguishable limited areas of distribution. For example, within the Northwest Semitic languages the word for 'town' is in Hebrew *ʿīr*, Phoenician *ʿr* (ער), Ugaritic *ʿr*, but in Moabite *qīr* seems to be used (see Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. עִיר and s.v.; קִיר the Stele of Meša). Therefore the word *qīr* 'town' can be understood as a Moabite marker in the historically defined areas of the Moabites and their vicinities.[7]

2) *Phonetic characteristics*: For example, in the Canaanite language family, the sound shift **ā* > *ō* occurred. It is called "Canaanite shift" (e.g. Moran 2003: 206; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 36). In Hebrew and Phoenician, *o* and *e* developed from the diphthongs **au* and **ai* (Moran 2003: 206; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 31).[8] There also were differences in the phonetic history of consonants within the Northwest Semitic languages; cf. Proto Semitic **ḏ* > Ugaritic *d, ḏ* ~ Hebrew, Phoenician *z* ~ Aramaic *d* (Sivan 2001: 36, table). The phonetic history of old toponyms may reveal something of the original language behind the name or give some suggestions for dating. Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 16) has proposed that the toponym *ʾEdreʿî* in Bashan and Naphtali (Num. 21:33; Josh. 19:37) should be derived from a language in which there was the phonetic development **ḏ >d* (or ~ *ḏ*) in contrast to Hebrew and Phoenician **ḏ > z* (Sivan 2001: 36).[9] In that case, the word behind the name is, according to Rainey, 'arm', in this case 'branch of wadi' (with a toponymic prosthetic aleph; see section 6.4); cf. Arb. *ḏirāʿ*, Heb. *zĕroaʿ* 'arm'. The name might originate from an Amorite or Aramaic type of language. Streck (2000: 194) has suggested that Proto-Semitic **ḏ* was preserved in Amorite and in Aramaic **ḏ > d* (Bordreuil & Pardee 2009: 25; Sivan 2001: 36). One must remember that, most probably, all the Northwest Semitic languages were very close to one another at the beginning of the second millennium, having only dialectal differences of some kind of common Proto NW Semitic.

3) *Morphology*: For example, such toponyms as *ʾEšaʾol* and *ʾEštəmoaʿ* reveal that in the language behind the names, *ephtaʿol* (< *iphtaʿel*) verbal structure was found. This structure was non-existent in Biblical Hebrew, but existed in Moabite and probably in the Canaanite dialect that was spoken in the most southern parts of the Southern Levant. Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 16) interprets it as belonging to an earlier stage of the language, but does not say which language (possible candidates might be Hebrew or Southern Canaanite).

4) *Structure of toponyms*: In different languages there are different structural ways to construct toponyms. For example, in some languages, the word for 'lake' is placed in front of the actual name, as in *Lago* Maggiore (Italian) and *Loch* Laomainn (~ Eng. Lomond) (Gaelic).

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7 In Hebrew there is a word *qiryā* 'town, village' that necessarily is not a derivate of קִיר (*qīr*); cf. Ph. *qrt* and Ug. *qrt* or *qryt* < **qar*-; cf. *Carthago* (see Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. קיר).

8 Some Egyptian inscriptions seem to support the idea that the diphtong *-au* still existed in Hebrew as late as in the tenth century BC; cf. *Ḥawrōn* (*Bí-ta Ḥa-aw-rú-n*) instead of *Ḥorōn* in the Shoshenq list (Rainey & Notley 2006: 186–188).

9 In Egyptian sources *ʾAduraʿ* and *ʾUd*(*u*)*raʿ* (Aḥituv 1984: 90–91).

In other languages, it is placed after the name, like Baden *See* (German) or Stor|*sjön* (Swedish). Accordingly, in personal names the yahwistic theophoric elements were used as prefixes or suffixes in the Hebrew naming models during the Iron Age II (Golub 2014: 626). Suffixes are sometimes used to mark toponyms, as in the Finnish naming system with *-la* as the marker of settlements. These kinds of suffixal elements are called (*topo*)*formants* (e.g. Matveev 2001: 186). They serve as markers of toponyms. Formants often originate from so-called generics of names or from derivational affixes.[10] Later they become obscured, losing the transparency of their original meaning. In Great Britain such suffixal elements exist in names of settlements ending in *-ton* < Anglosaxon **tun* 'enclosure, estate' (Everton, Kingston), *-ham* < Anglosaxon **ham* 'farm' (Nottingham, Birmingham), and *-bury* Anglosaxon **burg* > *bury* 'fortification' (Salisbury, Sudbury); see the etymologies of Hellquist 1922 s.v. *borg*, *hem*, *Tuna*. All of these originate from generics. The Anglosaxon words **tun*, **ham* and *bury* are no longer used in modern English in the same way they were used at the time of the naming, and can therefore be considered to be formants.

In the Canaanite languages, such formants as *-ōn* < **-ān* (Ṣid|ōn, Ašqel|ōn) and *-ō* < **-ā* (Yeriḥ|ō, Məgidd|ō) are used both in toponyms and in personal names (Šimʿ|ōn, Šəlom|ō). Another way to create toponyms in Semitic languages is to use so-called construct states of such nouns as *bayiṯ : bêṯ* 'house' (Bêṯ-Leḥem), *ʿayin : ʿên* 'spring' (ʿÊn-Geḇ), *may(im) : mê* 'water' (Mê-Nep̄toaḥ). Names that are formed using the above-mentioned elements can be classified and distinguished in groups of *toponymic types*.

Many successful attempts have been carried out to determine correct etymologies of individual toponyms of the Southern Levant (see above in section 3). However, the research of *toponymic types* and their *distribution* has not always been fully utilized. To some extent it is visible, for example, in Wilhelm Borée's (1968) and Anson Rainey's (2006) works. Tigay (1986), Layton (1990), and Golub (2014) have paid attention to the structures of personal names. Different kind of toponymic types have been "in fashion" among various linguistic groups in different periods, even in different dialects of the same language. The notion of toponymic types has been an especially important tool in examining toponyms which originate from now extinct, mutually cognate languages (e.g. Matveev 2001; Rahkonen 2011). Due to the fact that the Northwest Semitic languages in the Levant were closely related to one another, the language itself does not always reveal the exact linguistic background of individual toponyms. Therefore, one must conduct a survey of toponymic types.

Alongside toponymic types, another important tool is the *distribution* of these various toponymic types. Distribution may offer useful hints at original "homelands" of toponyms and directions of their spread. Of course, linguistic peculiarities in lexicon, phonetic characteristics or morphology may also reveal much of the etymological background of ancient names. A narrow distribution may reflect a dialectal area. Good examples of a narrow distribution could be the above-mentioned toponyms constructed out of a rare *ephtaʿol* stem not occurring in standard Biblical Hebrew (Kutscher 1982: 58).

Archaeological data should be utilized in order to confirm that the sites whose names are used as the research material really existed in the second millennium BC; that is, that the sites were populated in the Middle/Late Bronze age or in the Iron Age I. Secondly, those archaeologically confirmed sites should also be identified as well as possible (see Elitzur 2004: 12–13;

10 A generic answers the question of the characteristics of a place; i.e. lake, river, village, hill, mountain.

Appendix 2).[11] Thirdly, the general archaeological picture of the second millennium must be comparable with the toponymic distribution on a large scale.

The leading methodological principle in the present article is that of Malcolm Ross (1998: 141, 158, 162) who speaks of *reconstructed linguistic and cultural events* as manifestations of change in human societies. Ross stresses the importance of finding sequences of linguistic events comparable with sequences of material-cultural events. It is true that archaeological finds alone cannot reveal much about ethnic or linguistic groups. But to totally ignore archaeology may significantly reduce the possibility of interpreting the settlement history of the Southern Levant. For example – although a dogmatic, extremely formal scholar might repeat the mantra that the ethnicity or linguistic background is never possible to determine by means of archaeology – even just the archaeological picture of the Middle Bronze Age II in the Southern Levant alone, combined with common sense, can reveal at least that people behind the new culture were not Egyptians or Europeans. The characteristics of a material culture can therefore give possible guidelines, but they must be confirmed by historical literary sources and/or onomastics.

The dramatic change in the material culture in the first half of the second millennium BC (Yasur-Landau et al. 2008; Ben-Tor 2006: 66–76) and the obvious appearance of new toponymic types (see below) are the sort of linguistic and cultural events meant by Ross. These events may reflect migrations, and not merely the spread of a new language or linguistic influence.[12] Directions of the spread of new archaeological cultures should correspond to the spread of parallel toponyms/toponymic types. In addition, ancient literary sources may confirm at least *terminus post quem* the existence of those toponyms which do not have an archaeological dating.

4.2 Research material

In choosing toponyms for the present study, the first criterion is that the selected toponyms must be located in the Southern Levant. The second criterion is that the names already existed in the second millennium BC (archaeologically, the Middle and Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I). The first criterion is simplified by determining the Southern Levant to be the area of modern Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip regions. The toponyms of the Southern Levant presented below are drawn from the Hebrew Bible and have extrabiblical archaeological or documentary support (see Appendix 2 below).[13] The archaeological support means that a MB, LB or IA I site must be identified to a sufficient degree. The extrabiblical literary support relies on various Egyptian sources such as the Execration Letters, the lists of Thutmose III and Amenḥotep, the papyrus Anastasi I (pAn I), and the list of Shoshenq ~ Shishak (see Appendix 2). Other sources have been utilized, too, for example other Egyptian materials from the second millennium BC collected by Shmuel Aḥituv (1984), as well as Syro-Mesopotamian sources, such as those collected by Bonechi (1993), Groneberg (1980), Nashef (1982), and

11 The identified archaeological sites presented in this study are as follows: ʾAšqelōn, ʿEqrōn, Gibəōn, Ḥeḇrōn, Ḥeṣbōn, Qišyōn, Šarōn, Šimʿōn, Ṣidōn, Beṯ ʾEl, Beṯ ha-ʿEmeq, Beṯ Ḥorōn, ʿEp̄raṯ(ā) ~ (Beṯ Leḥem), Beṯ Šəʾan, Beṯ Šemeš, Beṯ Ṣur, Beṯ Yeraḥ.

12 Languages can wander and be adopted not only through migrations, but, for example, through cultural and/or political influences, as in the case of Latin in Gaul and Spain. Languages often accompany migrating people, especially if they become a majority in their new home country. A good example is the Hungarian language, which crossed over the Southeastern European Steppe from the southern Urals to eastern Central Europe.

13 Biblical toponyms without extrabiblical support usually show similar distributions with the supported ones, suggesting that at least a majority of those names originate from the second millennium BC.

Marin (2001). The comments of various stray mentions of various sources have been observed as well (see References).

One may consider it problematic that the utilized toponyms are drawn from the biblical record. How reliable are those names? Of course, if a name has extra-biblical literary support (for example, Egyptian inscriptions), as these toponyms often have, the certainty is almost 100%.[14] Some of the toponyms presented here have only archaeological support. Elitzur (2004: 16–18) has presented more than 150 examples of how originally Northwest Semitic names underwent Hebrew, Aramaic, Hellenistic, and Arabic linguistic periods. However, the modern Arabic names are usually still relatively easily recognisable variants of the original ones. On this basis, one can assume that the toponyms originating from the Northwest Semitic linguistic period (*c.*1900–300 BC and sporadically even considerably later), when nearly the same type of language was uninterruptedly spoken in the Southern Levant, the overwhelming majority of the toponyms stayed almost unchanged. Even the Philistines did not change the Semitic names of their five central cities. In consequence of this, we assume that majority of the sites which were established in the MB II, LB, or Iron Age I period in all probability still bore the same name in the latest editorial phase of the biblical records. Therefore, archaeological support of properly identified sites is necessary, but is also sufficient in cases where we do not have documentary support. Of course, the certainty is lower, but the evidence is reliable enough for our purposes. If a site according to the results of archaeology is established later, one must consider the name to be late as well.

4.3 Question of adaptations of toponyms

A major problem in onomastics is always determining the original forms of toponyms. It is obvious that the language of the Hebrew Bible adopted names previously used in the Southern Levant and in many cases slightly modified them.[15] A special difficulty is the mutual similarity of the Northwest Semitic languages, especially the Phoenician, Hebrew, and Moabite languages. In addition, at least within Hebrew and Phoenician, different dialects are attested as well (Kutscher 1982: 70). The earliest Hebrew probably consisted of the alphabet of 25–27 consonants instead of the later 22. The changes may have begun *c.*1400 BC (Moran 2003: 204–207). The vowels changed because final short vowels – namely the case endings (vowels *-a, -i, -u*) – were eventually lost in Hebrew. According to William Moran (2003: 204–207), this happened after the Amarna period. Furthermore, the softening of the so-called *begadkefat*-consonants can have originated no earlier than approximately 1000 BC, according to some studies, but no later than 700 BC (e.g. Kutscher 1982: 21; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 46). The phonetic characteristics of different languages in different phases must be accurately observed whenever possible (cf. Elitzur 2004).

4.4 Non-Semitic languages

An even more serious question is the role of the non-Semitic languages that have influenced the onomasticon of the Levant, some of them Hurrian and Indo-European (Naʾaman 2005: 3–13) and some of totally unknown affiliation. For example, in the Jerusalem district, the etymological background of such toponyms as *Yəbus* (~ Jerusalem) and *ʾEp̄raṯa* (~ Bethlehem), *Luz* (~ Bethel) (see

14 Sometimes the interpretation of the Egyptian sources is controversial, lowering the reliability.

15 Another problem is that the biblical texts following the Masoretic tradition do not always reflect the spelling of earlier manuscripts or textual variants (e.g. Tov 2015: 157–158; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 76–104). This is true especially regarding the vocalization.

Rainey & Notley 2006: 16) is opaque, even though there have been attempts to derive the names in question from Semitic roots (Koehler & Baumgartner 2001: s.v. יְבוּס, אֶפְרָתָה and לוּז). The name of the Jebusite man who according to the Hebrew Bible sold the plot for the temple in Jerusalem is spelled rather differently in the book of Samuel, as *Arawna*, compared with *Ornan* in Chronicles. Both of them might be adopted from a word which is related to Hittite *arau̯an*(*n*)*i* 'free man' (that is, not a slave) (Kloekhorst 2007: 237–238 s.v. *āra-*). This has also been suggested, for example, by Rosen (1955: 318–320), Görg (1988: 151), and recently Gass (2012: 352).

The king of Jerusalem in the Amarna period was called *ʿAbdi Ḫeba*. According to Gelb (1944: 69), this name is Hurrian. Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 85) correctly notes that the structure of the name is Semitic but the theophoric element is Hurrian. The conclusion is that although the king might have had a Semitic background, the Hurrian influence in Jerusalem was obvious in the Amarna period (fourteenth century BC). As for Jerusalem, the local scribe of the Amarna letters was more proficient in Akkadian than most of the Canaanite scribes, as evidenced by the lack of canaanisms and in his tendency to write in Assyrian Akkadian. These tendencies may hint at close connections between Jerusalem and Mesopotamia. The conclusion is that the scribe possibly was not a native speaker of the local Canaanite language (see Izreʾel 1998: 3; Moran 2003: 249–274). The name of the king, the linguistic quality of the scribe and the name *Arawna* could hint at a Mitanni and later Hittite influence in Jerusalem ~ *Yəbus*.

Furthermore, we know practically nothing of the Philistine language with the exception of some possibly Philistine anthroponyms mentioned in the Hebrew Bible; for example *ʾAk̲iš*, *Golyaṯ*, and such toponyms as *Ṣiqlag*. It bears mentioning that for phonetic reasons, it is problematic to derive *ʾAk̲iš* in the Bible, *ʾkyš* in the Eqron inscription, from the word **Akhaiwos* 'Greek' as it was spelled in the Greek language during the Early Iron Age (Petri Kallio, pers. comm Apr. 2014). According to the Hebrew Bible, *Golyaṯ* was not a native Philistine but a *Rephaite*, and *Ṣiqlag* may be Semitic in origin and composed of two roots **ṣwq* 'pour' and **lwg* 'measure (for oil)'.[16] In addition, the inscription on a sherd *ʾlwt wlt*...[text is broken] found from Tell es Safi (ancient Gath) is not the Philistine for the name Golyaṯ (g < *א is phonetically impossible) (see, e.g. Maeir 2014: 3). In my opinion, the language of the inscription is not of Greek or Anatolian origin as suggested by Maeir et al. (2008, see the discussion of the study). A possible interpretation could be that the text was a religious dedication of the vessel in a Canaanite type of language, and it should possibly be read *ʾelōt we-lota*[*n*] 'goddesses and Lota[n]' (the Canaanite dragon deity) even though *ʾelōt* in that case is written in *mater lectionis*.[17] Plene spelling was rare in the Iron Age IIA period (cf. the Eqron, Siloam, and Meša inscriptions). However, in the Eqron inscription there is plene spellling, with *yod* in the name of *ʾAkiš*. As a proof that vessels were dedicated to deities, we may mention a famous analogue called *Lachiš ewer* containing the text: *mtn šy*[-] [-]*ty ʾlt*. It seems to be a dedication, an offering to *ʾelat* 'goddes Elat' or *ʾelōt* 'goddesses' (e.g. Smith 2002: 28–29). The conclusion to be drawn is that we have no indisputable evidence of the linguistic background of Philistine onomastic material.

16 If the ethnic origin of Golyaṯ as a Rephaite is denied, one should also deny the real existence of the name itself as an imaginary legend, and refrain from using the name in reconstructing the Philistine language.

17 The language might be the same as in the Eqron inscription.

Figure 2 Toponyms of the type STEM + *-ōn* from the second millennium BC.

5. TOPONYMIC TYPES

At first, as already stated above, it is necessary to mention that the toponyms presented below have been selected because the sites, and most likely their names as well, already existed in the Middle/Late Bronze Age or in the Early Iron Age at the latest.[18] The studied toponyms have extrabiblical archaeological or/and documentary support. Names which are structurally similar types but from later periods (that is, the first millennium BC) are not examined in this study.

5.1 Type stem + *-ōn*

Hebrew and Canaanite shared the sound shift **-ān* > *-ōn* (e.g. Kutscher 1982: 24; Moran 2003: 206). The Egyptian versions of the name of the city *Ṣidōn* ~ *Ṣi*[*d*]*una* (Papyrus Anastasi I from the Early Iron Age) and the district of *Šarōn* ~ *Śárúna* (Thutmose III list from the fifteenth century BC) prove that the aforementioned sound shift had occurred at the latest in the fifteenth century BC.[19] It is remarkable that the toponymic type STEM + *-ōn*, also observed by Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 17), is especially found both in Phoenicia and in the coastal area of modern Israel (Fig. 2).[20] Therefore, one can hypothesise that the type in question originates from some early Phoenician type of Canaanite language. The areal distribution of such toponyms that existed already in the second millennium BC supports this idea (Fig. 2).

The afformative *-ōn* < **-ān* also serves in forming nouns (Joüon & Muraoka 2013: 240–242), for example Hebrew *ḥāz|ōn* 'vision' < *ḥāzā* 'see' (Brown et al. 1999; Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. √חזה). The affix **-ān* found in the Amurru personal names is explained as a diminutive marker (Streck 2000: 342). There are a few examples of *-ōn* diminutives in the Hebrew vocabulary as well (Joüon & Muraoka 2013: 241–242). The particular type STEM + *-ōn* is very common in Hebrew anthroponyms, as well; we find such biblical names as *Šimʿ|ōn*, *Gerš|ōn, Šamš|ōn*, *Gidʿ|ōn*, and so forth. This type was especially productive in the early history of the Hebrew language. It is also found in Phoenician-Punic anthroponyms: for example *brqn* (*Baraqōn*; cf. Heb. Baraq), *gršn* (*?Geršōn*; cf. Heb. Geršōn), *ʿmrn* (*ʿOmrōn*; cf. Heb. ʿOmri) (Benz 1972: 244) and in Ugaritic with the suffix **-ānu* (final *-u* is the marker of nominative); for example *Dan|ānu* (cf. Heb. Dan), *Ṣidq|ānu* (cf. Heb. Ṣidqiyahu) (Gröndahl 1967: 17–18, 52). Gröndahl (1967: 77) states that the suffix in question has served in building *abstracts* and *diminutives* in the Ugaritic language.

There are two pieces of evidence supporting the hypothesis that the toponymic type *-ōn* should be derived from Canaanite languages: 1) the principal areal distribution of this topo-

18 Most of the presented names are mentioned in literary sources (Appendix 2).

19 The main rule is that the lack of the sound *o* was substituted in Egyptian hieroglyphs with *w* and in Akkadian cuneiform with *ú*, *ù* or any syllable sign containing *u-sound.*

20 A number of biblical STEM + *-ōn*-names exist without documentary or archaeological support. Many of them are located, according to the Bible, in the western parts of modern Jordan and most likely already existed in the second millennium BC.

nymic type and 2) the Canaanite sound shift *-*ān* > -*ōn* itself. Archaeological evidence suggests that the earliest settlements of the MB IIA in the area of historical Israel were concentrated in the Mediterranean coastal area and in some inland valleys (Cohen 2002: 107–110, fig. 13; Mazar 1990: 176–178). Accordingly, early toponyms which belong to the type STEM + -*ōn* are located mainly in the Mediterranean coastal area (Fig. 2), both in the territory of modern Israel and in Lebanon. It is possible that some of the Transjordanian -*ōn* names may reflect a later Biblical Hebrew pronunciation of original *-*ān* toponyms. Alternatively, it is possible that the "Canaanite Shift" occurred in Moabite and Ammonite as well (see Elitzur 2004: 90–92 s.v. Αμμαν). The sound shift -*ōn* separates the Hebrew-Phoenician names from Ugaritic *-*ān(u)* and Amurru *-*ān* names (see above).

5.2. Type *bêṯ* + adjunct

The toponymic type *bêṯ* + adjunct has analogues in Syro-Mesopotamia. The meaning of the topoformant *bêṯ*- in some cases has been 'temple', sometimes 'place of a clan' (see Nashef 1982: 52); later, it served merely as a marker of a place name (see below). In the Old Babylonian Era (*c.*2000–1550 BC) we find in Syro-Mesopotamia such identified sites as *Bīt-Akkaka* (riv. Ḫabur), *Bīt-Jaetim* (riv. Ḫabur), *Bīt-Japtaḫarna* (riv. Išim-Jaḫdunlim), *Bīt-Kapān* (riv. Ḫabur), *Bīt-Zarḫan* (riv. Ḫabur). In addition, there are 20 unidentified "*bīt*-" sites in the list of Groneberg (1980: 42–45). In Syria, in the second millennium BC, such sites have been identified as *Bīt-Ḫilu* (between Ugarit and Alalaḫ), *Bīt-Ilu-Abūma* (close to Ekalte, Upper Euphrates), *Bīt-Rašap-Qulla* (Upper Euphrates), *Bīt-Šūli* (Upper Euphrates), and *Bīt-Tenni*? ~ *Tannūnā* (Marin 2001: 57–59). The only unidentified site on this list is the name *Bīt-Ari*. It is remarkable that only one *Bīt-*/*Bêṯ*- name of the second millennium BC has been found in Lebanon, namely *Bīṯ-Arḫa* close to Byblos (Marin 2001: 57), and none has been found in the Ebla archives (Bonechi 1993). This means that the type in question most likely does not originate from coastal Lebanon or coastal Syria. During the Old Babylonian period the spread of Amurru population in Syro-Mesopotamia began, as is proved especially through the evidence of personal names (e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006: 50–51; Streck 2000: 23–24). It seems that this particular toponymic type may be connected with these West Semitic people.

Later in the Middle Babylonian Era (approximately 1550–1200 BC), the distribution of this toponymic type expanded to a remarkable degree, especially to the south and east; for example *Bīt-Ada* (NE Tigris), *Bīt-Bāzi* (Tigris), *Bīt-Bēlāni* (riv. Namkar-Bēlāni), *Bīt-Bēltija* (Babel reg.), *Bīt-Bēri* (Nippur reg.), *Bīt-Enlil* (riv. Nāru-eššetu/Nippur reg.), *Bīt-Ḫabban* (riv. Nār-šarri/Idiqla/Mê Kalkal, Middle Euphrates), *Bīt-Ḫanbi* (riv. Sumundar), *Bīt-Imbijati* (close to Bīt-Ḫanbi), and dozens of others as listed by Nashef (1982: 52–74).

Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: Index) has listed in the Mesopotamian region such sites as *Bīt-Adini*, *Bīt-Agusi*, *Bīt-Akiti*, *Bīt-Baḫiani*, *Bīt-Burutas*, *Bīt Dayukku*, *Bīt-Gabbari*, *Bīt-Hairi*, *Bīt-Ḫalupe*, *Bīt-Hazail*, *Bīt Sin-Magir*, *Bīt-Yakin*, *Bīt-Zamani*. These are supposedly names from the Early Iron Age. At least some of them might be of Aramaic origin; cf. *Bīṯ Adini*, *Bīṯ Agūsi*, *Bīṯ Gabbāri*, *Bīṯ Ḫazail* (Bagg 2007: 44–49).

It is possible that the spread of this toponymic type to the Southern Levant in the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age II took place in the context of cultural waves and/or migrations from north to south (Rainey & Notley 2006: 52, 55; Cohen 2002; Mazar 1990: 188–189; Kempinski 1992: 166, 168, 209). Because we know the principal area of the toponymic type *bêṯ* + adjunct (in the MB II period) in the Upper Euphrates, we are able to state at least that the origin of this particular toponymic type can to be found in Syro-Mesopotamia. It seems that the sites having

this type of name appeared in the Southern Levant slightly after the first coastal MB IIA settlements from Lebanon (see Cohen 2002: 123, 125, fig. 26). Ben-Tor (2006) has shown that many of the urban settlements mentioned in the Egyptian Execration texts developed in the coastal area of the Southern Levant during MB IIA, but several of them in the Galilee and Judean Hill Country developed later during MB IIB. In our research area, the *bêṯ*-type of toponyms is concentrated mainly in the Judean Hill Country and the Galilee (Fig. 3).[21]

Figure 3 Toponyms of the type *bêṯ* + adjunct from the second millennium BC.

This toponymic type later became very productive among the Israelites, who named many places according to this model: Bêṯ-Guḇrin, Bêṯ-Ha-Kerem, Bêṯ-Ḥesdaʾ (Bethesda), Bêṯ-ʿAni (Bethany), Bêṯ-Šeʿarim, and so on. A hypothesis has long existed that this type developed from names of sites where deities were worshiped (Nashef 1982: 52). It is true that some toponyms exist that were named on the basis of temples like Bêṯ-El, Bêṯ-ʿAnat, Bêṯ-Šemeš, and Bêṯ-Yeraḥ. However, the model *bêṯ-* + adjunct is found in other connections as well. There are plenty of very old *bêṯ*-names in the Southern Levant which are most probably not derived from names of deities or clans: Bêṯ-Ha-Gan 'house of the garden', Bêṯ-ʿEmeq 'house of the valley', Bêṯ-Gader 'house of the fence or wall', Bêṯ-Markaḇoṯ 'house of chariots', Bêṯ-Peleṭ 'house of escape', Bêṯ-Ṣur 'house of rock', and so forth. I would interpret the structure *bêṯ* + adjunct to mean at its later stage simply 'place of something', not necessarily a temple of a deity. It is clear that in the Southern Levant, the habit of using the construct state *bêṯ-* as a marker of a clan (Nashef 1982: 52) was rare in toponyms. In the Hebrew Bible there are only a few examples, such as *Bêṯ-Yoaḇ* (1. Chron. 2:54). In contrast, this model was usual in Mesopotamia (Nashef 1982). However, in biblical texts this structure existed (for example in the names of clans *Bêṯ-Yaʿăqoḇ* Gen. 46:27, *Bêṯ-Šaʾul* 2. Sam. 3:1, *Bêṯ-Dawid* 2. Sam. 3:1) even though it is not frequently visible in toponyms.

5.3 Additional remarks

We notice that the district centered on Jerusalem has been an area where both the toponymic type *-ōn* and the type *bêṯ-* existed side by side. However, one can see that the *-ōn*-type was located in areas further west of Jerusalem alongside the route Jerusalem–Yaṗo (Fig. 2). This corresponds with the Middle Bronze Age IIA settlement history as presented by Cohen (2002: 125, fig. 26, 126–127; index 1). In turn, the *bêṯ* + adjunct -type is found everywhere in the regions of the biblical tribes of Judah and Benjamin (Fig. 3).

It is very important to take account of the negative evidence as well. Toponyms formed according to both of the above-mentioned models are totally absent in the Hill Country of

21 Several biblical toponyms of this type, probably originating from the second millennium BC, are found in the Transjordanian Dead Sea region close to the estuary of the river Jordan. They are not listed here, because they do not have extrabiblical or archaeological support.

Ephraim and Manasseh. Is there any explanation for this? Was this area perhaps sparsely populated in the second millennium? In any event, the toponyms in the Hill Country of Ephraim and Manasseh show that the inhabitants, who were according to Gass (2012: 324–326) Perizzites, spoke a Northwest Semitic language. The names of Shechem, Gərizim, and ʿEḇal have reasonable Semitic etymologies (Koehler & Baumgartner 2001), but these Semitic people did not use such toponymic models as STEM + *-ōn* or *bêṯ* + adjunct.

6. SOME DIALECTAL TOPONYMIC TYPES

Some of the existing toponymic types will not be analysed in detail; instead, we will content ourselves simply to mention them with some comments. These types represent dialectal toponymic types with relatively restricted distributions. The toponyms demonstrate that the spoken Northwest Semitic language in the Southern Levant was not exactly homogenous, but consisted of different dialects.

6.1 Toponymic type stem + *-ō*

A toponymic type STEM + *-ō* (see also Rainey & Notley 2006: 17) is found in such names as *ʿAk(k)|ō*, *Yəriḥ|ō*, *Šil|ō*, *Məgidd|ō* and *Yapī|ō*. In addition, there is an unidentified site which is called in the Hebrew Bible *Śoḵō* (1. Sam. 17:1) and in the list of Thutmose III *ś ̌-kʿ* (Rainey & Notley 2006: 73). It is unclear whether the toponym *Śeḵu* is connected to this site (see Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. שֹׂכוֹ). The obviously very old toponymic type STEM + *-ō* may originate from some Northwest Semitic language/dialect spoken mainly in the Jordan and Jezreel Valley.[22] Amarna tablets (fourteenth century BC) show forms like * *ʿAkka* and **Magidda* (Kutscher 1982: 24; Koehler & Baumgartner 2001: 823). Aḥituv (1984: 48) interprets the Canaanite form * *ʿAkā* and Rainey (Rainey & Notley 2006: 58) reconstructs the Execration list E * *ʿ-k-ya* > * *ʿAkkâ-ya*. Those forms suggest that these particular toponyms participated only later in the "Canaanite shift" **ā* > *ō*. However, there is a contradiction. The list of Thutmose III proves that the Canaanite shift had already developed in the fifteenth century (see above). Possibly, the spelling still varied in the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries. The type STEM + *-ō* might be a dialectal form, possibly from *-ōn* < **-ān* as suggested by Brown et al. (1999) (s.v. שִׁלֹה), but Kutscher (1982: 59) notes that on the contrary, there was a tendency in the period of Late Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew to add *-n* after original *-o*. If the Execration list's *ʿ-k-ya* can be interpreted as **Ak(k)a*, Kutscher seems more likely to be right.

6.2 Toponymic type *ephtʿaol*

Some Northwest Semitic toponyms show forms that contain certain peculiarities. For example, there is a type of *ephtaʿol*? < **iphtaʿel*, that is not found in regular Hebrew: the oikonyms *ʾEštaʾol*, constructed on the basis of a reflexive form of the root √שאל 'ask', and *ʾEštəmoaʿ*, which results from a reflexive of the root √שמע 'hear, listen' (e.g. Kutscher 1982: 37). The above-mentioned forms show the absence of an initial *h* that appears in Hebrew and early Aramaic, being in this sense similar to Imperial Aramaic *ithpaʿal* or Phoenician *yitpaʿil*. However, these examples might

22 All of these properly identified sites were already populated in the EB or MB II era.

also be compared with Moabite *iphtaʿel* found in the stele of Meša.[23] Borée (1968: 69) and Kutscher (1982: 58) have thought that the toponym *ʾEltəqeʾ* belongs to this toponymic type as well. The site is located not far away from *ʾEštaʾol*, close to Timna, offering some evidence that *iphtaʿel* occurred in the Canaanite dialect spoken in the region of the Judean foothills in the Shephelah. On a papyrys (pLeiden) from the Egyptian Ramesside period, an unidentified toponym *ʾIlt*(*i*)*qān* ~ *ʾEltəqōn* is found, which could belong to the same toponymic group (Aḥituv 1984: 92–93).

6.3 Toponymic type *ʾa* + stem

Such names as *ʾA*|*šqelon*, *ʾA*|*šdod*, *ʾA*|*k̲ziḇ* (close to Tyre), *ʾA*|*rwad* (Phoenician town), *ʾA*|*k̲šapō* (close to Acco) and possibly *ʾEdreʿi* [אֶדְרֶעִי]? < **ʾA*|*draʿi* with initial prosthetic aleph are found. This type seems to have a coastal Canaanite spread and origin.

6.4 Pre-Semitic toponyms

Finally, it should be mentioned that some most probably archaic, non-Semitic toponyms exist, such as the names of the mountains *Gil*|*boaʿ* and *Gil*|*ʿad*. These names are possibly not Semitic because of their four root letters and an unknown etymology of the words behind the names. Very likely, these names of mountains consist of a word **gil* 'mountain' and of an unknown element of the name (*boʿa* < ? **boγa* and *ʿad* < ? **γad*).[24] Ayin (*ġ*) might be a Semitic substitution for the original **γ*. The name of the ruler in Ḥaṣor, *gṭi*, from the time preceding MB IIA was probably non-Semitic (Ben-Tor 2006: 75). One could also suggest that in this archaic language a word such as **yar* 'river' was found; cf. the rivers *Yar*|*den*, *Yar*|*muq*, *Yar*|*muṯ*, and even *Yar*|*qon*. However, *Yarden* may originate from Semitic *Yard*|*on* < √ירד 'flow down' (thus Brown et al. 1999) and *Yarq*|*on* from √ירק 'green, yellow'. However, the Egyptian loanword *yəʾor* 'big river, the Nile' in Hebrew should not be forgotten. It may be somehow linked with the stem *yar*-; cf. Eg. **yrw*, cuneiform **yaruʾu* 'Nile, stream, canal' (see Brown et al.1999; Koehler & Baumgartner 2001 s.v. יְאוֹר).

7. ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOPONYMIC TYPES

Languages or linguistic elements may "wander" from one geographical area to another. The reasons may be 1) migrations, 2) strong cultural impacts (trade, political submission, etc.), or 3) especially in a bilingual situation, the influence of a prestige language (language changes, sound shifts, linguistic adoptions, and so forth) on a less valued language. Spread of toponyms may reflect directions of linguistic movements. However, even if a spread of a certain toponymic type exists on a north-south axis, it is difficult to define whether the movement took place from north to south or vice versa. The reason is that the dating of toponyms is often problematic. In such cases, the direction of the spread must be reasoned out utilizing the results of archaeology or documentary sources. Linguistic influences usually do not move against cultural tides. Literary sources can

23 The Meša text says in lines 11 and 15 ואלחם 'I fought'. *Iphtaʿel* occurred in Arabic, early Canaanite, and Ugaritic (Kutscher 1982: 58). The initial *waw* in the Meša text could probably be understood as a marker of *waw-consecutive* combined with Moabite reflexive *iphtaʿel* (see Kutscher 1982: 37), because the context shows that the verb was used in the past tense. Some type of *waw-consecutive* appeared in Byblos Canaanite during the Amarna period as well (Moran 2003: 215–216).

24 Instead of *gil*, the original form might have been **gal*. The soundshift **a* > *i* is fairly common in the masoretic tradition; cf. Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 84.

define the existence of sites *terminus post quem*, but not necessarily their earlier phases. However, archaeological finds can often be dated rather reliably: it is at least possible to distinguish archaeologically earlier and later material. If an archaeological picture fits well with a toponymic spread, then it is probable that they together reflect a mutual *linguistic and cultural event* in a society as described by Ross (see section 4.1). In that case it is possible to define earlier and later strata of toponyms utilizing the results of archaeology. Accordingly, the purpose of presenting the results of the archaeological studies in this section is to clarify the basic directions of cultural movements and corresponding linguistic influences.

One may wonder why the work of Susan L. Cohen (2002) plays such an essential role in the present study. The hypothesis presented in this article is not meant to be proved on the basis of her research work. It is necessary to highlight here that even though the results of her archaeological study correspond almost exactly to the results of the toponymic study presented here (Appendix 1), the toponymic evidence supports the archaeological evidence considerably more than vice versa. Cohen has convincingly determined four archaeological phases of settlement history during the MB IIA period (cf. also Yasur-Landau et al. 2008). Ben-Tor (2006: 66–82) has presented later datings (MB IIB) for some sites accepted afterwards by Cohen herself as well (pers. comm. 22 Jan. 2016).[25] Cohen's definition is based on the architecture and ceramic sequence identified at Tel Aphek (see also Kempinski 1992: 166). Using the sequence, together with the additional ceramic evidence from other MB IIA sites, it is possible to determine in which phase the sites were founded for the first time. Her work concentrated particularly on the issue of the dating of the Middle Bronze Age IIA and on the development of settlements during MB IIA in the Southern Levant. Later, Manfred Bietak (2015) presented more accurate datings of MB IIA. From the point of view of the present study, the relatively small difference in datings is not a pertinent question, because the span of time of the present study is all of the second millennium BC. For us, the principal focus is the order of the events, not the exact dating.

Cohen did not pay much attention to the origin of the population. She briefly mentions that population estimates indicate a movement of peoples from the north. In addition, she states that ceramic and other evidence points to cultural influence coming from Syro-Mesopotamia (Cohen 2002: 15). She supports the idea of local continued growth according to the model of an economic dendritic system (Cohen 2002: 137). No doubt, this model might have worked in the Southern Levant during the Middle Bronze Age. However, one should remember that during the course of history, new economic possibilities have always attracted immigrants, especially if the economy of the homeland has worsened (lack of arable land or pasture, famine, wars, trading difficulties); cf. the Hyksos Period in Egypt. The Southern Levant offered free land for agriculture and cattle. Kempinski (1992) asserts more strongly that the new population arrived in the Southern Levant from two regions during the MB II period. An earlier group came from coastal Lebanon and another, slightly later, group came from northern Syria. Yasur-Landau (Yasur-Landau et al. 2008: 66, 74, 77) writes that the beginning of the land settlement during MB IIA period in the western Galilee took place in arable lands and close to available water sources. Later, rapidly developing urbanization and fortified cities offered good opportuni-

25 MB IIA sites mentioned in the Execration texts according to Ben-Tor (2006) are Ashkelon, Aphek, Acco, and Laish. According to Ben-Tor, fortified towns or minor sites without fortification from the MB IIB period are: Jerusalem, Shechem, Rehov, Pehel, Hazor, Achshaph, and Beth-Shean. There was an occupation gap in Beth-Shean between circa 2000 and 1700 BC (Mazar 2003: 323–339). That is to say, the coastal areas were, generally speaking, populated or at least urbanized earlier than the mountainous ones.

ties for craftsmen and traders, too, especially during MB IIB (see Ben-Tor 2006: 77). In my opinion, both migrations and internal growth were reasons for the spread of settlements. The growth of the economy even makes it probable that there was some sort of immigration. Even though the so-called "Amorite Hypothesis" is ruled out by many scholars (see, e.g. Bunivomitz & Greenberg 2006), migrations from the north to the Southern Levant in the first part of the second millennium BC should be considered as one of the possible events.

The archaeological evidence connected with the wide picture of toponymic types in all the Levant shows quite indisputably that the new population or/and at least new cultural influences came to the Southern Levant in the Middle Bronze Age IIA–B (*c.*1900–1550 BC), particularly from the north (e.g. Rainey & Notley 2006: 60; Mazar 1990: 188–189; Kempinski 1992). From the point of view of the present article, it is enough to understand the north-to-south direction of the principal cultural movements. There existed two "gates" of cultural, political and, possibly, immigration activities. Yasur-Landau (Yasur-Landau et al. 2008: 59, 76–77; see also Kempinski 1992: 166) describes the nature of two major urban poles of political and economic forces in the Galilee: western *Acco-Kabri* (the gate of Lebanon) and eastern *Ḥaṣor-Laiš* (the gate of Syro-Mesopotamia). The other movement that is important to understand is the internal settlement from coastal areas to the Judean mountains in the Southern Levant. The population seems to have initially reached the Coastal Plain of the Southern Levant – phases 1–2 in Cohen's definition; see Figure 4 below (Cohen 2002: 107–115, Figs 12 & 13). Slightly later, the first phase of settlement and urbanization of the hill countries began (Cohen 2002: phases 3–4; Ben-Tor 2006: 66–76). (See Figs 5–8 below.)

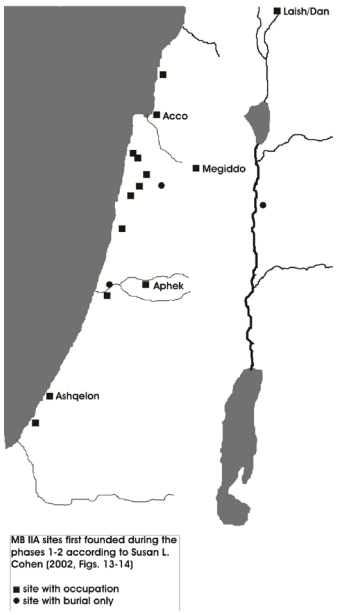

Figure 4 MB IIA sites, phase 1–2 according to Susan Cohen.

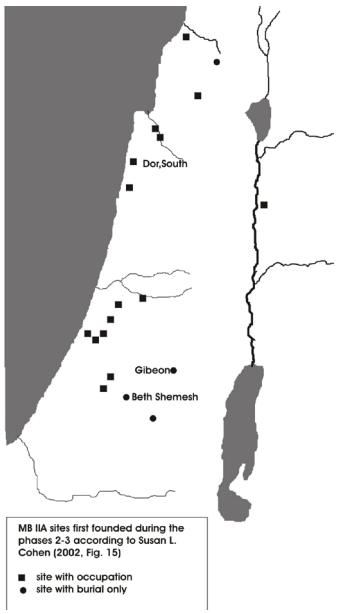

Figure 5 MB IIA sites, phase 2–3 according to Susan Cohen.

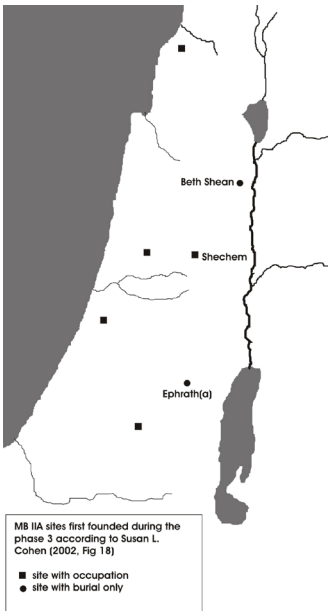

Figure 6 MB IIA sites, phase 3 according to Susan Cohen. Some of them MB IIB (Ben-Tor 2006).

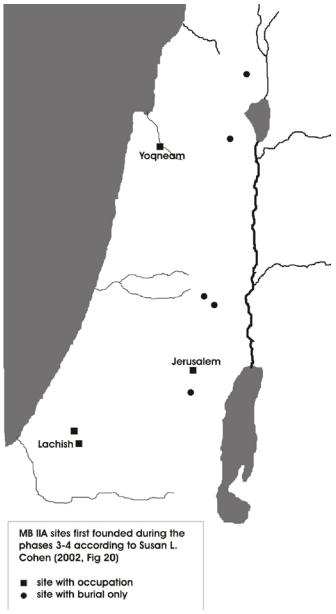

Figure 7 MB IIA sites, phase 3–4 according to Susan Cohen. Some of them MB IIB (Ben-Tor 2006).

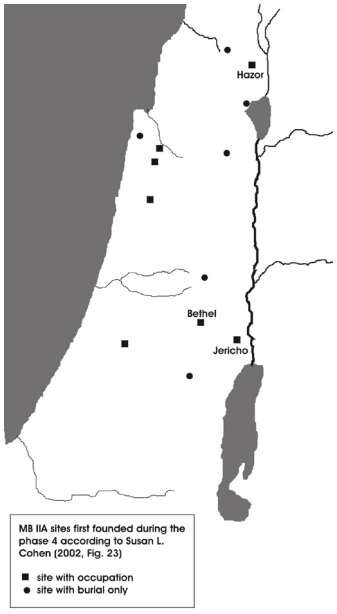

Figure 8 MB IIA sites, phase 4 according to Susan Cohen. Some of them MB IIB (Ben-Tor 2006).

8. DISCUSSION

The toponymic type STEM + *-ōn* < **ān*(*u*) bearing the Canaanite shift *ō* < **ā* is spread mostly on the Lebanese (*Ṣid*|*ōn*, *Leḇan*|*ōn* etc.) and Israeli (*ʾAšqel*|*ōn*, *Šar*|*ōn* etc.) coastal plains, with the exception of a wedge towards Judean Hill Country and Jerusalem (See Fig. 2 above). This affixal element, having originally a diminutive and/or abstract meaning (see section 5.1 above), is also known in Phoenician and biblical Hebrew personal names and vocabulary (Benz 1972: 244, 292). The affix **-ān(u)* is known in the Northwest Semitic language family in Ugaritic and Amorite personal names as well (Gröndahl 1967: 52; Streck 2000: 342–347; Joüon & Muraoka 2013: 241–242).

The affix *-ōn* itself alone does not prove that a term originates from Phoenician Canaanite, because the Canaanite sound shift most probably developed after MB II during the Late Bronze Age. For example, the name of Ashkelon in an early Egyptian Execration text is written in the form *ʾAsqalānu*, and in some Qadesh Inscriptions *ʾAsqalāna*, but later *ʾAskalūna* (pLen, KRI V); *Iyyon* is written *ʿAyyānu* in a later Execration text (Aḥituv 1984: 70, 120). Toponyms STEM + *-ōn*, after the sound shift **-ān* > *-ōn*, reflect the Canaanite linguistic reality after *c.*1300 BC (see section 5.1).

However, the distribution of this toponymic type is very typically Canaanite and no toponyms bearing the earlier form, STEM + **-ān*(*u*), are found in the Southern Levant. This leads us to believe that the Canaanite sound shift touched all of the *-ān*(*u*) toponyms in the Southern Levant. The distribution of this toponymic type in the Southern Levant corresponds rather well to the first phases of settlement history presented by Susan L. Cohen (2002: Figs 13–15). (See Figs 4 & 5.) The toponymic spread, and Cohen's archaeological picture support each other.

The type *bêṯ-* + adjunct has a different distribution. It is almost unknown in Phoenicia and on the Israeli coastal plain, but the type *bīt-* + adjunct is typical in the traditional North Syrian Amurru area (Fig. 1) during the Old and Middle Babylonian period in the second millennium

(Fig. 1; see section 5.2). In the Southern Levant, the distribution of the type is concentrated in the hill countries of the Galilee and Judah-Benjamin (see Fig. 3 above). The naming tradition shows mutual connection between Syro-Mesopotamia and the Galilean and Judean hill countries. The possible reasons are 1) migrations, 2) cultural, commercial or political connections influencing the language, and 3) early tradition from the common NW Semitic Proto Language. As mentioned above (section 5.2), the type *bêṯ* + adjunct could not spread from the coastal plain to the hill country, because the model on the coastal plain was practically unknown. The only possibility is that it was adopted from the north. One should keep in mind the two above-mentioned political and economical power poles during the MB II period in the Galilee (section 7): the western *Acco–Kabri*, the gate of Lebanon and the eastern *Ḥaṣor–Laiš*, the gate of Syro-Mesopotamia. Possible linguistic influences most probably came through these gates. The type *bêṯ* + adjunct had to come through the eastern *Ḥaṣor–Laiš* gate through migrations or cultural/commercial/political influences. The possibility of the tradition originating from the common proto-language is possible, but does not explain the difference between the coastal and inland naming models.

If one compares the areas of the above-mentioned toponymic types, it is possible to find some clear contrasts: STEM + *-ōn* vs. *bêṯ* + adjunct toponymic types, coastal versus mountainous settlements, and agricultural versus semi-pastoral economy. In both areas there were important Bronze Age cities: western *Sidon*, *Tyre*, *Acco*, *Megiddo*, *Ašqelōn* and eastern *Ḥaṣor*, *Beth Shean*, *Shechem*, *Jerusalem*. Through both of them lead important north-south oriented commercial routes: the western coastal road *Egypt–Ašqelōn–Acco–Tyre–Ugarit*, and the eastern one *Ḥeḇrōn–Shechem–Ḥaṣor–Syro-Mesopotamia.*

Four known main branches of the (North)west Semitic languages were spoken in the Levant in the second millennium BC: Canaanite, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Amorite. It is hard to compare them, because the basic informative literary sources are from different periods: Canaanite and Aramaic mostly from the Iron Age II, Ugaritic from the Late Bronze Age, and Amorite from the Middle Bronze Age. The last one is known mainly through personal names only (Streck 2000). When comparing the Ugaritic and Amorite personal names with each other, Bordreuil & Pardee (2009: 10) group Ugaritians with the Amorite entity. However, in the Middle Bronze Age, all the Northwest Semitic languages were most probably very close to one another linguistically; those tribes supposedly spoke dialects of the common Late Proto NW Semitic language. The different toponymic types suggest that there were different dialects and linguistic innovations. Finally the proto-language likely split during the first part of the second millennium BC, and different distinct Northwest Semitic languages began to appear. We should not underestimate the heavier Akkadian cultural and linguistic influence on the Syro-Mesopotamian Amorites compared with the coastal Canaanites as the separating cultural and linguistic factor. Even though the linguistic difference was not very remarkable, some sort of cultural and linguistic differentiation no doubt already existed between the Canaanite coastal and Syro-Mesopotamian inland populations during the MB II period.

Some areal dialectal differences are visible in the Southern Levant in such early toponyms as the type with *initial prosthetic aleph*, the type of final *-ō* < **ā* and the type based on *iphtaʿel* (sections 6.1–3). A possible dialectal difference may be visible in the mountainous area of Ephraim, because both of the above-mentioned toponymic types (*-ōn* and *bêṯ-*) are absent there. The same linguistic difference may be reflected in the famous biblical passage describing the Ephraimites, who were not able to pronounce correctly the sibilant of the word *šibboleṯ* (Judges 12:6).

The similarity between the archaeological results of Cohen (2002) and the toponymic results of the present study (sections 5.1 and 5.2, Appendix 1) is remarkable, and it gives proof that the two approaches mostly illustrate the same cultural and linguistic events, thereby offering a justification for utilizing the theory of Malcolm Ross (1998: 141, 158, 162).

ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeological:

EB = Early Bronze Age	late third millennium
MB = Middle Bronze age	*c.*1900–1550 BC
LB = Late Bronze Age	*c.*1550–1200 BC
IA I = Iron Age I	*c.*1200–1000 BC

Egyptian documents:

Ex = Execration inscriptions	early second millennium
Th = List of Thutmose III	fifteenth century BC
Am = List of Amenthotep II	fourteenth century BC
Ram II = Ramesses II	thirteenth century BC
An = papyrus Anastasi I	twelfth–thirteenth century BC
Ram III = Ramesses III	twelfth century BC
Sh = List of Shoshenq I (Shishak)	tenth century BC

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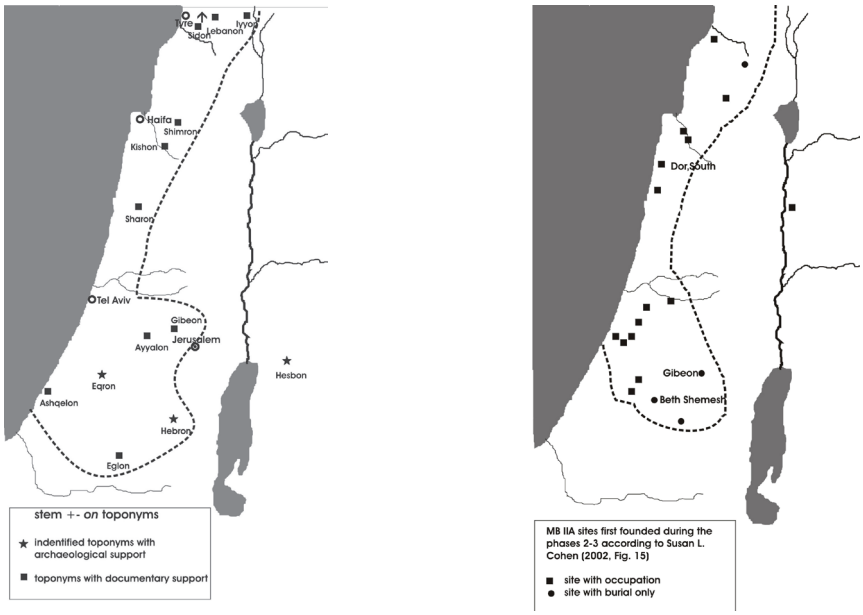
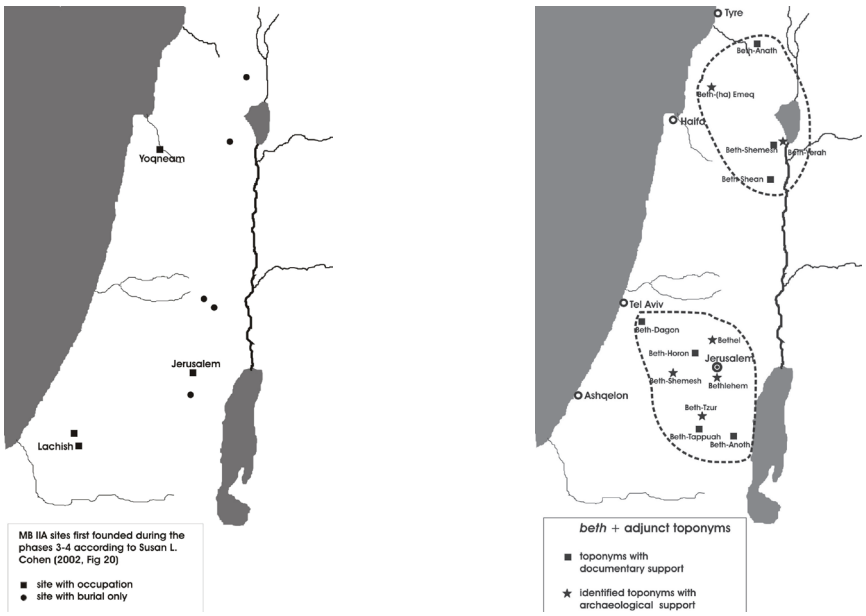
APPENDIX 1: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND TOPONYMIC COMPARISON TO THE MAPS OF SUSAN L. COHEN (2002)



Comparison 1: Phase 2–3 of new settlements according to Susan Cohen and STEM + *-ōn*-toponyms supported by archaeological or documentary evidence from the second millennium BC (Fig. 2 in section 5.1).



Comparison 2: Phase 3–4 of new settlements according to Susan Cohen and *bêṯ* + adjunct-toponyms supported by archaeological or documentary evidence in the second millennium BC (Fig. 3 in section 5.2).

APPENDIX 2: LISTS OF THE NAMES IN FIGURES 2 AND 3

Biblical names without archaeological or documentary support are located similarly to the supported toponyms in Cis-Jordan.

Fig. 2	Archaeological evidence	Documentary evidence
Ayyalon		Sh
Ashkelon	MB IIA	Ex[1], Am
Eglon		Ex
Ekron	MB II, IA I	
Gibeon	MB I	Sh
Hebron	EB, MB, IA I	
Hesbon	LB	
Iyon		Ex[2], Th
Kishyon	EB, MB II, IA I	Th
Lebanon		pCh Beatty I
Sharon		Ex[2], Th, Am
Shim(r)on		Th, Am
Sidon		Am, pAn I

Biblical stem + *-ōn* toponyms without archaeological or documentary support:

Abdon, Ammon; Rabbath, Arnon, Atzmon, Chesalon, Dibon, Ephron, Evron, Etzion-Geber, Gibbethon, Gihon (Jerusalem), Hammon, Hannathon, Helbon, Hermon, Holon, Yarkon, Kidron, Kitron, Pirathon, Shikkeron, Zion (Jerusalem), Yardon ~ Yarden (Jordan).

Fig. 3	Archaeological evidence	Documentary evidence
Beth-Anath		Th, Sh, Seti I, Ram II
Beth-Anoth		? Sh
Beth-Dagon		Ram III
Bethel	EB, MB I	
Beth-(ha)Emek	EB I–IIA	
Beth-Horon		Sh
Bethlehem ~ Efrat(a)	B	
Beth-Shean	EB I	Th, Sh, An
Beth-Shemesh (Judea)	MB	
Beth-Shemesh (Issachar)		Ex[2]
Beth Tappuah		Sh
Beth Tzur	EB, MB IIB	
Beth Yerah	EB	

Biblical *bêṯ* + adjuct toponyms without archaeological or documentary support:

Beth-Araba, Beth-Arbel, Beth-Ashbea, Beth-Aven, Beth-Azmaveth, Beth-Baal-Meon, Beth-Bamoth, Beth-Biri, Beth-Car, Beth-Diblathaim, Beth-Eglaim, Beth-Gader, Beth-Gamul, Beth-Haccerem, Beth-Haggan, Beth-Hanan, Beth-Haram, Beth-Hoglah, Beth-haYeshimoth, Beth-Lebaoth, Bethlehem (north), Abel Beth-Maaca, Beth-haMarcaboth, Beth Nimrah, Beth Pazzez, Beth Pelet, Beth-Peor, Beth-Rehob, Beth-Shemesh (Naftali), Beth-haShittah.