

THE WARRIOR ETHOS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST - AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL COMPARISON BETWEEN THE WORLD-VIEWS
OF WARRIORS OF THE FERTILE CRESCENT

by

CATHARINA ELIZABETH JOHANNA SCHNEIDER

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SUMMARY

The Fertile Crescent, due to its geographical characteristics, has always been an area troubled with conflict and warfare. The men who participated in these wars, from ca 2000 BCE to 1000 BCE operated from an ethos which was governed by a system of rules, all which were conceived to be the creation of divine will, to which kings and their warriors (keymen) were subject. The cuneiform texts from Mari, Ugarit, Ebla, Amarna and others, have not only thrown light on the political, social, religious and military aspects of those turbulent times, but have also given insight into the formation of armies as well as the commanders who led those armies and the royal officials who governed cities and provinces, all appointed by the monarch in order to effect the smooth running of his kingdom. They also shed light on the formation of coalitions and alliances in order to promote peace, arrange marriages to the daughters of other ruling powers and to promote trade relations. These were no easy tasks, considering the diversity of peoples, the birth and fall of kingdoms and empires, and the ever shifting and changes of loyalties of greedy kings and their men, to attain power and conquest for themselves.. However, these texts also give glimpses of the human side of the king and the close relationships between himself and his men of authority, whilst the women of the court also played their role in some areas of the social field. The responses, of these people towards matters and events, whether they were confrontations, marriage alliances, trade ventures or hunting expeditions, occurred within an ever changing world yet, it was also a world with an ethos of ancient traditions, which did not disappear but instead remained, albeit in adapted or altered form, to be a part of their contextual reality.

KEYWORDS: Ancient Near East, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Egypt, Israel, warriors, warrior kings, generals, governors, ethos/ethics, archaeological discoveries, cuneiform texts/letters, Mari, Ebla, Ugarit, El Amarna, Ur, Emar, Middle Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age IA.

FOREWORD

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CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

Within the Song of Deborah [Judges 5:1-31 (NEB,1972)], the following scene is enacted:

The mother of Sisera peered through the lattice,
through the window she peered and shrilly cried,
“Why are his chariots so long coming?
Why is the clatter of his chariots so long delayed?” (v 28)

This searching, waiting anxiety, as uttered by the mother of the Canaanite commander is then, seemingly, soothed by the wise response from one of her princesses:

“They must be finding spoil, taking their share, a wench to each man, two
wenches, booty ... for Sisera ... to grace the victor’s neck” (vs 29-30).

The abovementioned point in time, namely, the war between the Canaanites and the ‘invading’ Israelites during the period of the Judges (Judges 1-21), supply graphic substance to a state of affairs called WAR. Even though war is not specifically mentioned, there is the persistent emphasis here on the chariot, one of the most complex and developed weapons which ever served the ancient warrior. Due to its mobilisation by animal power, this vehicle could appear very swiftly on the battlefield and execute dramatic (and psychological) displays of competence and aggressive stance. Then, just as swiftly, it could retreat from the war zone, either to pursue the fleeing enemy, or else to serve as a means of evacuation of the wounded (cf Buttery 1974:13,49,50; Gonen 1975:86, 87; King 2000:274, 275). Of course it could, and probably more often than not did, also serve as a type of *catafalque* for those who will never fight another battle again. The text also mentions loot, women and booty, the spoils warriors seek and claim as their due, on the triumph of conquest (cf Lambert 1983:61-66; Postgate 1992a:253; Numbers 31:27, 48). Last but not least, and a part of war which is often delegated aside, is the sheer pathos of the mother’s straining ears, in the hope of hearing *his* approaching chariot, *his* homecoming.

Departing, from the abovementioned point in time, approximately 3000 years into the future, we arrive at a movie theatre where the audience waits and watches anxiously whilst a group of Jedi warriors (the good guys) use their flying machines to attack and to destroy a fearsome weapon

called a 'Deathstar'. The Emperor Palpatine (the bad guy), who wants to make the whole galaxy his sole domain, had ordered the construction of this fearsome machine. This weapon has the capacity to destroy a whole planet within a few seconds. However, the Jedi, highly trained and dedicated to a tradition of honour, justice and the defence of the people of the galaxy, succeed in their attack, and the Deathstar is destroyed. The audience cheers. The warrior leader of the Jedi, Luke Skywalker however, knows and warns that there is yet another *new* enemy out there, a species called the Yuuzhan Vong. They claim to be on a holy quest for their gods, and hence entitled to conquer galaxies, no matter the havoc and destruction which will follow in their wake. Luke's comrades, flushed with the exhilarating and heady feeling of a hard won victory, downplay this so-called threat - confident that they can conquer anything or anybody!

Two tales of two warriors? Are they factional or fictional? Is the biblical (theological) one more believable, whilst the futuristic one only vivid imagination which had been applied in order to create the STAR WARS trilogy and its subsequent Episodes III - VI (films seen and enjoyed by the writer of this thesis, and on which abovementioned information is based). Could it be immanently possible that both are factual because there had been, since times immemorial, and as Homer so aptly defines in his *Iliad*, 'sackers of cities'(5.333), and 'henchmen of Ares'(6.67)? Indeed Ares, god of war, who is 'insatiable of fighting'(5.388), a bringer of 'Hate, whose wrath is relentless' (5.518) and a 'man slaughtering, bloodstained stormer of strong walls'(5.455).

When George Lucas' STAR WARS films were first screened, the public came face to face with spectacular and very visual scenes of brutal battles and fierce wars, of fighting warriors wielding fearsome weapons, of flying machines armed with destructive ion blasters and of battle Droids and 'Machine-warriors', who functioned as effective, emotionless killers. The public though, is familiar with the creative use of electronics and the ability of computers to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, and therefore have no problem in relating to such awe inspiring wars, as they perceive and classify them merely as 'futuristic' or 'science fiction'.

The other aspect of the film, of the concept of good and evil, and the eternal struggle between right and wrong, though, generates a far more realistic response. Each member of the audience has, at some time or another, experienced the results of an irritating or frightful wrong. It does

not necessarily have to be a real war situation. It can be as mundane as a newly-bought and expensive, but non-working fridge, and the procrastination of the shop-owner in dealing effectively with the matter or, it can be as momentarily unjust as an inheritance allocated to the spendthrift of the family. Both cases need the help of someone who will, hopefully, *right the wrong*. The audience thus focus on those whom, in our modern day speech, are called the Heroes and the Heroines of the story, and whom an audience, in ancient times, would have perceived as warriors. Seen in the context of battle or war, these fighters, whether from ancient, modern or the future times, epitomize that which the ordinary person lacks, that is, a specialized training, one involving honed skills which allow them to address and resolve conflicts.

Often, and sadly though, these skills were (are) also used *to satisfy a lust for just such conflicts, as well as the killings which frequently accompany these confrontations*. Hence we meet within the STAR WARS scenes, a character called Darth Vader. He was trained to be a great Jedi warrior but, instead, chose to side with the evil emperor Palpatine. As that emperor's imperial *commander-in-chief* Darth Vader turns into a ruthless figure, a killer of the Jedi warriors and a brutal enforcer of the emperor's rule across the galaxy. Consequently idealistic reasons, such as justice and righteousness fall by the wayside, to cater for the sheer pleasure of slaughtering humans, and to wantonly destroy that which cannot be carted away. The choice between good and bad became the choice between limited power and that of full power.

Author Susan Niditch (1993:13) acutely observes that attitudes towards war are *cultural maps* of sorts, and that war is a world in which *relationships* between life and death, god and human, one's own group and the *other men and women* are put in bold relief. Within abovementioned observation I have highlighted three aspects of attitude (see italics), since 'attitude' (a cultural, and hence imbued characteristic) becomes a deciding factor when societies address problems and the solutions thereof. A *cultural map* postulates that differences as well as similarities will occur, since each culture will have their own, innate reasons, and hence approach towards conflict. Depending on their social structures, for example, a culture will thus either have an effective or non-effective military organisation. Consequently any culture could (or could not) enjoy great achievements and build major empires. They will also practice and apply deeds against their captives (and their own peoples), according to *their own* experiences and

perceptions of life. The Assyrian army of Tiglath Pileser III (ca 734 BCE) can serve as an example of such a stance (cf Oded 1991:223-229). Being highly skilled in military manoeuvres as well as professionally equipped, this army could juggernaut its way into the neighbouring countries. Their reputation for and application of cruelty (albeit a deterrent for rebellious behaviour), was possibly as a result of their own experience at the hands of others (cf King 2000:267; Oded 1992:226; Olmstead: 1923:23, 24, 87). However the depictions, which we find on the walls of the palaces of their kings, of the punishments which awaited those who did not conform, could also have been a means of clever and effective (psychological) propaganda (cf Saggs 1963:148-150; Dalley 1995:419).

In comparison, to an army as sophisticated as the Assyrians, we find the Israelites terrified when confronted by the Philistines, since these invading warriors had iron chariots (Judges 1:19; 4:13; 1 Samuel 13:5; 2 Samuel 1:6) and were heavily armed (1 Samuel 17:4-7). Due to their own lack of such sophisticated weaponry, the Israelites were forced to use tactics such as bold tricks, ambushes and night attacks; some examples of such methods being those of Jael, who tricks Sisera, the Canaanite, into her tent in order to kill him (Judges 4:17-21), or Samson, who sets the crops of the Philistines alight (Judges 15:3-5), and Gideon's midnight raid on the Midianite camps (Judges 7). Soon however the situation changed, because the enemy's successful military culture forced the Israelites to adapt and to change their cultural world view regarding the issue of conflict. In the process this revised perception (culture) generated a king to rule over them (1 Samuel 8:5), as well as a corps of permanent warriors (1 Samuel 18: 5,30; 22:17; 23:25-26; cf De Vaux 1961:218-220).

Then there are the *various relationships* which may, and often do cause reasons for the type of conduct applied. When life is threatened by famine, necessary steps must be taken to procure food, even if that result is conflict and the killing of other humans, in order to prevent the starvation of one's own people. In the same way can peoples' relationship with their god(s) justify the type of conduct used (Oded 1991:224-227; cf Niditch 1995:403, 405). The gods command all things and the king obeys. Sennacherib claims his war against Jerusalem as due to his god's commands (2 Kings 18:25). Waging a war thus demonstrates the king's relationship with the gods, since every war carried the promise of the god's help in the battle. Monarchs, their

commanders and warriors were thus empowered to wage war, execute the enemy and to destroy and lay waste as far as they went (cf Oded 1991:227, 229).

The *men and women* are put into ‘bold relief’, because their reasons for engaging in conflict raises the issue of the legitimacy of their argument (or their war), and hence the justification for their conduct there of. Thus, long ago, when man emerged from his cave and found ‘others’ eating the leftovers of the kill he personally had made the previous day, the *degree of his attitude*, towards the theft of his ‘property’, would have determined the way he handled the matter. He would either have accepted the situation meekly (according to his societal indoctrination), or had become so livid with anger that he would have killed the thieves without any hesitation (his justification according to bold relief). However, his degree of attitude was only an immediate reaction towards an occurrence of personal affront, one which had turned him, momentarily, into a fighter and defender of edible property, but one which most certainly had not turned him into a warrior of format. *Format* denotes organized or arranged. Every society or civilization needs aspects of organization, be it for political, economic or religious reasons. Organization involves people who, endowed with specialized skills and experiences, will be contributive to successful administration of that society. Consequently our cave-society defender did not really start a war but could have, by agitating for protection and revenge, stimulated those who, physically and fighting strong (the bullies), would have grabbed big boulders and ‘solved the problem’.

The warrior and his milieu though was more involved and complicated than a man and his boulder. These embryonic beginnings of the warrior lacked the necessary military technology and organization to engage in war. The gradual settlement of the land changed all of this, since benefits reaped from agricultural resources resulted in growth of the population, and hence a seeking after new pastures. The results were manifold since:

1. In the well known observation, made by Childe (1948:67, 68), the *food-producers* expanded at the expense of *food-gatherers*, and the latter did not always submit to this meekly.
2. Food-production was more arduous than food-gathering and the former, in this case, was not willing to cede their hard-earned labour (Van de Mieroop 2004:11).
3. In troubled times of plague, famine and so forth, the food-gatherers could exploit a wider range of plant and animal resources than the agricultural population (Martinez 1990:418, 419).

The scene was set for argumentation, aggressive stances and, finally, confrontation. It thus became imperative, not only to make war a part of man's existence but, sadly, also to reap its consequences of conquest, expulsion and enslavement. The man with the boulder now became a necessary facet of mankind, namely, the warrior of format.

But, who really was this warrior of format, this *Man of Ares*? Why could he function as he did when he emerged? Could these warriors act at will, and were societies thus at their mercy? Or did societies actually flourish because of them? Were these men merciful? What were the punishments they meted out, especially to their prisoners of war? How did they treat women prisoners of war and the children captured during battles? What will emerge if comparisons are made between various ancient societies and the attitudes of their warriors? Shall their actions be similar and alike, or vastly different? If very different, why? Did the warrior only fight on the instructions of his gods? Were gods and kings seen as warriors? What about women as warriors? What will a comparison, between the worlds of the warrior of the Ancient Near East and that of the Israelite warrior, bring to light? In the ensuing chapters my aim is to search, investigate and to identify the characteristic spirit, or ethos, of these warriors of the ancient world. In the process I hope to highlight this ethos as having been an outgrowth of the (geographical) milieu and culture within which these warriors were born. Included in this observation would be the alien influences and cultures which intruded on and altered or changed aspects of this warrior spirit.

1.1 Aim of this study

In the myths of Mesopotamia we have an old Akkadian text (ca 2000 BCE), *The Epic of Atrahasis*, which tells of man's creation from the blood of a chosen god, Geshtu-e, (who) '... had intelligence ... they (the other gods) slaughtered him ... mixed clay with his flesh and blood ...' (COS 1.130 ; cf ANET p99,100). A Babylonian myth from Mesopotamia (ca 1900 BCE), *The Epic of the Creation*, tells that Marduk (son of the god Ea) created man from the blood of the slain god, Qingu, '(he) who (had) started the war ...invited by Tiamat (a monstrous deity of chaos) and gathered an army!' (COS 1.111; cf ANET p68). These myths became open to theological interpretation and were cited to explain why man is impious and bloodthirsty, or why

the gods make his life a penance. Similarly, although not a creation story, we have the biblical (Hebrew) story of Cain (the son of Adam and Eve) who killed his brother Abel, ‘... the Lord said, What have you done ... your brother’s blood ... is crying out to me’ (Genesis 4:10).

Even more explicit is the chilling application of the Ban (*herem*), a condition of war which (seemingly) allows total annihilation of the defeated (Numbers 21:1-3; 31:7-18; Deuteronomy 20:12,13,17; Joshua 6:17,21; 8:24-29). In his rendering of *herem* De Vaux (1961:256-260) sees it as a part of a holy, but not a religious war, which speaks of blood-vengeance (cf Judges 8:18-21). *Herem* here is thus ‘... anathema carried out on the conquered enemy.’ Niditch (1995:404) argues that Israelite views on war were many, the most important being that the Ban was God’s justice, and thus she postulates two Ban ideologies, namely, items devoted to God was his booty, and any contaminated items deserved destruction. Niditch (:405) concludes that humans are the most desirable and the best for God, since in Numbers 21:2-3 Israel promises the vanquished to God because they are polluted and defiled (cf Steinberg 1999:121,122). This *Herem*, of a separation between ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’, was not only applicable to Israel, but also occurred elsewhere in the Fertile Crescent (cf Niditch 1995:403-406; Stern 1991:217-225; Weinfeld 1984:121-147). The destruction of Babylon (689 BCE) by Sennacherib is inscribed on the Bavian Rock (Gomel River) as ‘... greater than that of “The Flood” ... I completely destroyed it ... and annihilated ...’ (COS 2.119e). In the land of Sumer, Enanatum of Lagash (ca 2500 BCE) subdued Umma, because the gods helped him in this venture and abetted in the heaps of massacred enemies. The stele of Vultures (cf Fig 1a) with its graphic representation of corpses, piled one on top of others, reflects this mutual agreement towards the reason for and annihilation of other human beings (Lang 2002:47; cf Postgate 1992a: 254; Winter 1986:205,210,211).

And so it seems, from abovementioned stories, that man’s destiny has been set, and that his *penchant for killing* those he envies, or feels impelled to depose of, is inborn, and therefore something he cannot destroy, sell or redeem. Be that as it may, myth and reality seem to have cohered into a factual record of man’s tendency and capacity to act violently and aggressively. Recorded history has shown that warfare, weapons and warriors can be viewed as mechanisms towards unending strife, which lead to either annihilation or victory. Some confrontations are deemed to be necessary, whilst others appear unjustified, a matter, seemingly, of (attitudinal)

perceptions and interpretations. It is therefore especially necessary to explore the context within which warriors were 'set' and affiliated to, since these factors contributed to reasons for the ethical and moral justification of their deeds and actions.

Within this work I aim to travel into the distant past (ca 2800 BCE to 600 BCE), to different lands and their warriors. This being an extensive period of time, my eventual concentration shall be on the specific time-span 2000-1000 BCE, whilst the years preceding, and following the specified date, shall act as guidelines. This decision is due to the political, social, religious, military and economic *accomplishments and realities* already being in place at the beginning of the second millennium, and thus acts as a data-base on which to build my archaeological and historical investigations. These *accomplishments and realities*, as noted by Postgate (1992a:14, 15, 22, 23, 45,56-60, 84-86), are as follows:

1. An increasingly agricultural life-style, had seen the rise of city states (urban societies), widely spread trade routes, systems of messengers and envoys and road stations. Dynastic ambitions (whether successful or disastrous) have had time to develop and become a part of the milieu of the peoples and their lands.
2. As a result bureaucratic administration, government officials, record keeping and autocratic control (rulers of cities) became a daily reality.
3. Incursions by nomads (Gutians, Elamites, Amorites), and inter-city confrontations, had necessitated defence mechanisms in order to combat these threats. A military elite (social rank) had evolved and standard armies came into being.
4. A well established system of record keeping had been put in place, and hence the tradition of inscriptions, treaties, letters from king to king, or officials to kings, commemorative plaques or stelae, ration lists and so forth.

As a result much of our information, of the second millennium, is found in the myriad of cuneiform tablets found at various sites such as Mari, Ebla, el Amarna, Ugarit and Emar and others, in the many seals and plaques that were found, and in the excavated, large structural archaeological artifacts such as obelisks, stelae and so forth. These traditions of correspondence and communication (hence information) which had been established then, now serve as a platform for my research. Consequently I intend using these written words and, as further

enhancement, make use of many archaeological (visual) illustrations. These illustrations, designated 'Figure' and 'Map' within a chapter, shall be inserted at the back of the relevant chapter to facilitate easy reference. Full information on all the illustrations, namely, a Maps and Figures list (16), and an Acknowledgement of sources list for the illustrations (17), will follow the bibliography list (13). All biblical quotations are from the New English Bible, 1973 (NEB), unless otherwise stated.

My travels will reach from the eastern arm of the Fertile Crescent (Mesopotamia) across to the western "Great Sea" (Mediterranean) and thus to the land of Canaan (cf Map1). The land of Egypt, being the western extremity, and somewhat isolated from the other two landscapes, shall only be used sparingly as comparative and contrastive material, since that countries' intermittent occupations of Canaan left legacies of influences. My intention is to probe the world, the wars and the weapons of the warriors of ancient times, within the landscapes of the abovementioned geographical areas. Within the context of those past landscapes, I aim to focus on times when societies and religion ordered and conditioned male aggressiveness by creating an entire *mythos, ritual and ethical code system* around its principal archetype, the *Warrior*. He was a man who could acquire such a position due to his physical strength, and superior background, or his domination through terror. Mostly he was chosen, as Luke Skywalker was, because of his fighting skills, moral stance and ability in aiding his king in the running of civil and military administration (Arnold 1991:32; cf Postgate 1992a:150-152).

I venture to say that the warrior, or fighter, initially stemmed from and due to very unavoidable and practical reasons. Some examples of 'unavoidable' being the hunger for land (population explosions), rebellions, lack of water resources, epidemics and, especially, the spectre of famines. Neuman and Parpola (1987:176) have, by means of a list, specified the visitations of famines in Mesopotamia for the period of ca 1140 to ca 930 BCE. Within this short period of 200 years, there were six visitations of famine (mostly drought-related) and outbreaks of plague which not only affected the settled areas, but forced the hungry nomads to attack the cities in their search for food (a case of the food-gatherers versus the food-producers). This was then also a time when Assyria, and Babylonia, were in a state of weakness (Neuman & Parpola 1987:161). Such a scenario encourages the tempting thought as to why it must have been necessary for the

Assyrians, or any other Near Eastern group of peoples, to go in search of land (conquest trips), since it could have been a means of survival.

Famine was no stranger to the Ancient Near East, since a series of low inundations (whether the Nile or Euphrates rivers) would cause the prevention of planting and harvesting, and hence no production of food for consumption. However, if such a calamity is combined with failed military campaigns or political collapses due to a line of ineffective kings, the spectre of famine takes on a particularly grim reality. A very graphic illustration, shown on an Egyptian relief at Sakkara (fifth dynasty, ca 2500 BCE), depicts emaciated and starving people (cf Fig 1b). This period was one of conflict and ineffectual rulers in Egypt, and one can only guess at the severity of that famine, in order for it to have been recorded. One can then postulate at the ensuing movements of people in a desperate search for food (and hence the consequences thereof). The biblical story of Joseph relates an approaching famine, and the stockpiling of grain, and how 'the whole world' came to Egypt to buy food in order not to starve (Genesis 41:54-57; 42:1-2). Famine can thus be seen as a deciding factor in the movements of peoples (and thus conflict and the confrontations when people defend their food stock).

As a consequence of these necessities, the practical solutions would take the shape of those who can see to it that these needs are attended to. I therefore want to locate and present some of the warriors of antiquity within their own specific geographical areas at certain periods of time, not only to highlight my own convictions, but to find how they compared, and contrasted, (contextually) with each other and other groups and, how warriors of such different cultural milieus as Mesopotamia and Canaan (Syria) compared with the Israelite warrior.

In order to find a common link between them, I shall research their existence as *they experienced* it. The sources, contributing to this exercise, will consist mostly of archaeological evidence and the latest research (past 2-3 decades) as done by scholars such as JN Postgate, Susan Niditch, K Lawson Younger, William W Hallo, Mark Chavalas, Stephanie Dalley (to name but a few). These authors form a nucleus of researchers who, due to comparative/contrastive and contextual methodologies, research archaeological evidence, such as inscriptions, documents, tablets,

artifacts, *ostraca* (clay sherds) and so forth, as a means to look beyond the narrow margins of biblical interpretations of the peoples of the Ancient Near East. Their concentrations are on the integrating aspects of all social, political, religious and economic conditions, these being the factors which influenced the course of a peoples' history. This type of delving into the past raises not only questions but supply expected (as well as unexpected) answers as to the why, by whom, and where, certain and specific events had occurred.

Consequently I shall use their findings in order to arrive at the way the king and his men (warriors) interacted with those around them and their treatment of those who opposed them. Being persons who were often rewarded with grants of land (for services rendered), the king's men became a group of persons of immense authority, with far reaching military powers, and thus they evolved into a class on their own (cf Leick 2003:81; Postgate 1992a:187, 242, 243; Spalinger 2005:72, 73, 103). As such they shared certain stances and attributes, since with every confrontation they would not only enrich themselves with as much loot as possible, they would also see and experience the enemies' better war equipment, realize a more efficient deployment of men, acquire new tactical innovations, and hence adapt or change their perceptions to suit (cf Dalley 1995:413, 414; Gonen 1975:8-10; King 2000:270-272). Within these contexts they shall thus sustain and retain certain *similarities* (comparisons) with each other.

Of course, there will be *differences* (*contrasts*) too, since warriors operate within a specific context, be it geographical, political, social or religious. Religious differences become apparent when the Israelite context is studied, since their religious experience/commitment was one of covenant with their god Yahweh, because he was the warrior (Exodus 15:3; Psalm 24:8) and Israel's saviour (cf Craigie 1978:33-43; Edelman 1991:75; Lind 1980:23, 24, 81-86; Niditch 1997:35-39). This Israelite class of theological ethics differed from those of her neighbours, whose rulers saw themselves *as representatives of their gods, and fought war at the behest of their gods*, rather than one god being solely involved and responsible for the actual conduct of war (De Vaux 1961:258-262; cf Lang 2002:47-49; Oded 1991:223-226). An inscription, by the Egyptian Thutmose III (1490 BCE), on Karnak's temple walls states: 'Re himself established me ... I was (perfected) with the dignities of a god ...' (ANET p 446). Thus this Pharaoh acclaims

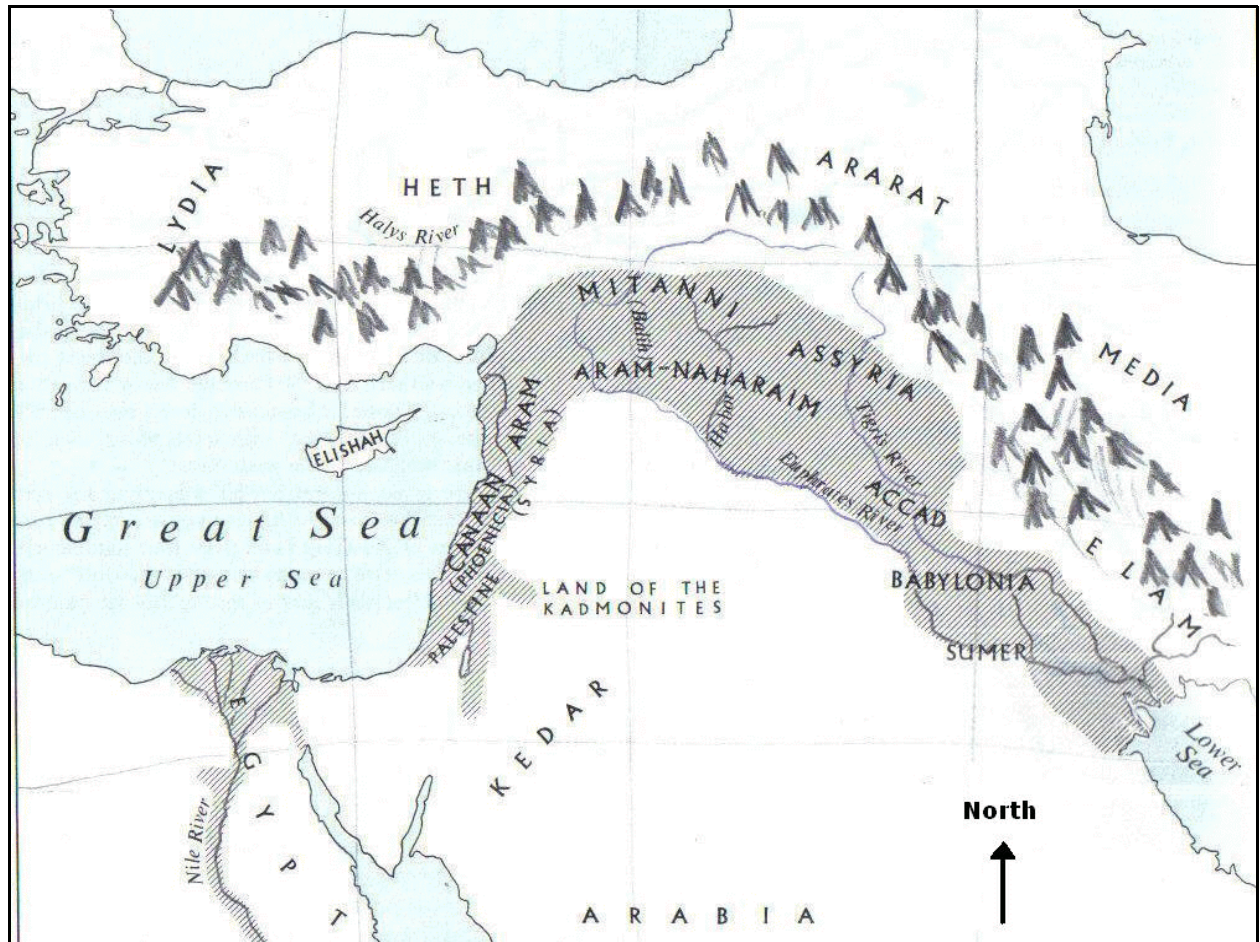
himself (no Israelite king would ever have uttered a similar claim).

Despite such grandiose acclamations though, the ancient world did acknowledge and ascribe victories to the support of the *deus militans*. Battles had cosmic repercussions, and thus victory was order rather than chaos. A monument or stele was erected to the victorious god/s. Victory stelae, such as the Stele of Naram-Sin, king of Akkad, ca 2250 BCE (cf Fig 1c) and the Stele of Dadusha, king of Esnunna, ca 1750 BCE (cf Fig 1d), all attest to this practice. Another difference between the Israelites and the other inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Syria, was the kingship tradition. Israel was a latecomer to the autocratic and military rule of a monarch, since she had always used temporary leaders to aid her in difficult times, such as Ehud (Judges 3:12-30, Samson (Judges 13-17), Othniel (Judges 3:7-11) and Gideon (Judges 6-8).

Consequently, in order to highlight similarities and differences, this exercise shall be based on a comparative, as well as a contrasting, study of *certain warriors of specific geographical and historical contexts*. My concentration shall, of necessity, have to be based on some well-known figures in history. Kings were responsible for military defence of the country and especially to care for its people, and as such images of warrior and king have synonymous connotations (Bergant 1992:53; Weinfeld 1983:189,193). Also, the scribes of those days emphasized the deeds of their rulers rather than the daily toil of the population. These deeds were inscribed on the walls of buildings and temples, to impress the contemporaries of the king, and to serve as lasting monuments for future generations to admire. These types of primary sources are thus prone to bias and partiality, but are also actual presentations of *aspects of an occurrence* in a time and space (cf Schneider 2001:29). Hence these inscriptions (though prejudiced or exaggerated) and their visual presentations of battles, the treatment of captives, dress codes, weaponry, hunting expeditions and so forth, will give clues as to warrior concepts, traditions and aims. These kings were an embodiment of an elevated warrior class with its own elitist ethos, an ethos which would obviously have filtered down to the barons, generals and other members of the nobility (cf Eph'al 1984:88, 89; Hauer 1978:68, 70, 71; Oded 1991:223, 224; Schley 1990:324-326).

Before I proceed, a brief introduction will be given of the class of sources which will be used.

Then a *history of research* will be presented in order to locate information and analysis on warrior kings, and his men of authority, of the Ancient Near East. As a methodology towards my own research, I shall make use of abovementioned research as well as my own interpretations of the sources, whether *Biblical*, *Extra-biblical* or *Archaeological*. Because of the visual and informative value of archaeological discoveries it must be stressed that such evidence (in all its forms) shall play a major role in my research towards a journey of ‘warrior discovery’. To conclude I shall look at the impact the king and his men (corps of warriors) had on their contemporaries and the results thereof.



Map 1 The Fertile Crescent

The extent of the crescent is clearly defined by the Nile river (west) and the two rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris (east), whilst the Arabian desert creates a barren barrier to the south, and the Taurus mountains a rocky one in the north.



Fig 1a Burial mount of corpses
(Stele of the Vultures from Girsu, ca 2450 BCE)

This custom was prevalent in the Near East and is a macabre portrayal of the boastful result of a successful campaign. Many inscriptions bear the words "mount of corpses."



Fig 1b Relief at Sakkara showing starving people
(ca 2500-2450 BCE)

A graphical presentation of a recurring phenomenon in the Ancient Near East. Famine resulted from periods of drought or flooding or even swarms of locusts. War often entailed the burning of the surrounding fields of crops.



Fig 1c Stele of Naram-Sin of Akkad
(ca 2250 BCE)

This grandson of Sargon the Great portrays his victory over the king of Lullubi. Note the small composite bow, as well as the horns of divinity worn by the king.



Fig 1d Stele of Dadusha, king of Esnunna
(ca 1750 BCE),

The military exploits of the king are recorded, while the relief scenes show him facing the goddess, who is standing over the walls of the besieged city. Note the severed heads of the enemy in the lower relief.

CHAPTER TWO

2 SOURCES TOWARDS RESEARCH

Researchers and scholars have made use of sources of various origins (and still do). Before I thus investigate their research, and the results thereof on the topic of warriors and their worlds, I shall give brief descriptions of these sources which are classified as Biblical, Extra-biblical and Archaeological. I aim to use these sources, in combination and correlation with the research that has been done, as vindication of my research.

2.1 Biblical texts

The Hebrew Bible is first and foremost a reflection of a sacred and not a secular history. Each text expresses a world view and certain social settings, based on divine intersections between the divine and human, and not on human initiative and action. Hence, when one's research delves into a past such as Israel's, it is necessary to remember that they bound themselves to Yahweh (Joshua 24:22), and in the process this established a 'treaty', with the implication that no human intermediary can act as a channel for that allegiance (Humphreys 1990:35, 37, 39; cf Niehaus 1995:84,85,108,109,114,). There was too, the command that no statues, no inscriptions and no glorification of its warriors or warrior kings shall be made (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 4:15-19). Although the law forbade the making and erection of 'graven' images, Van Seters (1997:301) postulates that the biblical accounts of military campaigns and building activities could have been taken from memorial inscriptions. If that is the case, the Israelites must then have used similar inscription-patterns, such as those applied by the Assyrians and Babylonians, except that the Israelite king would not have declared himself as a deity!

The biblical books of 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles however, relate the acts of the kings of Israel and Judah, as well as the interactions with, and between, their commanders (cf David and Saul's champions, Joab and Abner; 2 Samuel 2:8-32). This allows certain perceptions to emerge which, *in comparative reading with extra-biblical sources*, will indicate similarities and differences which Israel shared with her neighbours about the *ways of their commanders*. In other words, we can elucidate a more comprehensive interpretation, instead of

relying on a reading which Oppenheim (1964:150) designates as ‘frozen and monolithic’.

Soggin (1984:20) has likened research to that of the functions of a court of law, where witnesses must be cross-examined, their evidence be scrutinised and the circumstances of the act or deed be evaluated and then reconstructed, before a verdict is arrived at. Thus use must not be made of just one, singular piece of evidence (Mazar 1990:27, 508; cf Miller 1987:46). Consequently the circumstances of warriors from Israel cannot be reconstructed and understood, unless comparisons and contrasts are made with the evidences from the lands and peoples, who surrounded Israel, *at that point in time*. A similar methodology applies to any other cultural group within a specific geographical location. The course of certain actions are usually determined by the interactions with other humans or the influences they bring to bear, be it of a peaceful nature such as trade and marriage; or more violently enforced situations such as disputes over water resources, rights to use grazing lands, or the greed of rulers (kings). The solution then lies in a combination reading and interpretation of the biblical text with other texts, and artifacts, and to avoid an approach based solely on theological presumes.

The archaeologist WG Dever (1996b:36) proposes that both archaeologists and historians (as interpreters) should read between the lines, to look at not only that which was written by the biblical authors, but at that which they did not write about. He cites his methodology thus: first he starts with the excavated artifact, such as the (controversial) female figurines found in Israel, and only then he scrutinizes the biblical text. In other words: ‘You don’t start with an exegesis of those texts and then go to a site looking for something like that’(1996b:36). The biblical world must be entered without a compulsion to ‘prove’ its historical reliability, or theological truth, but rather entered to ascertain the interrelationships which had pertained, and which we need to face in order to find answers (Halla 1990:6-8; cf Monson 2004:317-319).

These are the approaches I aim to apply to bring the various warriors of the various cultures into perspective. This will certainly be in the case of Israelite warriors, since too often the emotional and subjective involvement, which arises from theological approaches, need to be tempered (cf Niditch 1997:28-32; cf Miller 1987:11-20). Whether or not Saul and David (contextual Israelite warriors), or any other king of Israel and Judah found favour in the eyes of the prophets or the

authors and editors of the narratives, the fact remains that people are human and react in a human way. Hence Saul's swift reaction towards the Ammonite threat (1 Samuel 11:1-11). It is not only the 'archaic fury of the warrior' (Lang 2002:53) which spurs him on and enables him to lead his warriors on a successful campaign, but definitely also his ability to organize, and to be aware of the logistics of war (Sanford 1985:13-21, 112-114). This is the crux of the matter, not the later speech of rejection by the prophet Samuel, a man who sees himself as righteous and without equal but, if perceived realistically within the context he appears, mirrors a gaunt and forbidding old man, a ghastly shade from Sheol (Sanford 1985:111).

Hence research into contextual realities can be deployed to look for non-theological issues within the text. To quote two examples: 1) Saul is introduced as the son of Kish, *who is a man of substance* (1 Samuel 9:1-2). There was a *lack of blacksmiths in Israel* (1 Samuel 13:19). The first description offers glimpses of Saul's economic and social status (eligibility to kingship), whilst the second postulates prevailing conditions, namely, the Israelites' inability to produce specific weaponry of war (lack of iron- mongers), and hence an unreadiness to confront anyone! In other words, the literary sources of Israel (or any Mesopotamian tradition) should be examined for the nuances inherent in the text (Oppenheim 1964:150).

The concentration of Gottwald (1985:11.28) , on the *socio-anthropological* aspects of the lives of societies and their actions (whether Israelite or Mesopotamian) within a time and place context, leads him to assert that these factors must be maintained in order to guard against and prevent superficial parallels, and thus allowing for different developmental contexts. De Vaux, in his introduction to his book *Ancient Israel. Its life and institutions*, stresses that even such basic beginnings as nomadic existence has its differences. We tend to see a nomadic tradition as being true for each culture, since it 'must have been' a very simple existence, and therefore 'must have been' similar in all its rules, habits, rites and customs. Not so, De Vaux (1961:3,4) says, since such a way of life will have its own regions of operation and its own style of living. Due to their style of living, each group will have its own codes of conduct, and its own way of dealing with transgressions, conflicts, or any other social matter. An understanding thus, of *all* the factors which contribute to a peoples' socially cultural existence, is obligatory. Only then can the emergence, *within those societal conditions*, of a warrior ethos become apparent.

2.2 Extra-biblical sources

First and foremost these sources serve as a means to obtain information which does not appear in the Hebrew Bible. So, when we read of the Canaanites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and so forth in the Bible, extra-biblical sources provide contextual realities of the relationships, not only amongst these peoples themselves, but also with Israel, and thus provide insights on aspects of specific events, peoples and the world in whose midst the Bible was composed and disseminated (Machinist 1991:196-199). Some annals of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BCE), commemorate his conquests of cities. This Assyrian king, reigning after the death of Omri of Israel (873 BCE) mentions that the conquered city of Abilakka is on the border of *Bit-Humria* [house of Omri (cf ANET p 283)]. This information tempers to a great degree the portrayal of this Israelite king and his descendants as 'evil' (1 Kings 16:29-33; 20:35-43; 21:15-27), since this type of description was an Assyrian method of reference to famous kingdoms, due to the ability and military successes of their royal dynasties. Hence we find an interaction between these two peoples which throws an unexpected, and new contextual reality, on this particular dynasty.

Similarly tablets, such as the Amarna tablets (found at the site of the capital of Egypt under Amenophis IV (Akhenaton), provide illuminating information. These tablets date to the mid-fourteenth century BCE, when Palestine and Syria was under nominal Egyptian control. Based on the information contained within these tablets, Niels Peter Lemche (1994:125-129) addresses the *proclamation of loyalty*, which features so prominently in these texts, and in the process highlights the different political perceptions of Egypt and that of her provinces in Asia. The vassals proclaim loyalty, based on their belief of the reciprocal (patron) protection of the Pharaoh (he must send military aid). The Pharaoh, on the other hand, ranks the vassals as employees who had their duties to fulfill. There was no concept there of a 'patron relationship' *since the Pharaoh does not owe!* Because the general viewpoint of this period is that Akhenaton was busy with his religious reforms (only one god, Atun), rather than looking after his domains in Palestine, this argument of Lemche brings a new understanding to that particular context.

The discovery of the Code Laws of Hammurabi, ca 1792-1750 BCE, (cf Fig 2a) in the ruins of Susa, illuminates the commandments as written in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:1-17), since much of the codes' juridical outlook finds echo in the biblical presentation of certain legal

provisions. These code laws were long regarded as being the original creation of legal matters but, a discovery in 1952 of the laws of Ur-Nammu, third dynasty of Ur, ca 2050 BCE, (cf Fig 2b) highlights not only that the latter codes are far older than those of Hammurabi, but actually accentuates the collection and codification of *that which was already traditional* (Moscati 1957:79, 80). Consequently one has to view extra-biblical sources not as a means to denigrate the biblical source, but rather to compare and to contrast, to assimilate and to emend, and only then to interpret and to correlate different renderings of events, people and their world view. Those who had commissioned inscriptions of stelae or monuments, or commanded ‘evidence’ to be penned onto tablets, may want glorification of war victories, records of buildings erected, or law ordinances and edicts proclaimed. Hence, if cognizance is taken of similarities or differences in wording, or expression in visual mode (cf Keel 1992:44, 45), it can contribute to a distinction between various cultural approaches (ideologies, indoctrinations, traditions), and so to an understanding of that cultural ethos (Halla 1990:3, 4: cf Licht 1984:107-111) .

2.3 Archaeological discoveries

Biblical and extra-biblical information can be highlighted even further when in correlation with *archaeological* discoveries. Archaeology is the science which attempts to recover the past by means of materially cultural evidence, either found through excavations or else discovered by chance. These artifacts, whether in the form of inscriptions, tablets of correspondence, stelae. Palaces, temples and so forth, all constitute visual and ‘touchable evidence’. In contrast to Biblical texts, which have a history of change and adaptations to suit specific contexts and audiences, these artifactual sources have lain in the soil, untouched, with no redaction done to it, and with no later, sporadic thoughts and ideologies impinged on its surface (Schneider 2001:41,42). Unfortunately the many archaeological excavations, done in the past, were not according to methodical disciplines, and hence many artifacts, considered insignificant, were discarded. Being discarded onto waste heaps, meant that the artifacts were taken *out of their contextual layers*, a sad state of affairs, resulting in much information being lost. Excavation is also a very destructive exercise, and once artifacts and strata layers have been removed or been disturbed, that area is basically closed to further research, and therefore the importance of accurate documentation and the speedy publication of all finds (Mazar 1990:25).

Archaeological sources provide us with glimpses, not only of royal lifestyles and the palaces needed for such a way of life, but also the way the ordinary people lived (housing, pottery, burials implements). The excavation of a city, which had been destroyed, can project the method of destruction as well as the weaponry (techniques and manufacturing) which was used to contribute to the demise of that city. In like manner items such as seals, household wares and pottery can be a guide-light to the times in which they were produced. Wares of foreign origin, or ones made from expensive and imported materials, are indications of peaceful times, extensive trade relations and prosperity. On the other hand will a lack of good quality ware, or debris layers of destruction, give an indication that there were troubled times of unrest and wars. These are the times too, when the background of the warrior comes into play, since his role of warrior is shaped by the destiny of his country.

The application of such diverse disciplines as anthropology, geology, metallurgy, zoology, biology, etcetera, can transform archaeology from being a silent witness into one which brings the past to life, and thus to some understanding of that past. However, care should be taken to keep all aspects of archaeological findings in balance, since the distinction between what can be learned from the artifact alone and what is to be learned when they are interpreted in connection with written sources, become especially crucial when the written sources (*or the archaeological material involved*) are themselves open to divergent interpretations (Miller1987:46). As an example, the pictorial inscriptions of warriors ca 3500-1000 BCE (cf Figures 3a-3c) show unprotected upper bodies, and simple, personal weaponry, consisting of bow, arrow and a (wicker) shield. Such visual evidence can be compared with reliefs of Assyrian warriors, ca 740 BCE (cf Figures 4a-4d), in order to notice the advances made in body armour and weaponry, whilst further changes, such as assault-machines, heavier protective armour and more potent weaponry, such as chariotry, can be seen in Figures 5a and 5b.

In the Assyrian reliefs one notices the muscular legs and arms, the uniform postures and expressionless faces, the exact curvatures of the bows, and so forth. In other words, as an exercise in interpretation?, can we presume these portrayals as containing messages, which can translate into ‘powerful warriors’, ‘set and determined’, ‘well trained’, ‘fierce and fearless?’ Consequently can we (also) read *The powerful Assyrian Empire* in these reliefs (cf Albenda 1980:224, 227, 228), rather than just accept it as an Assyrian record of a siege of a city?

Archaeological excavations at Gibeah show the defence-fortress of Saul as humble and practical, rather than grand and pretentious (cf Mazar 1990:336; Bright 1981:190). This is therefore a case of additional data (albeit interpretation), but one which complements and highlights *inherent* (biblical) information about Saul. Saul, as first king of Israel, had no precedent to follow (Gunn 1980:18,19; Sanford 1985:28). The succeeding Israelite kings, in contrast, did not restrain themselves to such modesty and consolidated their conquests and economic well-fare for personal aggrandizement, all in a manner like their kingly neighbours [cf David 's annexation of Jerusalem for himself (Samuel 5: 6-10)], and Solomon's palaces for his wives and stables for chariots and horses (1 Kings 6,7; 10:23-29).

Structures, artifacts, writings, inscriptions, objects — all tell us of 'something', whether of obvious recognition, or tentative interpretation. As indicated in the following chapter on research, I shall make full use of archaeological discoveries, and by means of contextual comparison and contrast, apply the results in order to portray the Ancient Near East kings and the corps of men who were their contemporaries in war and peace. Within this exercise I shall highlight the way they perceived their world, and hence their application of ethic codes, which was an integral part of their lives.



Fig 2a The diorite Stele of Hammurabi
(ca 1790 BCE)

A descendent of Amorite nomads, this king conquered and controlled the whole of Mesopotamia. His laws reflect greater severity than those of Ur-Nammu.

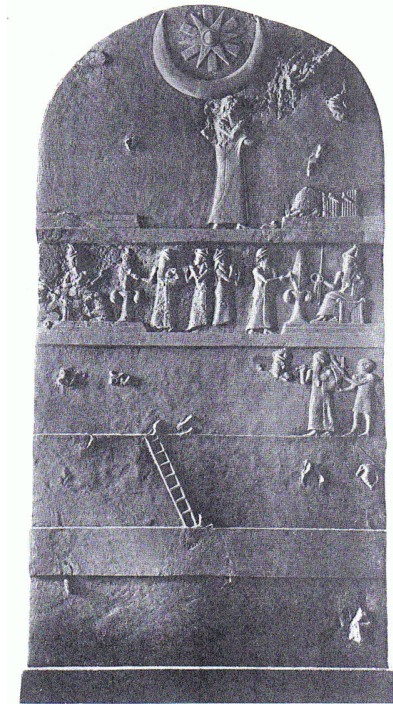


Fig 2a Stele of Ur-Namma of Ur
(ca 1200 BCE)

This founder of the Third Dynasty of Ur draws attention, by means of a prologue to the laws, to his re-establishment of order after a period of unrest and wars caused by the Akkadian dynasty and the Gutians.



Fig 3a Warrior with wicker shield
(ca 2400 BCE)

A battle scene depicting a great shield, which can accommodate more than one person. The 'Scythian' bow is unusual for this period and may indicate ties with the people of Central Asia.



Fig 3b The Hunter's Palette
(4th Millennium BCE)

Hunters are shown with spears which are taller than a man's height. The other weaponry consist of simple bows, spears and maces.



Fig 3c The "Lion Hunt" Stele of Uruk
(ca 3000 BC)

The hunter is drawing a very heavy bow which required a great strength. This ineffective bow was replaced by the composite bow.



Fig 4a Assyrian archers
(from an eighth-century BCE relief)

Rigid, merciless and with full concentration, these archers make use of the efficient composite bow, a weapon with a range of $\pm 600\text{m}$.



Fig 4b Assyrian stone slingers
(from an eighth-century BCE relief)

Rigid, uniformly and with intent, these slingers use a weapon as old a man. This weapon was effective in siege warfare, since the high trajectory of the slung stone could clear the city wall.



Fig 4c Assyrian scale armour
(9th Century BCE)

Note the difference in the heavy armour (full length protection) of warriors of more affluent background, as well as their more ornamental daggers in comparison with the kneeling archers and the man holding the horses.



Fig 4d Assyrian pikemen
(Nineveh Palace Walls, ca 660 BCE)

The diverse troops, within the armies of the Ancient Near East, are displayed by means of the differences in the headgear and shields of the men.

































WAR EQUIPMENT	EARLY BRONZE AGE		MIDDLE BRONZE AGE		LATE BRONZE AGE		IRON AGE						
	EB I	EB II	EB III	EB IV	MB I	MB IIa	MB II b-c	LB I	LB IIa	LB IIb	IR I	IR II	
BOWS	 Simple-curve Early Mesopotamian	 Double-convex Egyptian		 Composite Akkadian	 Simple double-convex	<i>Monuments were not preserved</i>		 Composite Ugaritic	 Composite triangular Egyptian	 Composite strengthened Egyptian	 Composite bi-concave Neo-Hittite	 Composite bi-concave Israelite	 Composite bi-concave Assyrian
AXES	 Single-joint (Ketar Monah)	 Single-joint with prongs in the back Egyptian	 Triple-joint Canaanite (Tell el-Hesi)	 Triple-joint Egyptian	 Single-joint with extended lugs Egyptian	 Single-joint with lugs in center Canaanite (Hazor)	 Single-joint with lugs in center Israelite (Hazor)						
SHAFT-HOLED AXES	 Pipe-shaped Sumerian	 Pipe-shaped Chalcolithic Judean Desert			 Piercing battle-axe Anatolia	 Piercing battle-axe Anatolia	 Piercing battle-axe Hyksos	 Socketed battle-axe with wide blade and prongs opposite the blade Beth-Shean					
SWORDS FOR STABBING					 "Eye-axe" Canaanite (Megiddo)	 "Duck-bill" Syrian	 Anatolia	 Canaan	 Aegean	 Assyrian Adad-Nirai	 Straight of Sea People origin	 Sennacherb Assyrian	
SICKLE-SWORD FOR SLASHING													 Ur III

Fig. 5a Hand weapons

The improvement of hand weapons ca 3300 to 600 BCE



























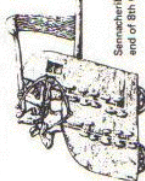
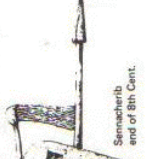

WAR EQUIPMENT	EARLY BRONZE AGE		EB IV	MIDDLE BRONZE AGE		LATE BRONZE AGE		IRON AGE					
	EB I	EB II		MB I	MB IIa	MB II b-c	LB I	LB IIa	LB IIb	IA I	IA II		
CHARIOTS							 Egyptian	 Canaanite	 Hittite	 Assurbanipal II 9th Cent.	 Tiglath-pileser III 8th Cent.	 Assurbanipal I 7th Cent.	
						Monuments were not preserved							
COATS							 Canaanite	 Egyptian	 Egyptian	 Philistine	 Assyrian 9th Cent.	 Assyrian 8th-7th Cent.	
HELMETS								 Assurbanipal II 9th Cent.	 Assyrian	 Assyrian	 Philistine	 Assyrian	 Sennacherib
BATTERING-RAM								 Assurbanipal II 9th Cent.	 Assyrian	 Assyrian	 Assyrian	 Assyrian	 Sennacherib end of 8th Cent.

Fig 5b Protective clothing and chariots

The changes and improvement ca 3300 to 600 BCE

CHAPTER THREE

3 HISTORY OF RESEARCH: ARCHAEOLOGY AS THE DATA BASIS

Much of our perceptions nowadays, on war and soldiers (warriors), are based on the 'Great War' (World War 1, 1914-1918) and the 'War of the Holocaust' (World War II, 1939-1945). These two wars, and the actions of their heroes (and villains), are well known and copiously documented, since they are still a living memory for many people. Also, war correspondents have turned these wars not only into written records of events, but used their film materials to provide first-hand visual evidence of battles, fighting soldiers, weaponry, etcetera. Included in the visual records are the results and outcome of these wars. Footage of films show the destruction of cities, dead bodies, the inhumanity of prison camps, mass graves, the harrowed and worn faces of those who survived and the despairing expressions of those who wait in vain for the return of loved ones (cf Sisera's mother). Interspersed with the visual horrors are the photographic glorification of the smiling faces of generals and their men. They deserve this accolade - they won the war!

Abovementioned primary sources enabled authors such as Elisabeth Wiskeman and AJP Taylor to produce distinguished texts such as 'Europe of the Dictators' (1966), "The Origins of the Second World War" (1964) and 'The First World War' (1966), since available source material provided an abundance of well-informed reports and overwhelming visual verification of the events *as they had happened*. However, the further back into time we go, the further away from 'well-informed' we find ourselves. The passage of time encompasses not only the destruction of sources (wars, fires and time), or the corrosion of sources (water and soil), but also a time-span dimension, between *us* and *them*. This time-span dimension makes *them* part of a context alien to ours, far removed from our setting, our realities and our perceptions.

Hence sources, even though in combination with *their* contextual settings, can create difficulties in identifying the past totally, and to fathom the thought processes of long-gone peoples. But, available sources can be approached through an *awareness* that they would have been influenced by the philosophical and theological suppositions of the day, and also the specific intentions which

gave rise to the creating of that source. Awareness, of course, can create its own dangers in becoming an instrument towards allowing the translated texts to tend to speak more of the translator than their original message (Oppenheim 1964:3)

The Oxford dictionary defines SOURCES as ‘fountainhead’, ‘origin’ and ‘prime cause’. It follows then that a source is that which can be used to obtain information in order to attain an answer to a posed question. But, as mentioned above, sources can be prejudiced against or predisposed to events, peoples and ideologies. Nevertheless they do represent, *in essence*, the account of an event or deeds of a person. Therefore I do believe that *a healthy dose of curiosity and imagination* (which are initiating factors towards knowledge) plus a critical evaluation of sources, can be contributive to a measure of an understanding of that which had happened long ago. Total objectivity is not always achievable, since our cultural background and world views influence our interpretations. As Dever (1996b:37) states: “We like a certain kind of history because it is our history”. Thus a realisation, of the *contextual essence of history* (not only dates, names and ‘heroic’ deeds), is a necessity when applied to sources.

My concentration on warriors is a theme which needs such an exploration of *contextual essence*. Research on this theme, though sparse up to about three decades ago, has increased to a stage where we can project a much clearer, and sometimes a disconcerting picture, of the world of the warriors of the Fertile Crescent (ancient Mesopotamia, Syria and Israel). In order to reveal the research done on the why’s and how’s of ‘warrior-making’, pertinent to each of the geographical areas, I intend to proceed as follows:

First, I shall give an overview of the archaeological excavations and ensuing discoveries which pertain to each area. These archaeological remains, artifacts, inscriptions, literary forms, tablets and so forth, are basic materials which shall be used *extensively in my research*, since I consider these archaeological findings as the *research platform* for the study on warriors.

Second, I shall investigate, *via* each of above mentioned geographic perimeters, the research of scholars on the *subject of warriors*, within those areas. In tune with the *subject of warriors*, I shall

therefore concentrate on researchers who had /have the same *objective* in sight (hence relative matter and its application). Their ensuing data and interpretations shall then be applied as a comparison and contrast (contextual) methodology for my theme.

Last but not least, I do not intend to relate the history of the deciphering of cuneiform texts but, I do applaud the achievements of the decoders, since without their hard work it would not have been possible to use the texts/tablets for my thesis. I shall therefore make use of the translations as found in their various forms, as per ANET, COS, MARI/ARMT and so forth. See the list of abbreviations/Journals (15). Towards an assistance and reference to the various sites where archaeological excavations have been done in the Ancient Near East, refer Map 2.

The use of extra-Biblical research material depends on two important factors before a conclusive interpretation can be effected towards an understanding of the context from which they originated. These two factors are:

The condition of the archaeological artifact Is it badly fragmented, are many ‘readable’ areas missing? Can a comprehensive study be made from such material? As an example the Tel Dan Aramaic Stele Inscription (found 1993/1994), highlights this problem. The three pieces of fragments contain enough data to date its setting (based on palaeo-graphic and archaeological grounds) to mid-ninth century BCE, and its probable purpose as that of a ‘victory’ stele, erected by an Aramean king. One school of thought designates the king as Ben-Hadad of Damascus, a contemporary of Ahab of Israel (Ahituv 1993:246). Others deem Hazael of Damascus, a contemporary of Jehu of Israel, the erector of the stele (Biran & Naveh 1995:11). Whichever interpretation we use will thus impact on our perception of the period spanning the time of Ahab (873- 851BCE) to Jehu (843-816 BC), that is, a period of either relative peace and freedom, or one of revolt and finally subjugation under the Assyrian yoke.

The person or body who commissioned the erection of the stele or monument Was it done as a glorification of a king’s victories in war, or does it reflect his building achievements? Or

maybe it concerned mundane matters such as law ordinances and edicts? For whatever reason, the fact is that stone was seen to be everlasting and consequently an engraving into such a hard substance was eternal and the message it conveyed for eternity. A king would put such a medium to good purpose, either suitable embellished, or with necessary omissions. Allowing for such factors, application of the information, contained within the source, can supplement our knowledge of an event or the characters involved in that specific incident (Schneider 2001: 37,38). On the other hand, stone effigies could be mutilated by means of the erosion of the facial features, that is, be gouged with a chisel. Such an act of mutilation can be seen on reliefs or statues. The Lachish reliefs show the enthroned Assyrian king, Sennacherib, with his face as having been obliterated (cf Fig 18a), whilst Sargon's head (cf Fig 18b) has been robbed of his left eye, had the bridge of his nose damaged and his beard 'torn'. This disfigurement might seem like a *loss* of information but, in reality *gives* information on a situation in time, since the wanton act of destruction may not have been random but, rather an act of revenge, a pointed reference of dishonour and disgrace and defiance against a hated enemy (cf Bahrani 1995:364,365, 372; Nylander 1980:331,332). Thus, an artifact can be interpreted in more than one way!

3.1 Mesopotamia: A history rediscovered

The Hebrew Bible mentions many foreign countries and the peoples who inhabited them. In fact, the very first book, Genesis, mentions the existence of four rivers (not found in Israel), which branch from the main river of the Garden of Eden. Number 'three' is called the Tigris, which runs east of Assur, whilst number 'four' is named Euphrates (2:10-14). Noah's descendants, as listed in Genesis 10, contains the name Nimrod (son of Kush), whose kingdom consisted of Babel, Erech and Akkad in the land of Shinar, from whence he migrated to Assur to build Nineveh (10:8-12). Some time later we are told about the Philistine menace (ca 1200 BCE), which produced not only mayhem, but the emergence of the first king, Saul, (and hence kingdom) of Israel (1 Sam:10). Kingdoms are glittering prizes to be won, and so we meet, in 2 Kings 15:19,20 Pul, king of Assyria (744-722 BCE), who invaded Israel but withdrew. This was however a phantasy respite, since soon after Assyrian kings like Shalmaneser (726-722 BCE) and Sennacherib (688-681 BCE) made short thrift

of Israel (2 Kings 18:9-13). Another foreign power, which struck the final deathblow to the surviving kingdom of Judah in 587 BCE was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (2 Kings 24:1; 10-12; 25:1-3).

Our present understanding of these alien powers has largely been the outcome of controlled archaeological excavations done in Mesopotamia during the past five to six decades (cf Map 2). This land was historical not as fortunate as Egypt, where huge and visible edifices such as pyramids and temples, with inscriptions on walls, and graves of Egyptian kings, could be viewed, absorbed and compared. The ruins of the cities of Assyria and Babylon (Akkad and Sumer) had been buried for centuries under sand and debris. The deserted land was dotted here and there with mounds (tells) which the inhabitants of the areas referred to by alien names that echoed the past (Oppenheim 1964:8). Onto this landscape men appeared, not only with their spades but also with their biblical perceptions of heathen conquerors, who had vanquished the kingdoms of God's people. Their application, of a type of parallel approach (Chavalas 2002: 22), impacted on the excavations done there, and hence also on interpretation of the emerging palatial remains, inscribed stelae, monumental statues of kings, thousands of clay tablets and a diversity of artifacts. The evidence, of the destruction of these cities, strengthened their belief that they had found the truth of prophecies as cited by prophets in Isaiah 10:12-19; 13:1-22 and Jeremiah 50:13, 35-40 (cf Chavalas 2002:22-24; Moorey 1991:9).

Since this land between the two rivers had, in the past, thus been traversed by travellers, adventurers and treasure hunters it meant, in effect, that not much was done in the area of scholarly pursuit of critical research. However, when further excavations were done throughout the areas of the Fertile Crescent, for example at Mari (Parrot 1931-1974), Alalakh (Woolley 1937), Nuzi (Chiera 1925-1931), Ebla (Matthiae 1974-1975) and, further afield, the western coastal town of Ras Shamra [Ugarit (Schaeffer 1929)], the realization dawned of the extent of the interrelationships between these forgotten peoples and the lands they had inhabited, and it brought to the fore the understanding that all these civilizations should be studied for its own culture and traditions: in essence therefore, *for its own sake*. Hence the entire corpus of archaeological evidence, the literature

found therein and the textual material should be studied within the context of the Ancient Near East, as a comprehensive whole (Chavalas 2002:35; cf Moorey 1991:150-152; Moscati 1957:49, 55; Oppenheim 1964:35-39).

As demonstration of how this argument applies itself to archaeological excavations, the remains and artifacts found there and the interpretation thereof, the following examples should suffice.

These examples are not only the means towards a visual appraisal of artifacts, monuments, temples and so forth, but constitute material which can be used as research and reference data.

In 1843/1843 Paul Emile Botta (1802-70) excavated the site at Khorsabad (cf Larousse 1972:168). The large, carved stone blocks found there were identified as being the remains of the palace of the Assyrian king Sargon II (721-705 BCE). These blocks were adorned with sculptured reliefs and inscriptions, portraying the energetic ventures (warfare, sieges, weaponry, treatment of captives) of this militaristic king. Drawings were made of the slabs and their inscriptions and, in conjunction with the written reports by Botta, remain an invaluable record of this part of Assyrian history (cf Albenda 1980:223, 226; COS 2.118A; 2 Kings 17:1-24; Isaiah 10:27-32; 20:1). It was, however, due to some undeciphered inscriptions brought back by Botta, from which the name *Sar-gin* was read and identified with 'Sargon, king of Assyria' (Isaiah 20:1), the first name of an Assyrian king to be correctly read in an *extra-biblical text*.

In 1845 Austen Henry Layard (1817-94) excavated the northwest side of the mound of Nimrud (cf Larousse 1972:168). Soon sculpture after sculpture emerged and no less than thirteen pairs of winged lions and bulls came to light. The imposing structure, which Layard was revealing, was identified as the palace of Assurnasirpal II (884-859 BCE), the Assyrian monarch who had moved here to Nimrud from Assur. The reliefs, which portray the progress of a royal lion hunt (cf Fig 6a), find echo in most reliefs, sculptures and recorded inscriptions, which graphically illustrate that the chase was a constant occupation not only of the Assyrian nobility, but of the upper classes of the Ancient Near East. Often these reliefs also provide details of the other types of animals (onagers) being hunted (cf Fig 6b), the dogs used in the searching and fetching of prey and their handlers (cf

Fig 6c). Horses also played a significant role and must have been of a breed suitable for either hunting or warfare (cf Fig 7a, 7b). Not only were chariots and horses items required towards military success, they also projected an image of wealth (acquisition), power and status (Dalley 1985:32, 37, 43, 48; cf Heidorn 1997:107-109). These visual and vivid scenes therefore postulate a whole plethora of data and information, which might seem mundane, but in reality provide contextual background for comprehensive research of the world of this class of citizen (warrior).

In 1846 Layard made another discovery which provided an extra-biblical perception, in *contrast* to the biblical one. This 2 m long, limestone, four sided 'Black Obelisk' (cf Fig 8a) which was erected by Shalmaneser III (ca 858-824 BCE) as a record of his victories over leaders such as Sua the Gilzanite, Jehu of Israel, and others. On the one hand the sculptured images, of Jehu of Israel's submissive kneeling (cf Fig 8b) contribute to a renewed assessment of the role- players of that particular period in the history of Israel (the biblical text does not mention this submissive action of Jehu). On the other hand this obelisk uses the phrase 'Jehu, son of Omri', which is incorrect if read literally. In actual fact it denotes the manner in which the Assyrians acknowledged a famous royal house. This obelisk bears testimony to the implementation of the required act of obeisance, a posture all captured, or free men, and ordinary citizens, as well as governors and high officials were ordained to adhere to when in the presence of the king.

Of special interest, towards research, is the portrayal of (plentiful) tribute and of captives (their appearances and apparel). The graphic presentation of the variety of booty is echoed in many of the memorial (conquest) inscriptions of the Assyrian kings (as well as kings of other areas of the Near East). The Calah Annals of Tiglath- Pileser III lists an inventory of booty, consisting of diverse items such as iron, elephant hides and tusks, spindles, live sheep, 'flying birds of the sky', mules and horses (cf COS 2.117A). Inherent in these lists, of goods received, lie the culture of the conquered peoples, their trading commodities and their reaction to the disaster of capture and conquest. Amongst these captives would be the elite (cf Jehu), and aristocratic warriors. How would the conquering warrior classes have reacted towards them? Confrontation and animosity? Have killed or shackled them into servitude? Or shown mercy? These issues I shall address

in Chapter Eleven..

In 1849 Layard eclipsed his findings at Nimrud when he found the great and magnificent palace of Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) in the city of Nineveh. Events from the prolonged military operations, of this very warlike king, provided the themes for groups of wall reliefs that decorated the chambers of this magnificent palace. Prominently reflected in these scenes are methods of attack, the taking of booty and the act of submission done before the king seated on his throne (cf abovementioned obelisk). Of great significance though, is the discovery of room XXXVI which was named the Lachish Room, due to its pictorial record of the siege of the Judean city Lachish (701 BCE), during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah (2 Kings 18:13). Again, it is striking how dress, headgear, weaponry, geographical peculiarities such as trees and vegetation, and animals and other daily details, such as the camp arrangement of the army so realistically portrayed (cf Fig 9a, 9b), that one can 'read' the scenes without the necessity of an alphabet or written script (Albenda 1980:226,227; cf Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:250-267).

Punishment was meted to those who rebelled against the demands of the Assyrian, or any other king (cf Fig 9c). The practice of torture and severe mutilation (Bleibtreu 1991:52-61; Olmstead 1923:23, 24) as well as the beating of prisoners and people (cf Fig 10a,10b) reflect the cruelty which prevailed during those ages and hence is also a reflection of the world view of its people, whether as an ordinary citizen or member of the elite. Of important significance here, is that we have evidence which enhances research to its full extent, namely: a biblical account, an extra-biblical account of the text and an artifact (archaeological) which acclaims both accounts.

A further discovery, at Nineveh, and one which was of supreme importance towards research into an understanding of the whole Assyrian Babylonian civilization, was Layard's last great find namely, the library of Assurbanipal (688-626 BCE). This find comprised thousands of clay tablets which include topics on exorcism, divination, medical matters, philosophy, astronomy, and many other subject matter. They also provide dynastic lists, edicts, songs, hymns and epic-mythical tales. Among these 'literary' tablets were those which recorded the Gilgamesh Epic. Found by Layard's

assistant, Hormuzd Rassam, the tablets record the saga of Gilgamesh, a ruler of Uruk (ca 2700 BCE) . The full meaning of this Assyro-Babylonian literature came to light when George Smith's decipherment of the cuneiform texts revealed not only the great deeds of Gilgamesh, but the occurrence of a great flood, sent to punish the people. Not only had the spade opened up what seemed to be a (primal) version of the biblical deluge (Genesis 6;7), it also raised the disturbing question whether the Bible was the oldest historical source we had? How far back did Mesopotamian history go? Here was a classic situation where too much comparison, in favour of the biblical narrative and theological ideology, could impinge on a lack of contrasting and contextual investigation of a foreign culture (Moorey 1991:79).

The statue of Gudea, the ruling prince, or king-priest, of the city of Lagash (ca 2200 BCE), was found by Ernest de Sarzec in 1877. This event set archaeology on the trail of the Sumerians (Akkadians), a people who were the predecessors of the peoples of that geographical setting. In 1959 Samuel Noah Kramer, after intensive decipherment of the clay tablets left behind by these people, published his book entitled *History Begins at Sumer*, in which he mentions many of the achievements of these Sumerians as 'the first....' (for example: school, historian, farmer's almanac, etcetera). Although his lists of 'firsts' might seem presumptuous and too clinically applied, that which does emerge is the reality of an ancient civilization, with all its social, political and religious ramifications. As a 'first' or early civilization, within a specific area, they would be a map for later nations to follow and to use as guidelines. It is seldom that conquering armies destroy so totally that nothing is left of a peoples' literature, art, their 'technologies', their wisdom and the way they handled, controlled and administered their daily lives. As a further expansion on this forgotten culture, Kramer isolated themes and motifs which occur in both the Sumerian and the biblical historical text. These comparisons highlight the impact a culture can exercise, irrespective of its position in the passage of time. Averbeek (2002:90, 91) though, cautions that a too literal application can distort. But comparisons (contextual) as well as contrasts (contextual) can be effected between the remnants of this old Sumerian civilization and the emergence of new civilizations (cf Zettler 1984:62).

Sir Leonard Woolley's excavations at Ur (1927) in ancient Sumer revealed royal graves which contained the remains of corpses other than those of royalty. Bodies of soldiers, ladies of the court, attendants, slaves and skeletons of bullocks lay in a neat parody of death. These graves (ca 2600-2500 BCE) constitute some of the oldest known to man. More important though, than the gold found there, is the visual evidence of the prevalent, cultural and social practices and religious circumstances of these ancient Sumerians. Of special significance is the *seemingly, planned* act of human sacrifice. Such sacrifice could be indicative of a society with either a high sense of moral commitment (sacrifice of own life) or, had achieved a high level of prosperity but suffered moral decline (atonement sacrifice). It could also have been an act of affirmation of the king's divinity (sacrifice for his life), or it could have represented an authority which practiced sacrifice as affirmation of customs (Katz 1990:91, 92, 102,108; cf De Vaux 1961:441; Oppenheim 1964:183). These theories though, Oppenheim(1964:183) reckons only postulate, but do not really satisfy: there are *conceptual barriers* which exist for us in determining an understanding of the cultural and religious practices of people as far removed in time and background as that of those found in the graves. Such a valid point comes into play when we designate these graves as indicative of a burial of the upper echelon of society due to the golden helmet, dagger, jewels, harp, etcetera, found there, as they seem to mirror an elite class (cf Fig 11a-11d). Due to a lack of inscriptions or written texts, we can only tentatively reconstruct the particular ethos of these peoples according to the visual evidence.

As an exercise, in which the application of preconceived ideas and judgement attempts to connect Assyriological data with the Old Testament, rather than probing contextual and contrasting possibilities, mention must be made of Woolley's conviction that not only had he found the Ur of Abraham, but also the biblical flood. This was based solely on a biblical interpretation, on layers of water laid silt deposits found at Ur and by the flood described in the Epic of Gilgamesh. However, as noted by later archaeologists, floods were then, and still are, a climatic and geographical feature of southern Mesopotamia, just as there were always cities being destroyed by rivers which overflowed their banks, and hence leaving deposits of flood residues (cf Chavalas 2002:35; Moorey1991:79, 80; Oppenheim 1964:40, 41).

A prominent discovery is the mosaic 'Standard of Ur' which was also found in the graves at Ur. This military standard, made for display in royal processions, has inlaid figures of shell on a lapis lazuli mosaic background. The themes depicted are *peace* on the one side and *war* on the other side of the standard (cf Fig 12a, 12b). The battle scenes, the chariots and the soldiers are clearly shown, with variance in dress, in weaponry and so forth. Of special prominence, and the research there of, is the presentation of prisoners to the king, a 'manner' of captivity which finds echo in all inscriptions, of such occasions, in the ancient world. Inherent in this display of captives before the king, is the power the king and his entourage had in the aftermath of such battles (cf the submission of Jehu). In contrast the peace scenes convey a social and economic background and its contemporaneous activities. These scenes emit much of the context and standard of living of that period (Postgate 1992a:245, 246).

Similar to the Standard of Ur is the Stele of the Vultures from Girsu (ca 2450 BCE), found by de Sarzec (cf Fig 13a). Here too ordinary troops are shown arrayed against the enemy. There is a distinct similarity between their 'uniforms' and those depicted on the Ur Standard. This stele compares well with the Stele of Sargon from Susa (cf Fig 13b) which also portrays the dense formation of soldiers. Predominant are the weapons used as well as the way the dead prisoners are dumped onto one pile of corpses (cf Fig 1a). The pictorial evidence on this stele from Girsu, in conjunction with the boastful inscriptions of conquerors such as Tiglath-Pileser III in his Calah Annals (cf COS 2.117 A), indicates the treatment of those who had been conquered. Their fate could be death (cf Fig 1a) or slavery (cf Fig 14a) of the cruelest kind (Gelb 1973:90; cf Eph'al 1984:96; Postgate 1992a: 254-256).

The abovementioned archaeological discoveries, of monumental kind, are of the most well known ones. They shall be used in conjunction with the many inscriptions, literary texts and so forth, which were found in the Mesopotamian context. Examples being the cuneiform tablets of Mari, Ebla and so forth. Following now I shall discuss various researchers and the methodologies they advocate(d) in arriving at reasonable (interpretive) conclusions.

Past civilizations not only excite the imagination of the general public, they also lend opportunity to scholars towards an investigation of these past histories, and thus to effect 'an understanding as to the identity of a civilizations' people, their way of life and the '*reasons and consequences*' within their worlds. In order to arrive at a reasonable conclusion, varied disciplines, ranging from anthropology (the study of people, their societies, cultures) to zones (residential, exclusive, war/battle/combat, buffer), incorporate all the possible factors which had, may have, should have, could have or did not, contribute to the final picture (thus an holistic approach). This methodology was not always applied to earlier interpretations of material found.

W F Albright (1891-1971), by training an Assyriologist as well as a biblical scholar (and seen as one of the great archaeologists), had as an aim to synthesize the history of the Near East and to place the biblical literature as having its place within that history. Aware of the danger of prioritising biblical data, he concentrated upon extra-biblical sources and information as a means of 'typical occurrence' within a specific culture (Moorey 1991:67) since he believed that archaeology as well as the Bible are contributive towards historical information. However, this ideal was overshadowed by ever- new archaeological discoveries which convinced Albright that these 'finds' actually illuminated, and proved, the biblical texts as history. This observation, and his preoccupation with the patriarchal period, subsequently led him to use the inscribed cuneiform tablets, found at Nuzi (1929) and Mari (1933), as proof of a second millennium dating for Abraham's peregrinations, since it was observed how similar these legal texts, customs, marriage practices, and so forth, were to the laws of the Bible (Moorey 1991:81). This type of interpretation, seen as 'a very specific approach' and, somewhat harshly stated by Mazar (1990:32,33) as 'simplistic and fundamental answers', contains the essence of archaeology as an utilizing technique towards meaningful answers, always providing reconstruction is based on an *overall relationship* between the biblical and the non-biblical.

In abovementioned case, use of the comparative method *only*, produced an extreme result. A contrasting approach would have highlighted the differences, since these texts are first hand reports, whilst the biblical material had been edited, or was written after the events. Hence

Malamat (1989:27-29) argues that the Mari material and the biblical text should be graded as two identities, sentiment which applies itself whenever more than one civilization, cultures, societies or a people are compared and contrasted (cf also the *contextual* tablets found in the libraries and archives of Mari, Nuzi, Alalakh, Ebla, and others). Different ‘written’ evidence, whether in the form of tablets, bullae or shaped form, all contain information (such as legal matters, land sales, orders for goods, etcetera) which enhances research towards an understanding of the daily, contextual realities (cf Figures 15a-15c). The examples, as presented in the Figures 15a-15c reveal a wide range of subjects, from a house sale to land purchases to geometric problems. In order to obtain full elucidation though, Chavalas (2002:44) stresses that an archive, of which only a portion has been interpreted, or published, could postulate supposed parallels, whereas the whole would permit more precise contexts for many of these parallels. But, Averbek (2002:90,91) cautions, themes of parallels can cause misrepresentation, due to the cultural context of the text, since the initial meaning could have been based on a totally different viewpoint from the one we postulate (cf Hallo1990:5, 6).

In the abovementioned scenario the most notable difference thus, between research done in past decades and more recent study of newly found (and existing) material, is that the ‘new’ scholars are not solely preoccupied with biblical issues, although there is a sensitivity towards the relevance of their results for such studies. This is due to a realization that Mesopotamia, rather than Israel (cf her restrictive laws on ‘graven’ images, Exodus 20:4), would be the source of illuminating discoveries (cf Mazar 1990:32; Moorey 1991:78; Oppenheim1964:73).

William Hallo is a scholar with numerous publications to his name, as well as being co-editor to such comprehensive and referential works as *The Context of Scripture* [COS (3 Volumes, 1997, 2000, 2002)] and *Scripture in Context* [SIC (4 Volumes, 1980, 1983, 1990, 1991)]. He advocates an approach based on *genre* comparability, where literary compositions are organized according to categories, based on their subject matter, be it kings, conquests and courts or, be it gods, rites, rituals, covenants or, be it just common people, daily living, customs, trade. Each instance will include tales, stories, instructions and traditions which could, *or could not*, reflect certain

commonalities in human experience. Further to his methodology of compare and contrast Hallo (1990:4-6) adds a contextual approach, which emphasizes similarities and differences, as well as *other variations*, since this becomes especially applicable when ‘biblical’ and ‘extra-biblical’ are steering a course of collision. Hence, whether it was Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Sumer, Mari, Akkad, Israel, or any other civilization which had existed within the Fertile Crescent, all should be seen as part of a cultural continuum and its texts against a wider literary background (Hallo1991a:24; cf Van der Toorn 1996:4).

In similar vein therefore, should *all* inscriptions on tablets, walls or stelae, or the remains of *all* palaces, temples, defence systems and graves on any excavated site, receive fair treatment. Such a treatment is necessary for a specific theme which encompasses research into the many aspects of a subject matter, such as kings and their men of the warrior class. Research has to investigate literary parallels (or more solid, material evidence) without necessarily or invariably finding the exact route by which a given idea, sentiment, or data had passed from source to source. Also, some ancient records are very fragmentary and its information thus scant (Hallo 1990:6).

Research into topics such as warriors, weaponry, warfare techniques, men-at-arms, and so forth, are widely scattered in books, journals and articles, mostly because the subject is developing so fast, due to new material. However, that which comes from the pens of scholars seem to adhere to methodologies which revolve around the comparative /contrast /contextual approaches. Practical reasons for applications of such means of interpretation, is that many instances prevail where themes or institutions (or cultures) may have influenced each other, have appropriated ideas and even have adopted legends, stories, customs, and so forth. Examples being Moses’ birth story (Exodus 2:1-10) and the ‘birth’ legend of Sargon I, which reflect similarities. So too are various ‘vassal treaties’ either very alike, or according to similar rules and rites, like those found in the Egyptian and Hittite treaties (ANET 529, 530) or the Treaties of Esarhaddon (ANET:533- 541; cf Saggs 1995:135) or in Deuteronomy 28 (cf Malamat 1995:226-229).

Military matters, as reflected in the annals of Kings, contain the practice of cursing the enemy before the start of a war, and thus can serve as a comparison and contrast analysis *of each other* in relation *to each other* (Hayes 1968:81-87; cf Kramer 1963:62-66; Oppenheim 1964:206 ff). Here, again, research depended on information which was not gathered at once, but as it emerged in time. 'Emerging in time' being applicable to the newer discoveries, which are interpreted by means of methodologies other than those used in the past.

As an introduction, to the players in the fighting arena, Alan Buttery's (1974) research on and visual presentation of the dress codes (from the lowest to the highest rank), and their weaponry (again in order of rank) constitute thorough information. Not only are the men concerned described, but he relates the vehicles, techniques, strategies, prisoners taken and the end results of these confrontations. Very *concise historical* details are provided which serve as a reference guide towards the time- period (changes that occurred), the interactions (changing face of the enemy) and the progress of conflict (changing reasons, attitudes). His work encompasses research on the time-span 3200 - 612 BCE and peoples such as the Egyptians, Nubians, Hittites, Sea Peoples, Assyrians, Arameans, Hebrews, Elamites, Babylonians and others.. A veritable comparative analysis of contextual background.

The research done by Rikva Gonen (1975), on the weaponry of the ancient world, is an exercise of descriptive comparison, which also include the world outside the parameters of the Ancient Near East. Starting with primitive stone-throwing (cf my introduction), ensuing offensive weaponry is taken to the point where close-range and long-range weaponry developed into the more advanced machines of defence and attack. Included in this study of weaponry are the tactics used, the materials which were needed (hence trade relations), the expertise in the manufacturing of the items (artists, eyewitnesses of warfare and the clients who buy weaponry). This research by Gonen is enhanced by other authors who, by means of published articles, supply additional data on the weapons (described in her work) and thus provide comparisons, for example, of the bow (Yadin 1972:89-94; cf Wilkinson 1991:83-99).

Stephanie Dalley, besides her many interests in topics such as Mesopotamian mythology, and aspects of daily life, tackles *military organization*, within the Ancient East, in a manner which supplies more than descriptive presentations of the men on the ground. Her research includes historical details and summary-accounts of aspects of military matters, and also details the class distinction of the fighting men (1995:416, 417; cf King 2000:266-276) within the organization, namely, the *mariyannu* (chariot-owning warriors) as opposed to those of lower class. The Nuzi texts mention many 'discrete' social classes, of which the *rakib narkabti* (chariot rider) is distinguished from the ordinary dwellers (cf Maidman 1995:941,942). This 'class' research becomes part of mine when I define the warrior class. Dalley also touches on the treatment of prisoners, a subject which is very comprehensively treated by Gelb (1973). As a contrast, Richard Beals' (1995) work on *Hittite military organization* indicates distinct differences but also similarities (such as the presence of a special corps of officers). The effect of confrontation and the morale on campaigns, an aspect often neglected, is also highlighted.

Eph'al (1984) expands on these specific themes and introduces such wide ranging subjects as communications (espionage), raids, distances between the fighting arenas with its problems of transport, roads (consequences), logistics, elite groups, and so forth. His emphasis is on a comprehensive view of the subject, and not on individual events. Further to this he reasons that geographical and climatic conditions played a role, a reality I agree with (cf Chapter Four).

Oppenheim presents one of the few, encompassing researches done on the world of ancient Mesopotamia. Here I do not mean to lose sight of the work of authors such as Olmstead and Saggs. Their concise, historical and contextual research, of the cultures within the geographical sphere of Mesopotamia, provides a basis which amply highlights all aspects of those past civilizations, whether it is of a religious, social, political or economical nature. Though much new data has been added to 'histories of the Ancient Near East' (cf Hallo et al 1971; Kuhrt 1997; Van de Mieroop 2004, and so forth), the research done by the initial authors, of work of such scope, still remain good reference sources..

In his research though, Oppenheim (1964) advocates that only few cuneiform inscriptions can really be considered to be 'historically' correct. These same considerations he applies to monumental inscriptions which, though seen as informative, should be recognised as probable tools for political and artistic purposes (cf Albenda. 1980:222-229). The historian, Oppenheim (1964:143,144) advises that one should consider an array of sundry literary work in order to get what could be termed 'history'. Of impact, on the research into religious considerations, is Oppenheim's perspectives on the religion of these civilizations. He argues that the nature of the evidence is archaeological, and hence interpretation is according to *our* understanding of temples, shrines and altars. Secondly he states that comprehension of those ideologies, *across the barriers of time*, is of debatable result (1964:171). A point, in fact, which is probably true of many areas of research, since it is often more comfortable (easier) to impose that which is familiar to us, than trying an alien one for size!

Research, as a comprehensive work on all aspects of the society of Mesopotamia (similar to Oppenheim), was done by Postgate (1992a), but with an extensive use of archaeology as a means to illustrate and to enlighten - a case of literary evidence enhanced by visual corroboration. All aspects, whether political, social, economical or religious, were researched with many (new) discoveries (literature, inscriptions, structural remains, and so forth) incorporated into the total fabric of Mesopotamia. Good information on subjects such as law, politics, military affairs and, especially, geographical background is provided. As I consider geographical contexts as attributable to reasons for conflict, I shall apply his research on that matter in Chapter Four.

On the subject of women (warriors) very little has been brought to light. This is mostly due to non-existent literary material and, of course, the practically non-existence of female warriors. There are exceptions to this rule, as indicated by a stele found in the wall of Assur. This stele commemorates Sammuratnat, the wife of Samsi-Adad and mother to Adad-nirari III (900 BCE), and is, as such, an unusual inscription (cf COS 2.114 H; 2.114B). The traditional scope or theme on war and warriors, is usually limited to the valour of warrior and the capturing of women, as booty or enslavement (cf Chapter Eleven, 11.1.5).

When women are mentioned it is in context of the laws of the country (cf Hammurabi's laws), or they are named in the inscriptions as the mother of the conqueror (cf above). When letters were written they portray a contextual connection to their husbands, sons, envoys or the kings of other lands and cities. Thus Queen Puduhepa of Hatti requests the king of Ugarit to send her the share of gold which was ordained to her by means of a treaty (cf COS 3.45J). An envoy sends a 'keeping in touch' letter to the queen of Ugarit about the king of Carchemish, which reflects an ongoing correspondence between these two persons (cf COS 3.45Y). The most obvious connotation of women though seems to be that of goddess, and her relationship to mankind. Tikva Frymer-Kensky (1992) has attempted to bring the role of women to the fore (mostly the well known biblical females) and in the process has demonstrated that a female, *other than within her ordained role*, would not have been seen as particularly feminine, since such a woman would have had the same goals as the men (cf Deborah and Yael of biblical stance, 11.1.5). Be that as it may, we have very little in the way of Mesopotamian lore on women who operated as warrior leaders.

Other scholars who have contributed to an insight into the (somewhat specialized) world of warfare, warriors and connotations there of, are notably Tadmor, Malamat, Elat, Na'aman, Hoffmeier (archaeology) and Chavalas. Their contribution shall become obvious when I use their research in order to present the warriors of the Ancient Near East.

Research into the areas outside the Mesopotamian conclave is usually one of a history of the Ancient Near East whereby those regions are incorporated into, or seen as an 'ensuing' part of Mesopotamian politics. Sargon, Hammurabi, Ur-Nammu and Assyrian conquerors all effected empires which stretched from east to west. As powerful over-lords of their realms they were, most of the times, in a vassal /treaty, rebellion /submission relationship with the peoples they ruled. As examples we can note treaties between Hammurabi of Babylonia and Zimri-Lim of Mari; or Hammurabi and Shamsi-Adad of northern Mesopotamia (cf Veenker 2002:154-156). Therefore research regarding the historical contexts of the city-states, which fell before empires, can be found within the various archives of cuneiform tablets (texts).

The Mari, Ebla, Ugarit and Alalakh archives have revolutionized our understanding of the history of that region. The translation of these texts have enabled researchers not only to reconsider that which was known about the Near East, but it gave the necessary re-assessment, insight and data in order to update the 'historiography' of that region, since these tablets contain matters which relate to every-day realities such as laws, customs, economics, and so forth. That is also why it became very easy to impose Israelite, 'similar contexts' upon them. However, the biblical texts have been edited and re-edited, whilst these texts are, and reflect, a fixed point in time. Malamat (1989:27) therefore advocates an approach of contrast as well as comparison, since application of valid comparison can yield significant answers, but it can also go the other route which will produce romantic or neo-fundamentalist truth.

When Hammurabi sacked Mari in 1760 BCE, the correspondence between him and Zimri-Lin of Mari were buried for centuries. These texts comprise all the aspects of the prevalent situation between two kings at two opposite ends of a geographical landscape. The one was the leader of Mari and its flourishing trade, whilst the other was an empire-building leader who desired that flourishing trade. The only conclusion to that situation was conflict, a result which becomes clear as one reads the correspondence. However, due to the correspondence between Hammurabi and his envoys, spies and informants, we are made aware of treachery and underhand scheming and plotting by the surrounding city-state rulers. Research into these tablets will therefore reveal the social and economic situation as well as the politics of the day which was, in reality, a politics against each other, where constant games of siding with this, then with that one, became the basis for ever-preparedness of a military nature. This, in turn, gives insight into the ethic world of its rulers, and his class of warriors keymen, in preparedness for eventualities such as war. In Chapter Eleven these realities will be discussed in full.

3.2 Canaan / Israel: The stepping stones

As opposed to Mesopotamia, we find a different situation regarding Syria, Canaan and Israel (cf Map 1) as to their historical and archaeological situation. Syria, was the thoroughfare for armies,

merchants, immigrants and invaders who travelled from east to west and north to south, and thus reflect the myriad of peoples who, at intervals, founded dynasties, kingdoms and powerful city-states. The evidence, for Canaan, is that of a civilization which, also due to its geographical position as a commercial and cultural crossroads, developed a distinctive culture, as exemplified in its archaeological remains (Tubb 1998:25), whilst Israel stands as an entity of overwhelming theological connotations and of an archaeology within that specific biblical milieu (cf the Temple of Solomon; Mazar 1990:375-379). Hence the archaeology of Syria, Canaan and Israel (the Levant) reveals a world of influences, adaptations and assimilation of the cultural uses of those who came, stayed or left. As a means towards research, these influences and different cultural aspects, give good indication of prevalent lifestyles, customs, rituals, warfare, class structures and dependence/independence on and from each other.

The archaeological research of Israel has been one which had the biblical text as a reference. It is only due, in many cases, to a re-assessment of existing archaeological discoveries such as temples, palaces, walls and gates, that a new awareness of past events and kings have been created. This is as a result of new discoveries which encompasses not only newly excavated structural remains and inscriptions on seals and *ostraca*, but especially the extra-biblical mentioning of Israel in newfound stelae and monuments. The cuneiform inscriptions, found in various archives, and other literary sources also contribute to new assessments of Israel.

Israel thus became a 'known' civilization which became re-known, but with a significant difference: theological considerations have lessened, whilst the life, customs and conceptional traditions of the ancient Israelites have become the focus point of research. This focus point was found within the realization that Israel was a part of all the lands of the Bible, whether that land was Assyria, Babylonia, Canaan or any other civilization which had existed and flourished in the Fertile Crescent. This 'newfound Israel' would have caused troubled reactions from our forefathers, but today's researchers do not concentrate on 'proving' the bible, nor do they aim to detract from the spirit and profoundness of the sacred writings. It is a sensitive matter, and hence a quote from Ernest Wright(1962:27) which puts it concisely:

We must study the history of the Chosen People in exactly the same way as we do that of any other people, running the risk of destroying the uniqueness of that history. Unless we are willing to run that risk, truth can never be ours.

In the past truth was based on any excavated materials' connection to the biblical text. Thus, Yigael Yadin noted the excavated city gates at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer as the illustration of building operations attributable to Solomon (on archaeological grounds) on the basis of the biblical reference [2 Kings 9:15-17 (cf Mazar1990:385)]. J Garstang's Jericho excavations (1930-36) revealed collapsed walls, which he designated as the remains of Joshua's conquest (Joshua 6:20). This interpretation sufficed since it confirmed the biblical story. Kathleen Kenyon later excavated these same walls, and re-designated them to the Early Bronze Age (ca 2300 BCE). She found no signs of a city having been there in Joshua's time (ca 1250 BCE).

Such 'hard' facts, though, are not the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Jericho's saga, since archaeological sources cannot deny an historical nucleus, which in the case of Jericho certainly exists because destructions did occur, albeit not the destruction incurred by Joshua (Schneider 2001:42).

These two examples illustrate the way the biblical source was used to verify the archaeological materials rather than the other way around. In similar ways discoveries of cuneiform tablets, see below, have been compared to an Israelite context rather than Israel being related *to them*. As an example we find that research has given the tablets of Ebla their fair share of interpretation. Mostly these tablets were read, comparatively, as of great significance towards an understanding of the Biblical text. Conclusions were made that Ebla sheds light on the minor prophets, and constitutes confirmation of the context of the biblical patriarchs, that the script was a potential ancestor to biblical Hebrew (cf Dahood 1982; 1983a; Freedman 1978; Pettinato; 1980,1990). But, the trend has shifted to the fact that Ebla has its own identity (civilization) and hence should be seen as part of the Near Eastern milieu, and not as confirmation of Israel's identity.

When the Ras Shamra texts were found on a mound on the Mediterranean coast in 1928, they became a means by which to explore worlds, previously hidden and obscure to us because of preconceived ideas and an inability to read 'strange' writings. Ras Shamra was identified as ancient Ugarit (Claude Schaeffer 1928) and the strange script was deemed to be Ugaritic, and dating from the 14th to 13th centuries BCE. Ugaritic is a northwest Semitic language and a close relative of Hebrew, which means that words occurring only once (maybe twice) in the Hebrew Bible, can now be determined with more certainty (cf Craigie 1983:71). Consisting of varied correspondence from the royal archives, as well as texts devoted to religious subjects, the Ras Shamra discovery enabled us to re-create the world of Canaanite thoughts and practices, which hitherto, we could only infer from the passages in which their 'abominations' were attacked by the Hebrew prophets (Jones 1974:44; cf Craigie 1983:71-73).

Our understanding, of practices and influences which the Israelites must have been subjected to, is enhanced by cult objects recovered from the excavations (cf Figures 16a, 16b). The ways the gods were worshipped are further revealed by stelae, cult stands, statuettes and altars (cf Craigie 1983:64, 65, 67, 68).. We can tentatively assess anew the prophets' condemnations of these gods, as well as attain a more enlightened viewpoint of these 'alien' worshippers. The Israelites lived among these Canaanites and influences were inevitable. A votive chariot, with two Syrians riding in it, was also found in the temple of Baal. This artifact provides a very good representation of the shape of the chariots, as well as the way the upper classes dressed nearly 3500 years ago (cf Fig 17).

Above-mentioned examples serve as an introduction to sources which do not appear in the Hebrew Bible, and are therefore in no way related to the traditions of the biblical text. So, when we read about Canaanites, Assyrians, Hittites and other peoples in the Bible, these sources provide researchers with contextual realities of the relationship the Israelites had with those around them, and thus provide insight on certain aspects of specific times, places and events.

Due to the restrictions which forbids graven images, use and research of extra-Biblical sources allows, to a lesser or greater degree, insight into the world of the Israelites.. Except for the Moabite stone, which was found in Palestine, the rest are of Assyrian origin, namely, the Monolith Inscription, Black Obelisk and sundry inscriptions. A short description of each follows:

The Mesha Stone (cf Fig 19), is a slab of black basalt and was discovered by F Klein at Dibon. It has a height of 1 metre and a width of 600mm, and is the longest inscription source ever found in Palestine. This stele was erected by King Mesha of Moab in commemoration of his successful rebellion against Israelite rule (Mazar1990:542) The Old Testament account, of this rebellion, is given confirmation by this stone (cf 2 Ki 3; Jones 1974:71-73). But, there is a discrepancy between the Biblical account and that of Mesha, since we learn that Mesha did not win his attack on Joram (2 Ki 3:27). The Moabite Stone thus reflects the care to be taken when reading conflicting renderings of an event, since very scant remains, from the time of Mesha and his descendants have been found which could supplement the existing information (Mazar 1990:542). Thus we can say that Omri and Ahab had subdued Moab, and had received tribute, a fact which implies military power and effective use of that power.

However, the stone also reveals more than abovementioned. The earliest occurrence of the name of Yahweh (inscription wise) appears on this stela as well as Mesha's conquest and *massacre of all the people* of Ataroth, in honour of the national god, a warfare procedure reminiscent to that of the ancient Israelites (cf COS 2.23). Again there are echoes of interrelationships and inter-actions which aid in research on war, attitude towards war and the subsequent treatment of captives and inhabitants.

A stele, found in Kurkh, is our earliest annals text of Shalmaneser III. This 'Monolith stele' has the figure of the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser, engraved on its face and was commissioned by him in commemoration of his military campaigns towards the West. The battle of Qarqar (853 BCE) is given in detail on the stele and reflects the king's claim to victory of that city. Since he did not go beyond Qarqar, to consolidate his 'victories', this claim to fame seems nebulous indeed. The

importance of this inscription, however, lies in the descriptive information given on the military might of individual kings of the anti-Assyrian coalition. Besides the forces of Adad-idri of Damascus and Irhuleni of Hamath, we learn that ‘Ahab the Israelite’ had 2000 chariots in the field (cf COS 2.113A). This battle, and its implications, is not mentioned in Scriptures. The number of chariots, like so many instances of the use of numbers in the Ancient Eastern context (cf Millard 1991:213-221) is questionable but, considering the high esteem the Assyrians denote to the ‘house of Omri’, we can infer that Ahab did indeed possess so many chariots, and the horses to go with it. Excavations at Jezreel (cf David Ussishkin & John Woodhead excavations, 1990-1993; 1997) have revealed large, open areas, which could have been the necessary space needed to muster horses and to manoeuvre chariots. This stele actually reflects the advances in war weaponry which the Israelites had made within a very short space of time. Considering the paucity of Saul’s ‘chariot force’, ca 1000 BCE, the influences from Canaanite and Philistine iron technology were the incentive towards this improvement, a case of new and necessary ideas, adaptations and assimilations.

The Black Obelisk (cf Fig 8a), found by Austen Henry Layard, illustrates the submission of five kings to Shalmaneser III of Assyria. The twenty panels (five to each side), vividly portray their contributions of camels, horses, an elephant, monkeys, and so forth, to the king. The second row from the top shows the kneeling figure of the Israelite Jehu, the ‘son of Omri’(cf Fig 8b; COS 2.113F). Jehu’s submission is not recorded in the Bible. Calling Jehu ‘son of Omri’ may suggest family ties, but, this was Assyria’s way of reference to a famous kingdom, such as the dynasty which Omri and his son Ahab had established, as the following inscriptions illustrate:

1) The Nimrud Slab Inscriptions, commissioned by Adad-Nirari III (805-782 BCE), contains his boast of his conquests of various cities, of which he names the following ‘... Tyre, Sidon, Humri (Omriland, Israel), Edom...’ (Luckenbill 1926:262-263).

2) Fragmentary annals, of Tiglath-Pileser III, (the biblical Pul-745-727 BCE), commemorates his conquest of cities and lands. This Assyrian king mentions ‘...Abilakka which is on the border of Bit-Humria’ (House of Omri, Israel) (Luckenbill 1926:292).

The ramifications, theories and arguments, on the use of *OMRI* in these inscriptions, are of a

very diverse nature. What is of essence though is not only that the appellation, *OMRI*, remained in use long after the last of the Omrid Dynasty had been exterminated by Jehu in 841 BCE, but that the inscription connects to Israel. It demonstrates that Israel was not an isolated island in a sea of alien peoples, but very much a (fighting) part of it. Also, these inscriptions reflect the enemy's point of view, and thus acts as a valuable aid to a new understanding and interpretation of the Biblical text.

Therefore the researcher's reliance, on extra-biblical sources, must be tempered with the realisation that 'outside' sources will reflect reports made by peoples who were not, as Israel and Judah were, committed to report in 'covenant obligation.' Their versions of events will be based on their own experiences and perceptions, not only from their religious, but also from their political or social standpoint. So, inevitably there will be contradictions and disagreements. These sources should be scrutinized for their contents, placed in context, seen to be a report from the opposing camps' 'world view', and must be correlated with biblical and archaeological material, in order to create a picture which is free from bias and partialities.



Map 2 Archaeological Sites of the Ancient Near East

The concentration of the sites reflect the extent of the Fertile Crescent. Within this arc the excavated materials, at the various tells, relate the histories of the various civilizations which had once flourished there.



Fig 6a Hunting Lion
(Ashurbanipal's palace at Nineveh ca 640 BCE)

This ferocious sport was practiced by kings and barons (the upper elite) as is clearly indicated by the rich apparel of both hunter and horse.

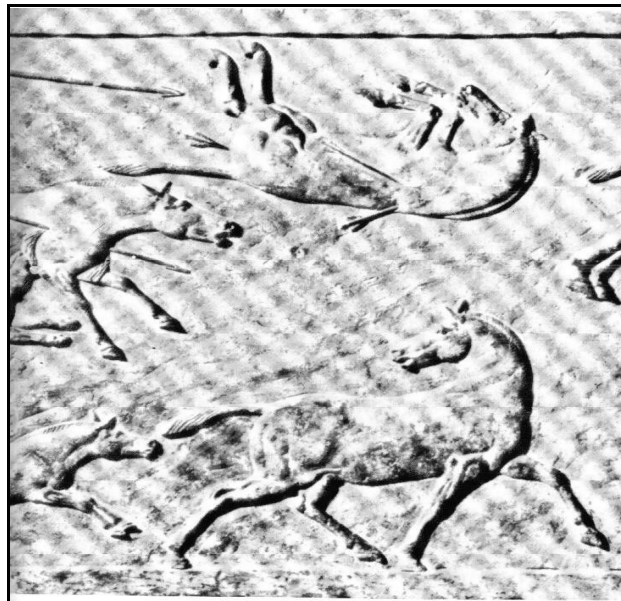


Fig 6b Hunting wild onagers
(Assyrian palace reliefs)

This animal (half ass) was widely used as a draught animal and for riding. The horse, though, gradually became more popular (chariots and riding) and this led to the hunting of onagers.



Fig 6c Hunting dogs and their handlers
(Assyrian reliefs)

Dogs were kept as pets and trained for hunting. A letter by Yaqqim-Addu to Zimri-Lim, King of Mari (ca 1780 BCE), indicates that the King had a personal interest in acquiring dogs.

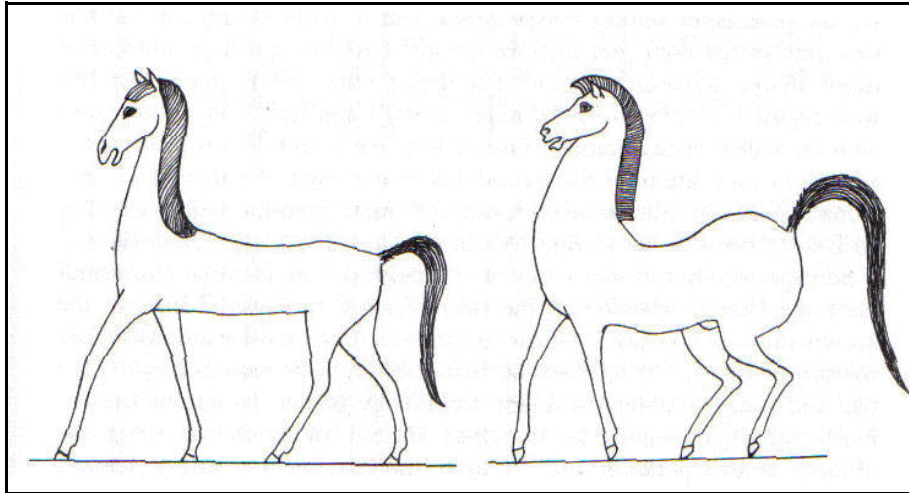


Fig 7a Egyptian horses, long lined and short lined

Horses were used for riding, the earliest pictorial evidence being of the second millennium BCE. However, the mule and ass long remained the preferred animals for riding.

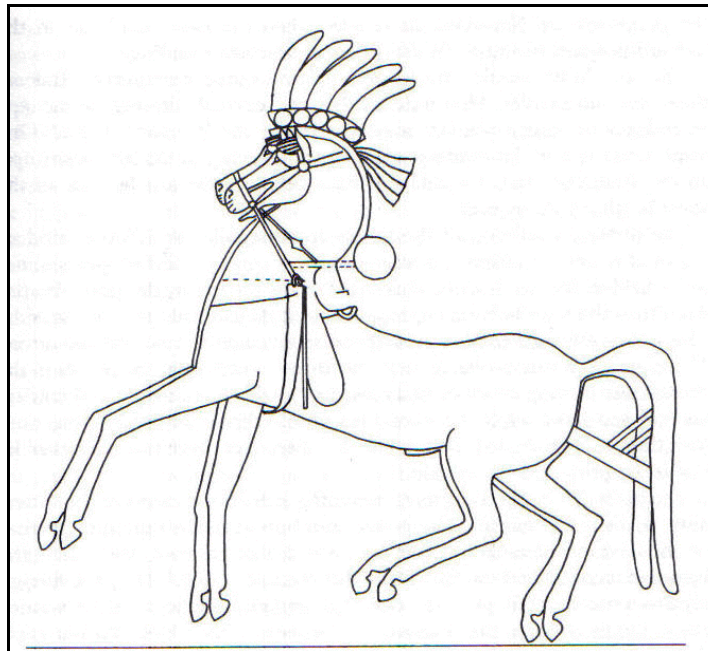


Fig 7b Chariot horses (Seti 1 at Karnak)
(ca 1290 BCE)

The first association of the horse and wheeled vehicles dates to the third millennium. By the eighteenth century BCE texts refer to teams of harnessed horses, their grooming and training (for chariots).



Fig. 8a The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III

Erected by the Assyrian king in commemoration of his victories over various leaders. It depicts the booty these leaders have brought to Shalmaneser. Shalmaneser is depicted as majestic, aloof-very much a king!



Fig. 8b Jehu's act of obeisance to Shalmaneser III
(ca 840 BCE)

Although depicted on the Black Obelisk, this act by Jehu of Israel is not recorded in the biblical texts. It is however, our only representation of an Israelite king.



Fig. 9a Assyrian soldiers prepare for battle
(Lachish, 701 BCE)

Closely packed and uniform. These attackers epitomizes the organized and well trained Assyrian troops.

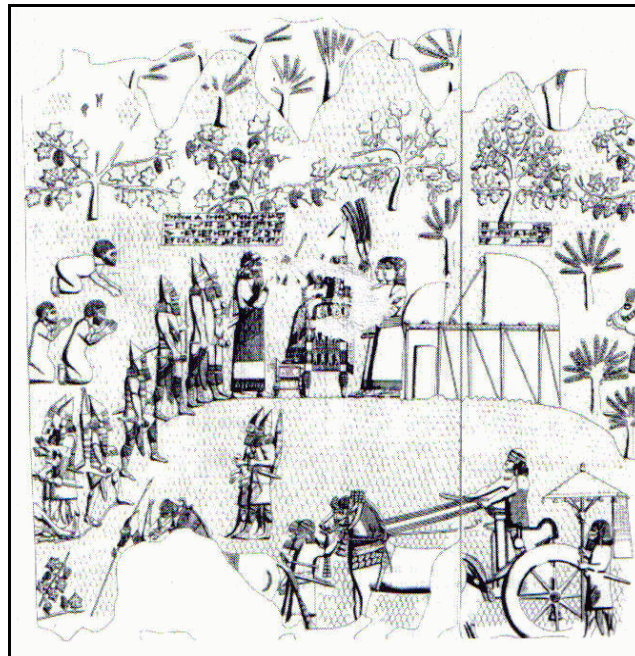


Fig 9b Assyrian king enthroned
(Lachish, 701 BCE)

The centre of power, clearly portrayed by the presence of the king, the abject grovelling prisoners, the ornate chariot and attending guards.

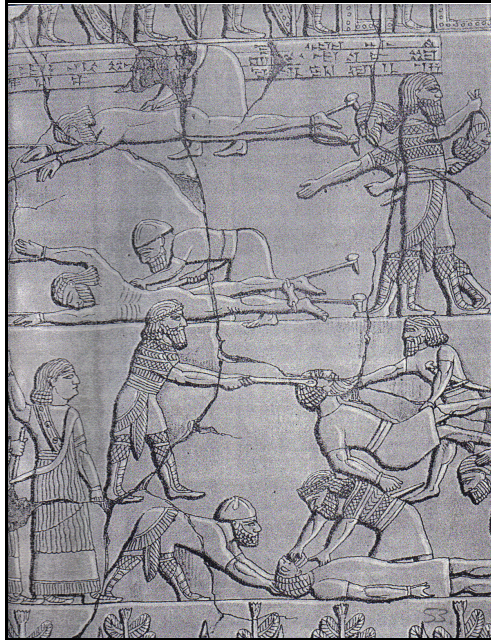


Fig 10a Assyrian methods of punishment

Various methods are being applied in order to punish those who did not yield to the conqueror's demands. This visual presentation could have served as a means of terror tactics, but on the whole the Ancient world inflicted cruel punishment for offences.

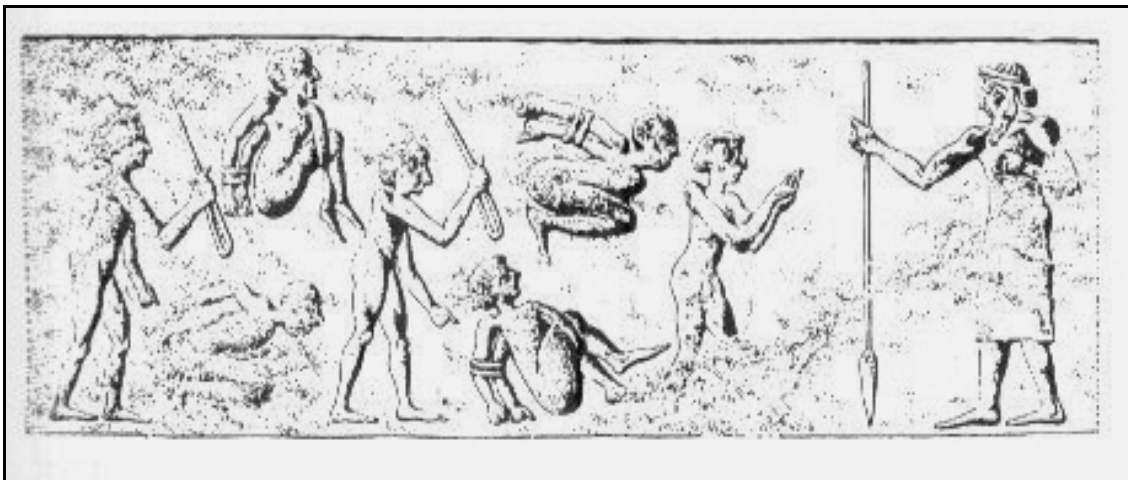


Fig 10b Beating/punishment of prisoners/people
(Uruk, ca 2800 BCE)

There is an overseer/ruler present at the beatings of rebels, prisoners or even criminals. His hat and skirt is characteristic of a ruler.



Fig. 11a Golden helmet from Ur
(ca 2600 BCE)

This helmet probably belonged to Prince Mes-kalam-dug.

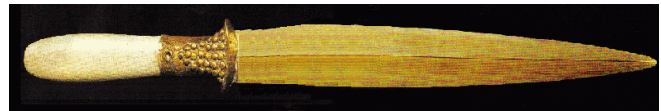


Fig. 11b Golden dagger from Ur
(ca 2600 BCE)

Sumptuously decorated, with a hilt of ivory, this was a ceremonial dagger.



Fig. 11c Golden necklace from Ur
(ca 2600 BCE)

This beautiful necklace, which adorned the neck of royalty, was enhanced by lapis-lazuli and carnelian.



Fig. 11d Harp with golden decoration
(from the graves at Ur, ca 2600 BCE)

The Bull's head affixed to this harp may indicate the ritual function of the instrument.



Fig.12a Scenes of War
(The Royal Standard of Ur, ca 2600 BCE)

A very graphic presentation which presents the preparation for war. The detail of the troops, their dress, weaponry, head protection as well as the assembly of chariots reflect the urgency of the situation. Everybody is standing (no sitting)

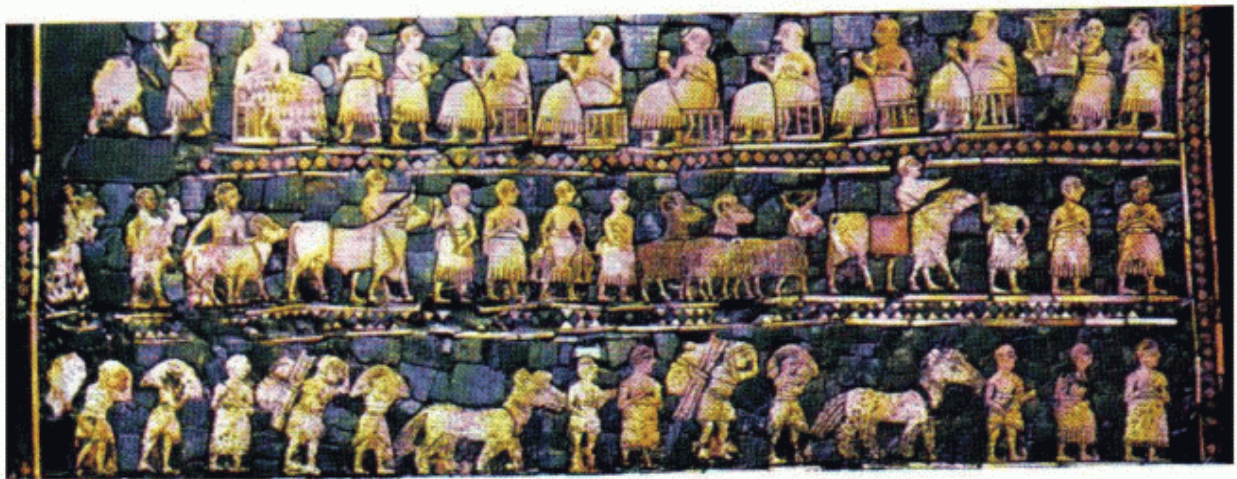


Fig.12b Scenes of Peace
(The Royal Standard of Ur, ca 2600 BCE)

This scene is the opposite of the above portrayal, and hence we find a calm but bustling atmosphere. Everybody is either sitting or bringing 'economic' goods. Quite the opposite of war.



Fig. 13a Troops of Lagash arrayed against enemies from Umma
(Stele of the Vultures from Girsu, ca 2450 BCE)

Rigid formation, tightly packed to ensure secure defence, these troops are led into battle by their leader.



Fig. 13b Stele of Sargon from Susa
(ca 2250 BCE)

Troops are arranged, weapon in hand. Very similar to Fig. 13a in being a depiction of the might (of an army) which a king could command and deploy.

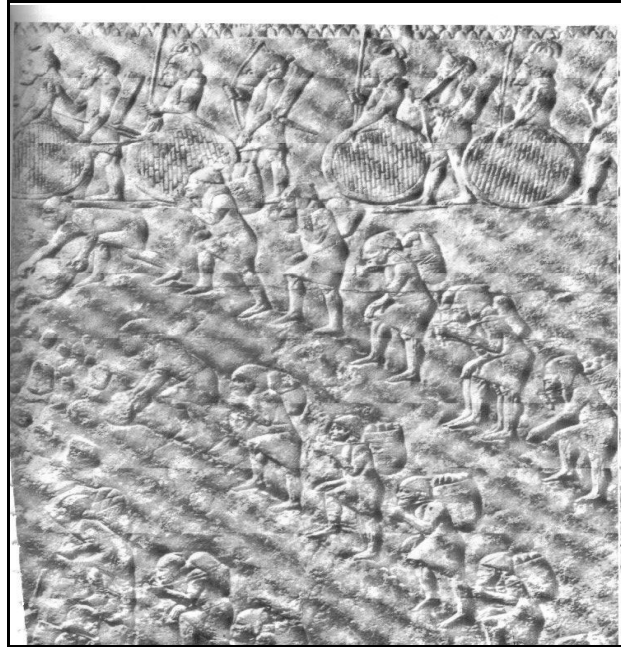


Fig. 14a Slaves working in quarries

Slavery meant toil and often death. Conditions were harsh and as can be seen, guards ensured that a continuous pace of strenuous work was held.

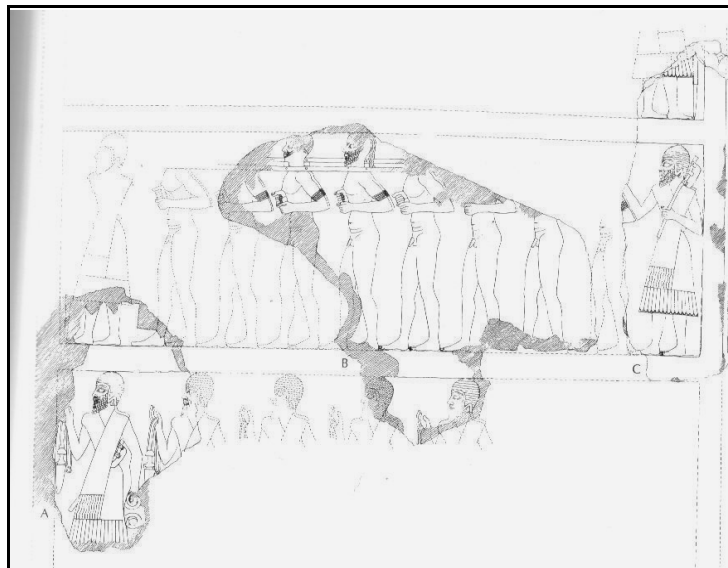


Fig. 14b Prisoners yoked together

The use of these neck stocks probably prevented escape until the slaves were deployed to their work stations. Note the differences in hair styles, a sign of the various ethnic groups which often fought on the same side.



Fig 14 c Prisoners roped together to a nose-ring

A very painful method of constraint. Kings often boasted, by means of this method, that they have bound and subdued their enemies.



Fig 15a Cuneiform of tablets from Mari
(ca 1800 BCE)

The information contained within these letters/tablets ranged from personal matters to business arrangements, military arrangements of contingents, provision lists and so forth

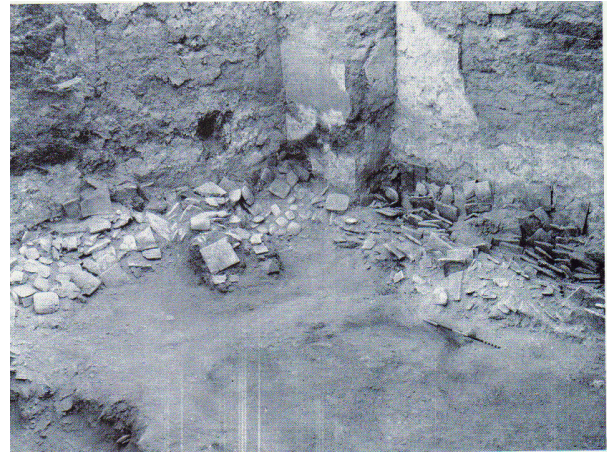


Fig 15b Cuneiform of tablets from Ebla
(ca 2100 BCE)

The tablets were stacked on shelves for easy access. These tablets had fallen from their wooden shelves when the room was burnt by an invading enemy.



Fig 15c Nuzi tablet
(ca 1700 BCE)

Part of an archive uncovered in Nuzi, a town Southeast of Nineveh. The Nuzians were Hurrians (biblical Horites). These tablets help explain some of the customs we read about in Genesis (the Patriarchs).



Fig 16a Altar with solar pillar from Ugarit
(13th century BCE)

This altar was discovered in the house of Ugarit's high priest.



Fig 16b Bronze statue of Baal from Ugarit
(13th century BCE)

This god was worshiped as the deified embodiment of the earth's fertility. He was therefore a god who provided for the necessities of life, crops and food. The Ugaritic pantheon included Baal, Dagon and Astarte, all familiar names from the Bible.



Fig 17 Votive chariot found in Baal temple
(ca 1300 BCE)

The chariot was used as a votive offering. The two bearded passengers provide a portrayal of how the upper classes looked and dressed.



Fig 18a Mutilation of Sennacherib's face
(ca 700 BCE)

The face of the enthroned Assyrian king has been deliberately gouged out. Since the faces of the surrounding people were not defaced, it seems that a specific person (the king) was singled out.

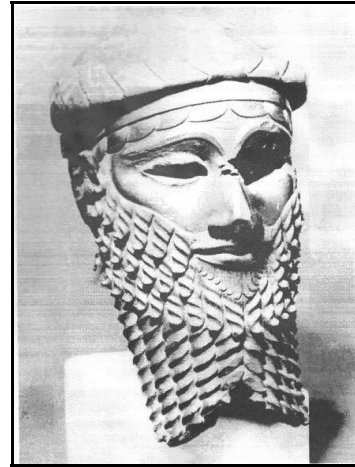


Fig 18b Mutilation of "Sargon's head"

The splendid image of "Sargon of Akkad" shows signs of violence on it, in brutal contrast with the exquisite finish and preservation of most of the head. It seems probable that the selective mutilation to the head was done to demonstrate the humiliation of an identifiable person.

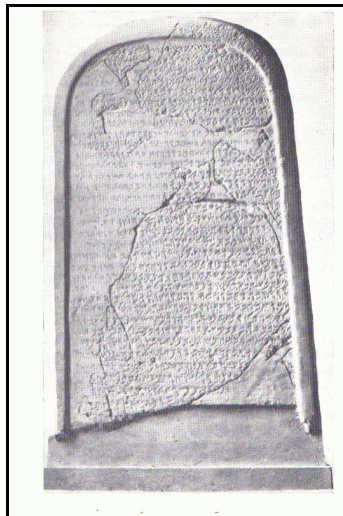


Fig 19 The Mesha (Moabite) Stele
(ca 830 BCE)

The text written in the name of Mesha, the Moabite king, and records his successful campaign against the Israelites. The Moabite language used on this stele closely resembles the Hebrew of the Old Testament.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXTS (ca 2500-700 BCE)

Baly (1987:5), in the introduction to his book on the geography of the Middle East, writes that:

It is the structural patterns and the landforms which have helped us to determine human movement, armies, immigrants, merchants, pilgrims etcetera - as well as the climate, upon which all the natural vegetation and the land use depended, and therefore, of course, the daily life of villages, townspeople and wandering shepherds ...'

Contained within this observation is the reality of the role geographical features play in the lives of peoples. Whether a particular region is fertile or arid, large or small, such features determine the route civilizations will take, hold, lose or share with others. Consequently a fertile area will be an attractive place to inhabit, unless someone else has already had the same idea (cf Map 3). Then conflict, a state of disagreement or argument between peoples, groups or city states, can erupt into confrontations and frightening prospects of war.

Should another migrant group appear, seeking pasture, water or land, 'history' repeats itself. A good example of such confrontations, and its ensuing turmoil, displacement of peoples and land appropriations, can be found in the migratory bands of 'Sea Peoples', and others who invaded the Mediterranean world in ca 1200 BCE. Map 4 is indicative of the ripple effect movements of peoples had on the countries which lay in their path of flight (and conquests), as well as the change in landscape due to the resettlement of people. Hallo & Simpson (1971:119,120) account the fall of Troy (ca 1250 BCE) as the mechanism which propelled this ripple effect movement from the Greek mainland to the rest of the civilized world, since Cilicia, the first to fall, sent its Hurrian population northeast, there to topple the Hittites who, in turn, fled into northern Mesopotamia and so forth until the Near East took on a new aspect with new protagonists to rule the landscape. However, to be kept in mind is the fact that the disaster of Troy was, itself, also as a consequence of circumstances due to the Dorian invasions.

Van de Mierop (2004:359) postulates that additional momentum to these migrations could also have been the result of socio-political systems which suffered from the exploitive character of royal establishments and power bases of military might. Then there are climatic conditions, such as dry years, which bring on droughts, famine and diseases, thus creating havoc on agricultural systems (cf Martinez 1990:420, 421; Neuman & Parpola 1987:161-182). Such patterns of accumulative disasters become the reasons for migrations and the subsequent 'invasions' by people. Inherent to these conditions would be those who had to address these situations, which usually entailed a militaristic solution (Halla et al 1971:49). Thus men and weaponry were organized, whilst elite commanders planned and led their troops to attack diverse enemies. Each of these peoples had their own means and measures of warfare, and was therefore a very direct challenge, and it can be postulated that trained and experienced 'war-warriors' must have been employed, and either succeeded or failed in this competitive war-arena.

From the earliest times inhabitants of regions, which lack certain commodities (wood, metal, stone), have had to resort to trade in order to acquire goods such as building materials, weaponry and so forth. Such enterprises can be accomplished when trade and trade-routes are safeguarded from hostile attacks. There can thus be a regular flow of merchants and their caravans of exotic and luxury goods. Routes which go to far-away places result not only in the exchange of goods, but also of new ideas, whilst in the process knowledge of foreign lands, peoples, strange customs and habits, and of technologies as yet unknown, are acquired. In effect 'new' materials, with all its connotations, can become the catalyst for an escalation towards new perceptions and ways of thinking. Repeated infusions, of new and diverse influences, cast the layers of a civilization into moulds which adjust to fit ranges of expression, be they of political, social, religious or economic nature, and thus 'history' establishes itself (Oppenheim 1964:35).

The invention of bronze, an alloy of tin and copper, is such an example. The outgoing Stone Age (ca 3100 BCE), with its unmalleable material, was replaced by a metal more easily worked into various shapes and objects (Halla et al 1971:29). Tin was a rare material which made its trade journey (cf Map 5) through the land of Elam, into Mesopotamia, then by way of the Khanagh pass to Eshnunna, and finally up to Ashur (cf Dalley 1984:3-6). Because of Eshnunna's strategic position at the narrowest point of convergence of the Euphrates and Tigris, this route became

a bone of contention between Babylonia's king Hammurabi and the Elamite king, which resulted in the defeat of Elam's army, by Hammurabi in 1764 BCE (cf Potts 1999:168-171; Van de Mieroop 2005:40-43, 50-53).

Roads would have been built (as far as possible) within the least difficult terrain and obstacle-ridden areas, in order to accommodate fast travelling. However, as a result of such facilities, they also became routes which heralded the arrival of power-hungry kings and marauding armies (Dorsey 1991:10-12; cf Oren 1982:20, 22; Wagner 1997:40, 41). Two such major routes can be seen along the Mediterranean coast and along the highlands along the Jordan River (cf Map 6). The one which follows the coastline up to Syria and then across the interior to the eastern reaches of Mesopotamia, was the *Via Maris* [Way of the Sea (cf Isaiah 8:23)], whilst the other, the *Via Regis* [the 'King's Highway' (cf Numbers 21:22)] was an inland route, flanked by such peoples as the Edomites, the Moabites and the Ammonites (cf Aharoni & Avi-Jonah 1968:16, 17; Dorsey 1991:50, 57). This was an important trade-route, since it connected the port of Ezion-geber with the cities of the interior of Palestine and, further ahead, connected Tadmor to Mari, from where it became a route serving the southern and northern parts of Mesopotamia.

The internal routes of the Near East, that is, from Syria to Mesopotamia to Elam can be seen as communication lines, which not only facilitated trade, the movement of armies and cultural influences, but they also functioned as transportation for mail/messages. Transmission of information (especially between rulers) was done by special couriers or merchants. Often the written messages would contain false information in order to mislead the enemy (Crown 1974:254, 259). These trade routes, by virtue of their geographical orientated paths, often developed certain characteristics, in tune with their trade or the cities they passed and served (Dalley 1984:3-7; cf 4.2 on the subject of tells).

In similar vein geographical features such as inland lakes and seas, arid deserts and towering mountain ranges, will play a role in the settlement, and survival chances, of a people. A very mountainous land, with small valleys, few rivers and moderate plains, will not only impact on agricultural and trade economics, but become instrumental in the creation of divided areas, and consequently of isolated communities. In comparison shall vast, arid deserts and steppes not only

act as deterrents for large, flourishing settlements, they will also foster an attitude towards life totally different to those living within large and bustling cities. The constraint, which city walls would impose on its inhabitants, would be in contrast to the freedom of the nomad. Rowton (1974:1-4) defines the habitation of such inhospitable land as external nomadism, which means that the dwellers of these harsh areas were not integrated with the state. Hence these peoples (nomads) were virtually independent, and as such their 'attitude' would not be tolerant towards the rules and restrictions of autonomy. In contrast an enclosed nomadism (both steppe and mountains) would constitute an autonomous polity within established states, thus there is a degree of symbioses between nomad and sedentary (settled communities) which, politically, socially and economically would institute contact with the farming communities and the urban authorities Rowton(1974:1-4).

When the geographical feature is one of open plains and large, long rivers, the foundation of civilization will be based on the fact that plains facilitate easy communication and political development. The mind set of its people would lean towards co-operation, and consequently a growth rate in most aspects of human activities (cf Postgate 1992a:3; Van de Mieroop 2004:7-10). Lastly, those areas along a coastline would facilitate navigational trade routes. The inhabitants of a seaport will thus have the extra advantage of reaching lands by means of a sea route. The negative side to this situation is that greedy eyes, in areas far away from port outlets, will try to gain access to these lucrative sources of income by various means of persuasion (cf the Assyrian campaigns). The seafaring Phoenicians (ca 1000 BCE) became the experts in this specific context. In the process they encountered new world cultures, obtained priceless objects, and much gold and great wealth for kings, nobles and themselves (Van de Mieroop 2004:207).

It is therefore within distinctive *geographical structures and patterns* that people are often forced to act, and in the process create a survival repertoire. Naturally there will be a concentration of *social, economic, political and religious factors* located within this repertoire. Society consists of and commits itself to powers of political machinations, social stability, military objectives and economic prosperity, whilst its spiritual wellbeing is ordained by means of religious rites and rituals. Society can acquire these experiences only by being in possession of land, of being interactive (trade), and by practising the freedom of their belief and their social rights. These

experiences often hinged on confrontation or treaty. In his study of Mari as 'democracy's ancient ancestor, Fleming (2004:18,19) uses the Mari cuneiform tablets to highlight the geographical and social issues contained within these records, since they reflect, he states: '...a political interest of one kind or another, touching on the push and pull of kingdoms, towns or tribal groups as they decided matters of war and peace, economic concerns or justice'. This is therefore a window here on group-orientated decision making, an indication of interaction, a phenomenon which probably permeated the existence of the inhabitants of the Near East. Whether this is democracy is a moot point, but it illustrates that geographical neighbours, within this ancient land, were never far apart, and as all neighbours do, they interfere, complain, fight, bring soup, help and aid each other and stand together when the neighbourhood is threatened.

All the abovementioned factors would have been very contributive to, and have had influence on, the existence of the man in the street, but, *much more so on those of the upper echelons*. These 'men of power' (kings, nobles, aristocratic warriors) were the decision makers, leaders and protectors of their immediate surroundings. Their type of neighbours (enemies, allies) would be the measure of their reactions to the realities they had to cope with. Such realities would create a specific ethos, and thus influence their relationship to all spheres of life, be it war, peace, trade, systems of administration and justice (cf Fleming 2004:32,33). Their acts would be according to their place and status within the prevailing circumstances, and consequently they would stake their political (status) claims, make their ritual offers to the gods at the temples, impose law and order and fight their military battles. In exerting these tasks they will expect the unconditional acquiescence of the people, in acknowledgement of their authority and domination (Postgate 1992a:260-263; Van de Mieroop 2004:26,27).

Abovementioned factors demonstrate that geographical contexts play a vital role in the scheme of things. Consequently a better insight, into the emergence of the warrior within a (his) geographical context, entails a more detailed description of the geographical features of the Fertile Crescent, in order to illuminate that endeavour, and hence existence, are closely related.

4.1 The Fertile Crescent

This crescent shaped landmass (cf Map 1) stretches between the Mediterranean and Caspian Seas and Persian Gulf, and ranges from the snowy heights of Iran to the heat of the lowlands of Iraq and Syria, from the rocky coastline of the Mediterranean to the swamps of the Persian shore, and from the forests of Lebanon to the fertile valleys of Israel. Peripheral to this whole area is the vast desert of Arabia, and as such a barrier, during all the past centuries, for an easy passage from east to west and vice versa (Baly 1987:7-9; Oppenheim 1964:35). This particular hindrance is the reason why an 'easy passage' thus followed the 'arc' of the Fertile Crescent. Consequently this 'easy passage' also became the reason why conquering armies came and left, why cities along that route were founded, destroyed and rebuilt time again, and why whole communities could be eliminated, either by wars, famines, plagues or diseases (cf Martinez 1990:418, 429-432, 444). Such a confined area did not allow the space to go anywhere else!

The two main rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, enclosed the vast area of Mesopotamia, and were the life forces of this landmass. The connection of the rivers with the open waters of the Persian Gulf encouraged trade by boat (which was more rapid than the overland routes). Indicative of this method of transport are the many settlements and cities along the river banks (cf Potts 1994:36-38). The loading and offloading of goods, at the quays of these 'ports', would be the economic provision for the city and village dwellers. The organization of such lucrative ventures rested in the hands of the religious (temple priests) and secular authorities (governor), but private enterprise was probably also possible (Crawford 1973:237.238). A shipping contract, dated to ca 1923 BCE (cf COS 3.139), provides a glimpse of trade carried out by various people of degrees of importance and wealth. The main essence of trade is its role it plays in different social contexts. Hence luxury goods for the elite classes, whilst staple goods would be the essentials for the populace who were involved in production or creation of textiles (cf Postgate 1992a:206). The merchants of Assur (ca 1900 BCE) exported tin and textiles to Anatolia, where, at their colony at Kanesh they would sell these goods for silver and gold, and then return to Assur. Bearing in mind that taxes were raised (cf Crawford 1973:238), on goods, it becomes apparent that city states would be contested for as well as vigilantly protected by ranks of authority.

Due to the seasonal spring floods, the soil along the banks of these rivers were frequently enriched by fresh layers of silt, which facilitated the growth of crops and hence farming year after year, which ensured supplies of food. The water courses and canals, which fed this crop-growing soil, would have been under the control of the local authorities (Rowton 1967:267). The increase in population though demanded a higher food production, and soon abuse of water rights appeared where kings of city states, governors and land owners would furrow and then divert the water away in order to irrigate their own lands (Cornelius 1984:53-55). But, water rights was a legal matter. Hammurabi (ca 1790), in his code of laws, ordained the requirements for conservation of water and the punishment in neglect thereof (cf COS 2.131 § 53-56; Rowton 1967:267). Such unauthorised diversion of water gave rise to disputes, often erupting into violent confrontations, and hence needful of the intervention of authority and its (military) enforcing.

The northern and southern plains contrast and vary largely. The south is quite flat, which makes it easy to direct water to the land but, being so flat leaves little to restrain it from changing course easily, a vexing reality the inhabitants had to live with (cf Postgate 1992a:6,7,11). These changes to water supply compelled some to leave and seek other, new pastures and agricultural land, whilst those remaining would have to adapt as fast they could, engineer new water courses, and then defend them, in age old tradition, against those who diverted them!

The southern plain gives out to marshlands (no crops) before reaching the waters of the Persian Gulf. The northern plains are fringed by the Zagros (eastern) and Taurus (northern) mountains and, other than the south, the surface here is mostly broken limestone. This meant that cross canals were extremely impractical to build, and therefore this area was reliant on rain water (a seasonal event which could cause droughts). The settled plains here were thus delimited to the foothills of the Zagros and Taurus ranges (cf Hallo et al 1971:28; Postgate 1992a:6,11,18; Van de Mieroop 2004:7-10). These settled plains, though not as fertile as those in the northern half of Mesopotamia, had its own problems of migrating and invading peoples. The Mesopotamian lowlands were inhabited by Sumerians and Semites, whilst the peoples of Susa and surrounding areas, the Elamites, Gutians and Lulubi of the Zagros mountains, were non-semitic peoples. These semi-nomadic, transhumant 'highlanders' would sweep down from the mountains, raid, destroy and retreat (Potts 1994:91,92,119-121). There was thus a market for warrior leaders and

commanders for the armies of the kings they served.

Going across the landscape of Aram-Syria down to Canaan (Israel) the geographics of these areas are distinguished by marked differences between the north and the extreme south of Israel. Syria itself is often styled as a land which was the 'crossroads of civilization' (Akkermans & Schwartz 2003:2), a definition which strangely echoes Israel's 'point of balance' position (cf Baly 1987:7; Map 7). Syria manifests, by means of her rainfall-farming plains, a counterpoint to the irrigated alluvial plains of the south of Mesopotamia and Anatolia's northern plateau (cf Map 3). She therefore tended to support larger population groups, as opposed to Canaan / Israel (cf Akkermans & Schwartz 2003:2-4). Syria was furthermore defined by mountains: to the north (the Amanus), the west (the Ansariyah), the east (Zawiyah) and the south (the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon), all of them making ready access to the Mediterranean Sea only possible via gaps through these ranges, the Homs being an example. However, Syria was the shortest route which kings of Mesopotamian empires could take to reach the Mediterranean Sea. Syria was thus a gateway to Israel and to Egypt. Here merchants and armies plied their trades of prosperity and death.

The narrow strip of land adjacent to the Mediterranean, Phoenicia, was humid and consisted of wooded areas of cedar trees, a commodity highly prized and greedily eyed by marginal lands surrounding this part of Syria. Further south the mountains, western seaboard ports and the few fertile valleys of the interior of Canaan, contrasts with the drier, semi desert (Negeb) conditions of the south (cf Arad). These landscapes (Syria, Canaan, Israel) were geographically situated at points of contacts, be it as travel routes for merchants, caravan stops or military armies. Hence groups passed by either peacefully or else in warlike guise. Abovementioned scenario makes it easy to grasp why this ancient landmass became the home of many various civilisations at different times. It was a matter of opportunities for conquest, a seeking for productive land, a through-way for migratory groups of people and last but not least, a place for refugees, whether within the dense reed lands in the south of Mesopotamia (cf Postgate 1992a:7), or the crags and crannies of the Judean mountain range (cf Baly 1987:51, 52).

It is also to be remembered that desert nomads were a part of the Syrian desert which runs alongside the western banks of the Euphrates, and that they did not cultivate land, but herded

flocks of sheep and goats. These flocks were their livelihood, and as such they needed grazing land for their animals (cf Rowton 1974:3; Van de Mieroop 2004:82-85). The seasonal migrations of nomads, from the western steppes into Mesopotamia, were often accompanied by raids. These raiders tended to view agricultural work as heavy toil (cleaning the land, planting, reaping, canal building). Often though, hunger was the drive towards such marauding (Veenker 2002:151, 52). Although agreements were reached and certain areas apportioned for use by the nomads, confrontations were not ruled out, and much of the political history (and ensuing military implications) of Mesopotamia was influenced by the role the nomad played (cf Postgate 1992a:6; Potts 1994:119-120, 133-135, 141).

Following on and as enhancement of geographical influences, mention must be made of the fact that people chose and settled at specific locations in order to survive economically and peacefully. The special quality which this 'basis' has, is the chance to read a more comprehensive story, additionally, to those related to the usual archaeological, biblical and extra-biblical sources. Such a source is that very visible, very tangible and practical commodity called, the *TELL*. I owe William G Dever this recognition after reading his article, 'The Tell: Microcosm of the cultural process' (1996a). I realized the immense role the actual, physical 'Tell' played as a determinative for the existence of cities which were built, and destroyed, in stratigraphically deposited layer by layer, as evidence of man's birth, life and demise.

The initial choice of a site indicates the needs the inhabitants had, whether economically, politically, religiously or militarily. This solid mass of earthy evidence will mirror the subsequent events that befell them and their reactions to those events (Scheepers 1987:5). I shall therefore devote some time to explain the significance of *TELLS*. In the process it will become clear that cities were founded for certain reasons, and thus will portray certain characteristics which will aid in an assessment of the 'life' of that city, its rulers, military corps, merchants and inhabitants. The choice of a town or city's position set the pattern for its history (Schneider 2001:63).

4.2 The Tell: a contextual basis towards interpretation

The phenomenon called *TELL* is something which finds itself predominantly in the Near East.

Both the words *tell* and *khirbet* are Arabic words. The tell refers to a mound which was continuously resettled, whilst *khirbet* denotes a short occupation only - not enough destructions had occurred in order for it to become a tell (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:12). Basically thus the term has a meaning of 'ruin heap'. According to the country where these heaps are located, the word is *tepe* (Iran) and *höyük* (Turkey). A tell is a structure which is easily identifiable, since it is an artificial hill with a flat top and relatively steep slopes. These slopes are the results of continuous human occupation of the same area, because successive generations built on top of the previous (destroyed) layer. Figures 20 and 21 are good examples of the various differences in shape, size and height which tells can attain. These distinctions indicate the way the city grew and expanded: it portrays distinctive features the city had (an administrative complex, or large temple) and by its size tell the story of having been destroyed and occupied again. The artificial shape of this hill will therefore contrast sharply with the natural hills in the vicinity, which will have more rounded tops and gentler slopes (Scheepers 1987:3).

But, when we seriously think about, and ask : "What is a Tell"?, we find that the answer is not just a simple matter of small or big cities built on top of each other, with their only considerations those of good water supply and an easily defensible position. Dever (1996a:38) points out that not enough significance emerges as to the realities of tells, and that tentative, overall typology of tells could be based on their size and shape, but should also be based on factors such as geographical position, social-economic organization, political and defensive structures and requirements, as well as ideology in the broadest sense, including religion. Thus, if all these requirements are met, it becomes easier to understand the *reality and history of the tell*.

Hence the significance of the Tell, as a 'Microcosm of the cultural process'(1996a:37), is infinitely true, since the city could not have been anything less than the place of daily existence, measured by the needs and purposes of every man, woman and child, irrespective of their wealth or social rank. Once the inhabitants had settled, they would start to embellish on any available commodities such as water availability, abundance of building material and wood. Those commodities which fall short, would either be manufactured or bought from passing traders, nearby villages or farm sites. Unavailable goods could also be acquired by the lucrative exercise of looting, booty and tribute. The cities' physical existence would have enforced it to become

imbued with specific connotations, such as, ‘place of political impact’ (cf Ur) or, ‘place of military strength’(cf Hazor), whilst some would have been ‘place of religious significance’(cf Jerusalem) or even one of ‘good economics and trade’ (cf Ebla). These projections, of the Tell *itself*, become archaeological ‘remains’, which forces us to look for signs and indications of the choices and purposes of the people who had lived there. We can move beyond ‘narrative’ history, and towards an understanding rather of the social, political and cultural dimensions which were at play during the various phases of the tells’ existence (Dever 1996a:42).

The uniqueness of a city, thus, did not only lie in its water supply or the height of its walls, but is grounded in other factors which contributed to its specific progress, to ultimately reach a specific result. To illustrate this uniqueness, Dever (1996a:39) tabulated this ‘typology of tells’ into sixteen different types, with each one given a designation of ‘essential characteristics’. I am now going to make use of this tabulation, to indicate how it becomes applicable to various tells (cities) in the Fertile Crescent. In the process it will become obvious why some cities became prosperous and flourishing capital cities, ruled by a king (or governor), and a class of wealthy elite. Similarly some cities will project a role as military outposts, and therefore postulate military connotations such as fighting men, weaponry and commanders (generals).

According to Dever (1996a), certain types and characteristics apply. The cities named in the examples list, encompasses most of the more well known cities / city states. The tabulation will indicate that many of these cities fit ‘essential characteristics’, albeit in some cases to a lesser or greater degree, whilst not one but several characteristics could fit any one city at a time.

Type of Tell	Characteristics of Tell	Examples of cities
1) Central Place or Hub	Good agricultural area, centre location, crossroads, defensible, mixed economy, city or city state.	Megiddo, Hazor , Ur, Lagash, Damascus, Ashur, Babylon Mari, Nineveh
2) Middle Tier or Node	Good agricultural area, good communication,	Beth Shemesh, Gezer, Hazor, Megiddo, Mari, Ebla
3) Satellite	Agricultural potential, hinterland, fair communication, village or hamlet.	Tel Masos, Nimrud, Khorsabad

4) Marginal Zone	Semi-arid, isolated, specialized economy, usually small, but could be large	Arad, Kadesh-Barnea
5) Industrial	Access to raw materials, good communications, highly specialized.	En-Gedi
6) Buffer Zone	Natural region, border location. Crossroads, mixed culture.	Arad, Gezer, Hazor
7) International Border	Major natural border, strategic, defensible, control of trade, may be politically subsidized	Hazor, Qadesh
8) Trade Routes	Major natural routes, strategic defensive location	Megiddo, Hazor, Damascus, Ur, Ashur, Mari, Babylon Alalakh, Ebla, Eshnunna
9) Water Supply	Near spring or water courses.	Jerusalem, Aphek, Mari, Ur
10) Port	Fresh water, seaport, trade a major factor, mixed cultures.	Acco, Dor, Ugarit, Byblos, Ur
11) Fort	International or regional border, primarily defensive, relatively isolated, may be small tell.	Azekah, Kadesh- Barnea, Arad
12) Religious Centre	Ideology and cult factors, traditional, long lived.	Jerusalem, Bethel, Dan, Ashur Nineveh, Ur
13) Shrine	Regional cult centre, may have briefer history	Shiloh, Bethel
14) Political Capital	Deliberately chosen, politics dominant, focus on national life.	Jerusalem, Ashur, Babylon Ur, Mari
15) Regional, Administrative Centre	Subordinate to national capital, evidence of deliberate dwelling.	Beersheba, Lachish
16) Symbolic Site	Makes a statement, likely a holding of elite or royalty	Jerusalem, Nineveh, Babylon Ramat Rahel

A more descriptive example of both Megiddo and of Ur shall suffice:

MEGIDDO (situated in the Jezreel valley) fits a whole number of the characteristics of a specific tell. The first walled settlement occurred in the Early Bronze Age (ca 2400-2000 BCE), and its inhabitants probably chose this site because of its abundant water supply, fertile agricultural hinterland and close trade contact with neighbouring states such as Syria and Egypt. Given this

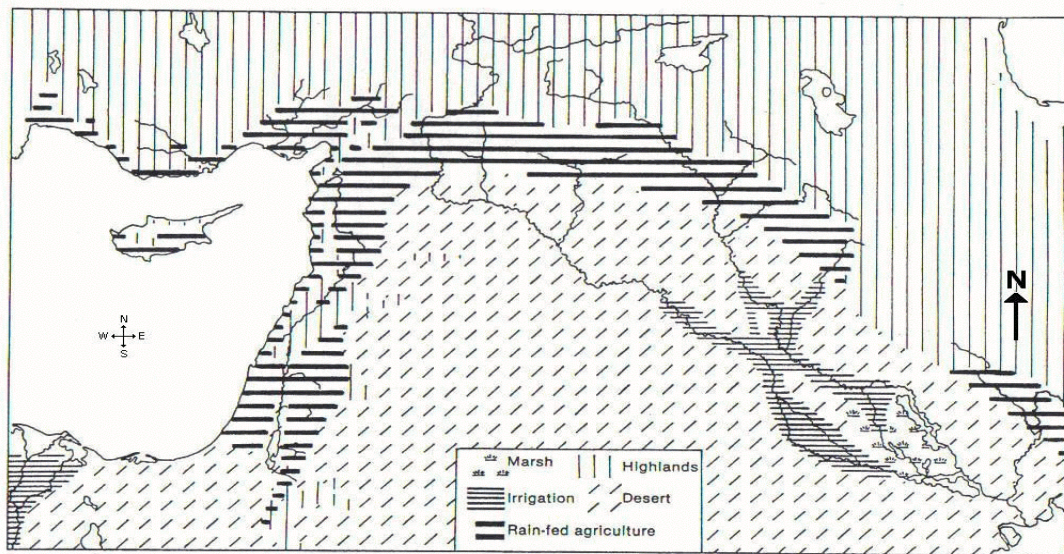
advantageous position, it was inevitable that confrontations would occur, as per example the Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak I (ca 945-924 BCE) who invaded Judah and Israel. The general view has been that Megiddo was destroyed by Shishak. However, a fragment of a stele typical of stelae monarchs erected when they had successfully campaigned against a ruler and his city, was found at Megiddo. The existence of this stele, which could have been of no use if there was no city and no one to see it, allows Ussishkin (1990:73) to state that such evidence is a clear-cut indication that the city continued to exist as an organized settlement following Shishak's conquest. This indicates the importance attached to a city such as Megiddo, and that Shishak did not allow its full destruction, due to its *inherent characteristics* (strategic, agricultural land, water supply, trade). Megiddo's history would thus always reflect periods of peace or wars, and as such would have served its rulers, defenders and ordinary citizens (cf De Vries 1997:215-222).

Ur (in the extreme southeast of Mesopotamia) dates back to ca 5500 BCE. Excavations have shown that occupation at this site was continuous until the Greek period ca 323 BCE, when the shifting of the Euphrates river had cut a new channel course to the East, thus bringing the city into decline. The enduring existence of Ur was due to her access to navigational travel, either via the Euphrates, or the Persian Gulf. Hence she became wealthy and powerful as a harbor city, a trade centre and a capital city. This empowered her with the necessary administrative capacities in order to uphold a diverse population, to erect temples and to build impressive palaces. Hence she could maintain a strong contingent of military expertise, in order to retain independence and dominion over neighbouring city states (cf De Vries 1997:38-42).

Abovementioned examples illustrate how, by means of its various 'characteristics', a tell becomes an 'archaeological artifact' which can aid in a reconstruction of the tell and its history.

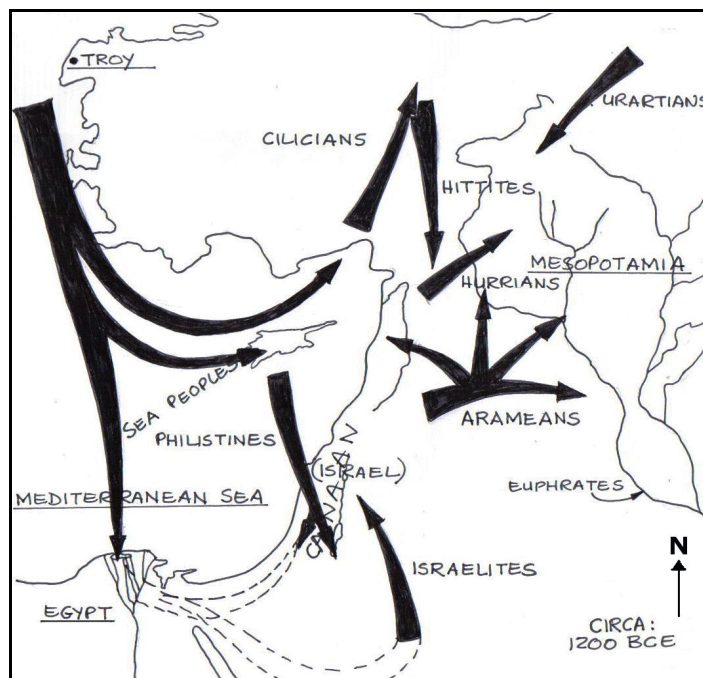
Since my theme of warriors is based not only on archaeological evidence and its interpretations, but also encompasses an historical background, a very short chapter 5, on historical perceptions and considerations shall be introduced. In chapters six to ten, the use of archaeological and historical material shall be employed in order to find the context of the times and thus the reasons for the wars that were fought and the necessity of the warrior (military incentives), to bring peace or destruction. Due to their linguistic and cultural similarities (cf Map 8; Van de Mieroop 2004:49,50) some of the peoples can be seen as belonging together in the scheme of things (cf

Canaanites, Israelites), whereas others are more distinct, as they constituted successful dynasties and empires (Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians). Our knowledge of the traditional histories of this diverse geographical scenario, obliges us to recount these cultures by means of the fall and rise of dynasties, since the source material we have are indicative of periods of strong centralized control, with periods of turmoil (Postgate 1992a:6).



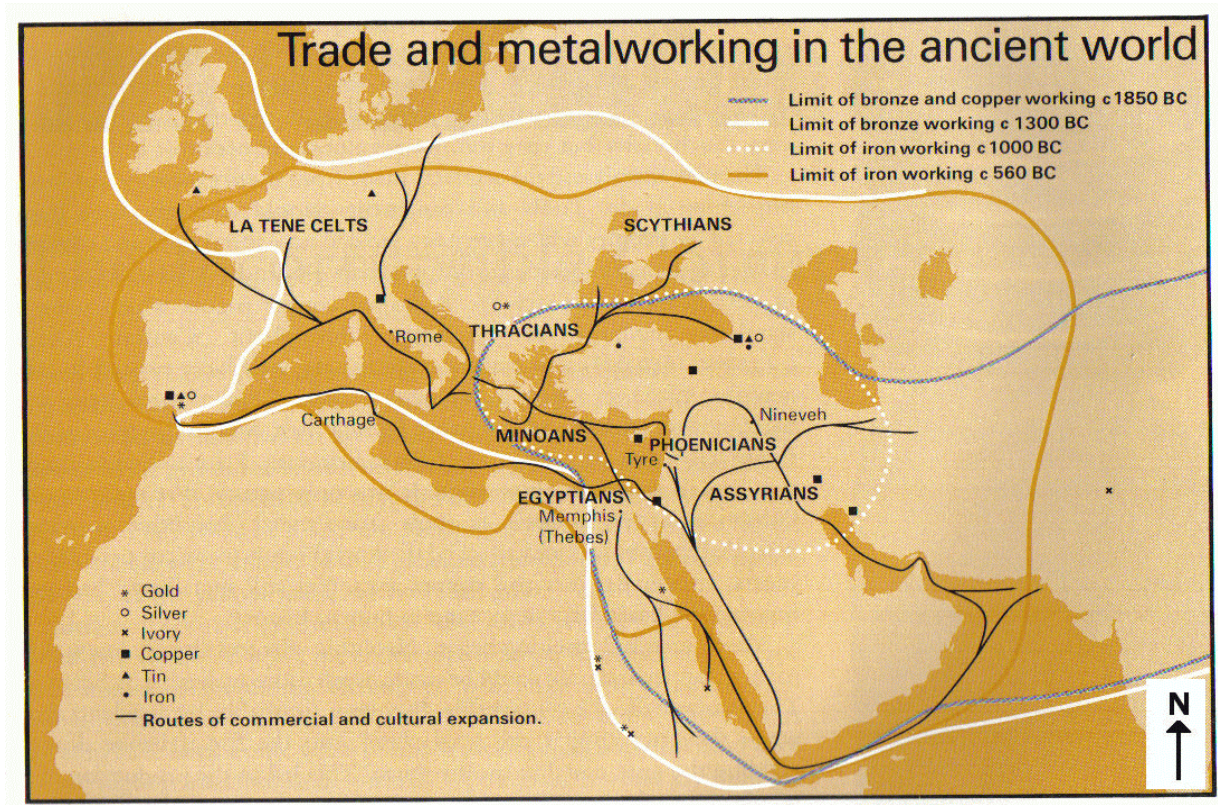
Map 3. The Fertile Crescent: Geographic and climatic conditions.

The map clearly shows how climatic conditions can determine the course of survival habitation.



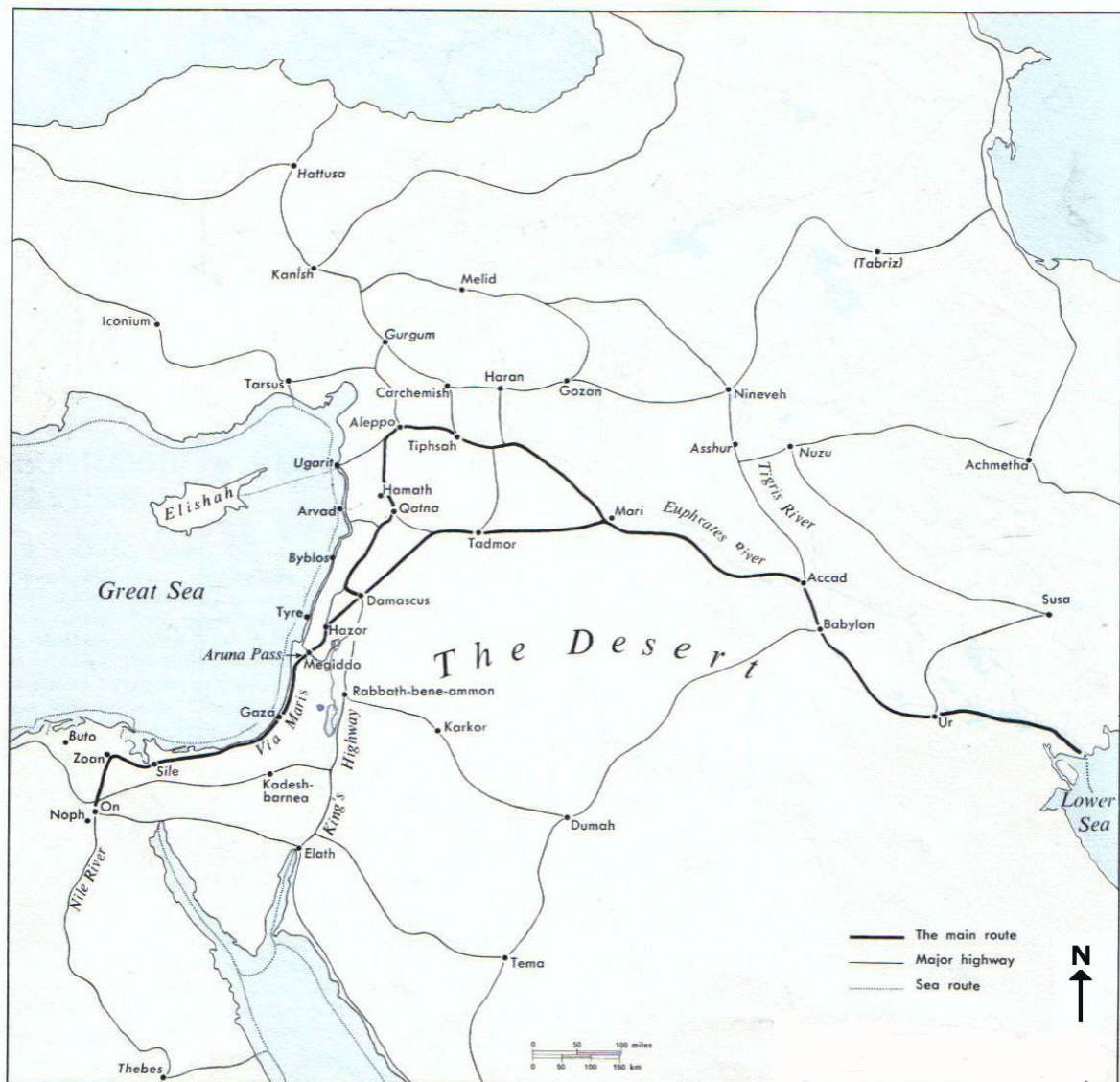
Map 4. The fall of Troy - Ripple effects
(ca 1250 BCE)

The fall of this city to the Mycenaeans set in place the turmoil and chaos which followed, and spread, when the Dorians invaded Mycenaea (Greece) in the 12th century. Destruction, raids and mass migrations ensued.



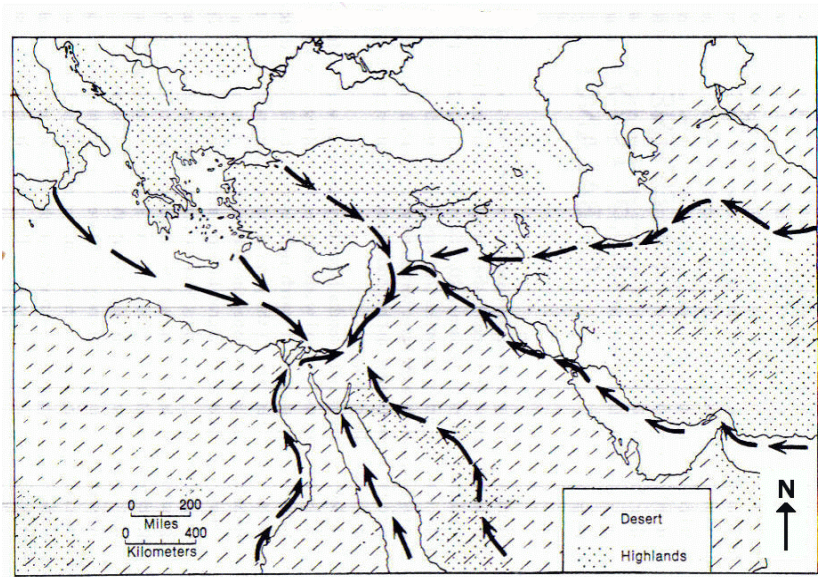
Map 5. Extend of trade and metalwork
(ca 1850-560 BCE)

The routes indicate not only the wide area in which trade took place, but also the involvement of both land and sea as a means of transport for these ventures.



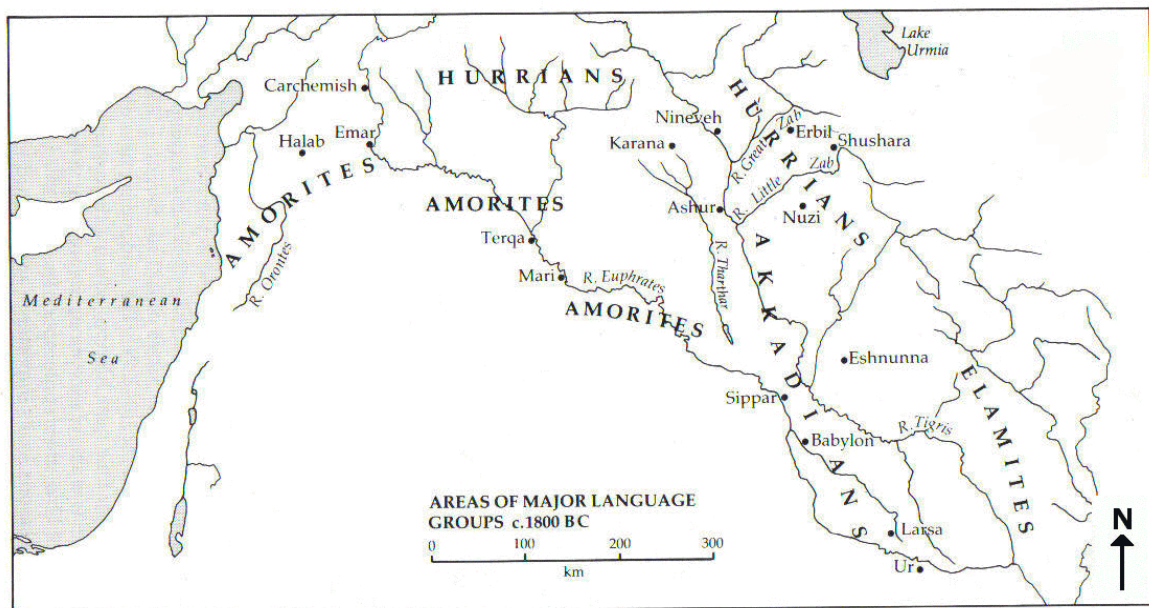
Map 6. International routes in the Ancient East

The great Arabian desert was one of the determinatives in the emergence of trade routes. Hence the route from Egypt (the Mediterranean Sea) to Mesopotamia (the Persian Gulf), had no other option but to follow the arc of the Fertile Crescent.



Map 7. Israel - The point of balance

Due to her geographic position Israel was a “natural” mid station for trade from east to west and from west to east. Naturally these would also be routes armies would follow, either to arrive at Seaports or to annex lands.



Map 8. Languages map

The diversity of the ethnic groups as shown here did not hinder in the use of a common language, namely Akkadian.

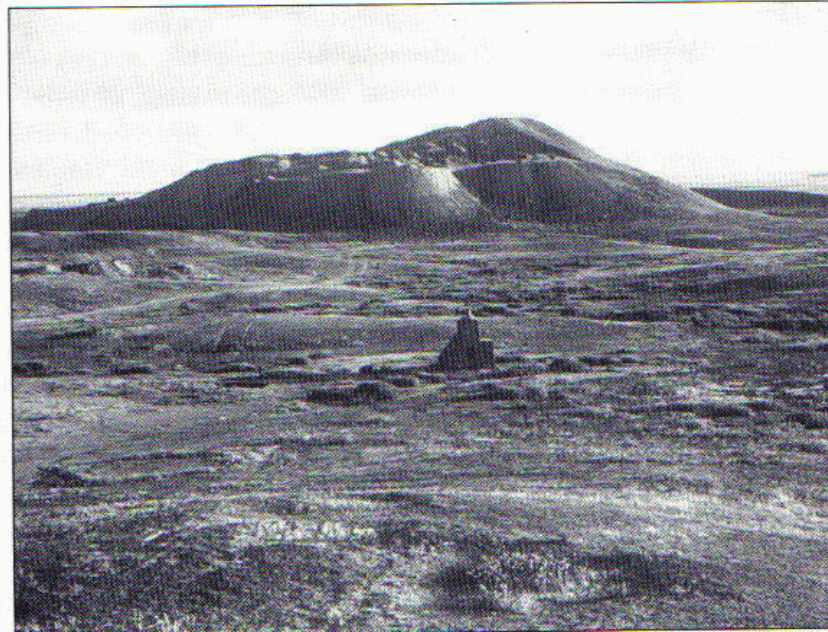


Fig 20 Tell Karana

The contour of the temple mound visible, which makes this tell not one of table-top flatness.



Fig 21 Tel es Sa'idiyeh

A double mound. Very large and with a table-top flatness.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 HISTORICAL CONTEXTS AND INTERPRETATION

1) For practical purposes history is limited to that which is recorded in written documents. Structural and artistic remains can highlight the textual evidence, but, without the written text these objects are mute (Halla & Simpson 1971:4, 5). However, within visual presentations such as, for instance, on seal-amulets where gods, goddesses and constellations are portrayed, a story is told, if one follows the history of the theme, and knows the history of the constellations. Here then single elements and the understanding of constellations help with the interpretation, since such information complements each other (cf Keel 1992:43).

2) The historian is more than a chronicler, since he has to understand and to interpret the past. In fact the historian has no choice but to interpret because historical data is far too numerous to be reconstructed. Consequently he must be selective and focus on significant data and causal relationships (Miller 1987:18, 19).

3) The account of Saul's elevation to kingship is, to the critically minded, unconvincing since all the 'accounts' do not agree with each other. Yet, the Greek historian Herodotus (ca 484 BCE) frequently related dissimilar renderings of the same event, because 'other' narrators each told the story in different ways (Licht 1984:107, 108).

Due to my specialized investigation of the warrior, I have to concentrate on historical factors which will pertain to that specific theme. Consequently I shall use aspects of the history of the areas in question (for example, Sumer, Akkad, and so forth), in order to locate the impact *that* history had on the emergence, or existence of *military affairs* and its connection to the world views of its kings and his warrior-class men of authority. By application, of the three perspectives as mentioned above, I shall attempt to reflect the sentiments that history should be taken seriously, but not to the detriment of getting to the bottom of history itself. By that is meant that:

1) A historical context which is not bound by the text alone, but one where non-textual evidence is used as illuminating information. Therefore archaeological discoveries, especially cuneiform texts, will not be used to get to the 'bottom of things', but rather to give an image of a world which we can never fully understand, but one which we can tentatively reconstruct in order to

enter into that far away and long gone world.

- 2) Interpretation should be done only after all causal relationships had been taken into account.
- 3) Different accounts be compared and contrasted, to get a wider platform to work from.

Traditionally historians have focussed their attention on the political and 'royal' affairs as presented by the written records, since these sources inevitably concentrated on such matters as a whole. There is, however, an awareness that other factors also contributed to a history of a region and its inhabitants. Consequently we find further development in various specialized branches of historical awareness, such as an intellectual history, a history of warfare, history of the arts, and so forth (Miller 1987:12).

The history of the Near East is the history of its geography, its divergent populations and its relations with outside factors (neighbours, enemies, invaders, nomads). Within this history the main role players are those who made the decisions, who implemented them and who, in the process, changed history into phase after phase of peace or conflict. It is not my purpose to present the minutiae of an areas' history, but rather to locate the warrior within aspects of those past social situations. A detailed examination of these aspects can emphasize the role the military dimension, its kingly actors, and the men around the king, played towards their perceptions of war and its connotations. Licht (1984:120) observes that one does not describe court politics in detail, unless one needs the matter for some special plea or moralizing!

Sumer is regarded as the 'first' civilization (cf Kramer 1963:5) and hence may be considered the 'father' of the Fertile Crescent. Consequently one can say that the peoples surrounding Sumer were, due to similarities, as well as dissimilarities, internationally interrelated. The geographical restrictions, with its relatively short distances between cities or states, the overlapping kingdoms and empires, and human contact by means of trade, war, treaties and marriage alliances, made it near impossible for the inhabitants *not to* have been cognizant of each other.

Of great significance is the impact Empires, as founded intermittently by Akkad, Babylon, Hatti, Assyria, and so forth had on the history of the people within this geographical sphere.

These empires often engulfed the Syrian territory, and beyond its borders, to effect a political coherence which involved its city-states. Knit together by economic degrees of integration, all of the geographical sections of the Near East were, by means of correspondence re military allegiances, trade relations, social interactions and political affiliations, never in isolation to the empire and to each other (Van de Mieroop 2004:122-125).

The Mesopotamian enclave is well documented by means of archaeological discoveries (including the archives of cuneiform documents) as opposed to the Israelite scene, which is found somewhat wanting, and which comes into its own largely by means of Assyrian inscriptions, the Biblical text and diverse artifacts (cf Chapter Three). The historical (religious) context of Israel did not allow monuments to be erected to their kings, since the Israelites considered God as their legitimate king. This hampers certain aspects of the historical layout of that land and its people. But even a cursory reading, of the biblical texts, project an image of warfare as a continuing experience in the lives of the ancient Israelites. Within their nomadic tradition though, oral transmission must have kept interests in ancestral customs and usages alive. Bright (1981:70,71) postulates that whereas oral transmissions have tendencies to stereotype material, to shape, regroup and sift it to conventional forms, it has a tenacious grip, allowing strong feelings for clan and cult to survive.

In order to get a perspective on the historical background of the Fertile Crescent, we find ourselves in the fortunate position to be able to make use of the cuneiform texts which were discovered at Mari, Ebla, Ugarit, Assur, Nuzi, and many others. These are written documents, correspondence between various people, all in their related positions of authority. It is mostly by means of these letters that we can find some connection, since they reflect the daily, mundane activities of the population, which we can relate to, such as buying and selling, marriage alliances, court cases and so forth. They also provide evidence of many troop movements, the political interactions which often preceded these military confrontations and the power plays which ensued there from.

5.1 The Fertile Crescent: An exercise in social interrelationships

The period succeeding Mesopotamia's Early Dynasty, is named after the first successful attempt by a leader to centralize power, that is, the Empire of Akkad (ca 2340-2250 BCE). This power was a mechanism which sought to bring the various cities, and their inter rivalry, under the permanent control of one dynasty of rulers, starting with the founder of this dynasty, Sargon I, who undertook expeditions to the west and the north, and then campaigned against powerful states such as Mari and Ebla (cf Kuhrt 1997:44,49). Throughout the reigns of the Agade monarchs, the role of the king was one of a warrior and his triumphant conquests, with large consignments of booty being distributed to temples, favourite subjects and family members, since he was the creator and controller of this wealth, by means of his military victories (cf Kuhrt 1997:55). This extensive political control, military display of power and consolidation thereof with favours issued to those who became the king's men, also became the *pattern of history*, for the period ca 2000-800 BCE, the period I wish to investigate.

If the decades, after the end of the 'First Empire', are put onto an abbreviated list of *approximate dates and events*, the following startling and illuminating picture emerges. If read in conjunction with Map 9, it becomes obvious how the geographical restrictions, within the landscape, became a political victim to the expansionist policies of those rulers who chose to ignore these boundaries in their quest for territories by means of military campaigns. (All dates are BCE)

- ca 2250 Agade empire ends
- ca 2230 Gutian conquests (interregnum)
- ca 2113 Ur Nammu conquests (Ur III Dynasty)
- ca 2017- 1750 Conquests by Amorites (Isin, Larsa, Mari)
- ca 1750 Hammurabi's conquests
- ca 1600 Hittite conquests
- ca 1600 Hyksos in Egypt
- ca 1590-1150 Kassite Dynasty
- ca 1500 Assyria vassal of Mitanni
- ca 1470 Egypt defeats Canaan/Syria

ca 1470-1200 The (Egyptian) Amarna period
 ca 1380-1208 Assyrian overthrow of Mittani
 ca 1225 Tukulti-Ninurta I conquers Babylon
 ca 1200 Invasion by 'Sea Peoples'
 ca 1200 Egypt departs Canaan
 ca 1180 End of Hittite kingdom
 ca 1100 Babylonians defeat Elamites
 ca 1000 Israelites against Canaanites
 ca 925 Pharaoh Shishak campaigns in Israel
 ca 900 Assyrian conquests

Therefore the peaceful periods, in above list, were at a premium! That which is clear is the repetitive pattern of conquest, rule and defeat, and then a renewal of that same sequence, the only difference being a new ruler, who, by means of political centrality, military leadership and *control of a well-trained and well-armed army*, imposed his dominion on lands he had conquered. Grosby (1997:2.3) defines abovementioned situation as one where boundaries of a nation, which are fixed and thus fairly stable, contrasts with one of an empire where boundaries are in flux, and where its many territories and many different peoples become the match which lights the fire. In such circumstances additional factors, such as the raiding and marauding excursions of nomads into the realms of empires, famine due to sieges of cities, unfavourable weather conditions, and the continuous *marching and deployment of troops* become the proverbial extra fuel on the fire.

The vast libraries of cuneiform texts reflect the administrative and economic aspects of the running of the realm but, many of these detail the deployment of troops, requesting them to be sent, urgently, to areas of rebellious confrontation, in order to prevent the possible outbreak of war. These military letters also reflect the role usurpers played in the fomentation of war.

1. Puzur-Numushda, governor of Kazillu writes to king Ibbi-Sin of Ur (ca 2029 BCE), '... the land trembles ... Ishbi-Erra (an usurper) goes everywhere at the head of his troops' (quoted by Michalowski 2006:80-81).

2. A letter from general Yassi-Dagan to Zimri-Lim not only relates the intrigues and scheming

of the other kings ‘... the allied kings and the whole land have become prejudiced against my lord ...’, but also writes that ‘...(he) will send a message to Hammurabi (of Babylon) and additional troops will come up from the man of Babylon’ (quoted by Van Koppen 2006:122-124).

3. A letter from Hammi-istamar to Zimri-Lim: ‘My lord sent me a message All the troops are assembled ... may your god break the weapon of the Elamites’ (quote by Van Koppen 2006:126).

4. A letter from king Ammisaduqa of Babylon (1646-1626 BCE) to his official, Marduk-musallim, warns him about marauding groups of Kassites and instructs him to guard the city walls (cf Van Koppen 2006:131-132).

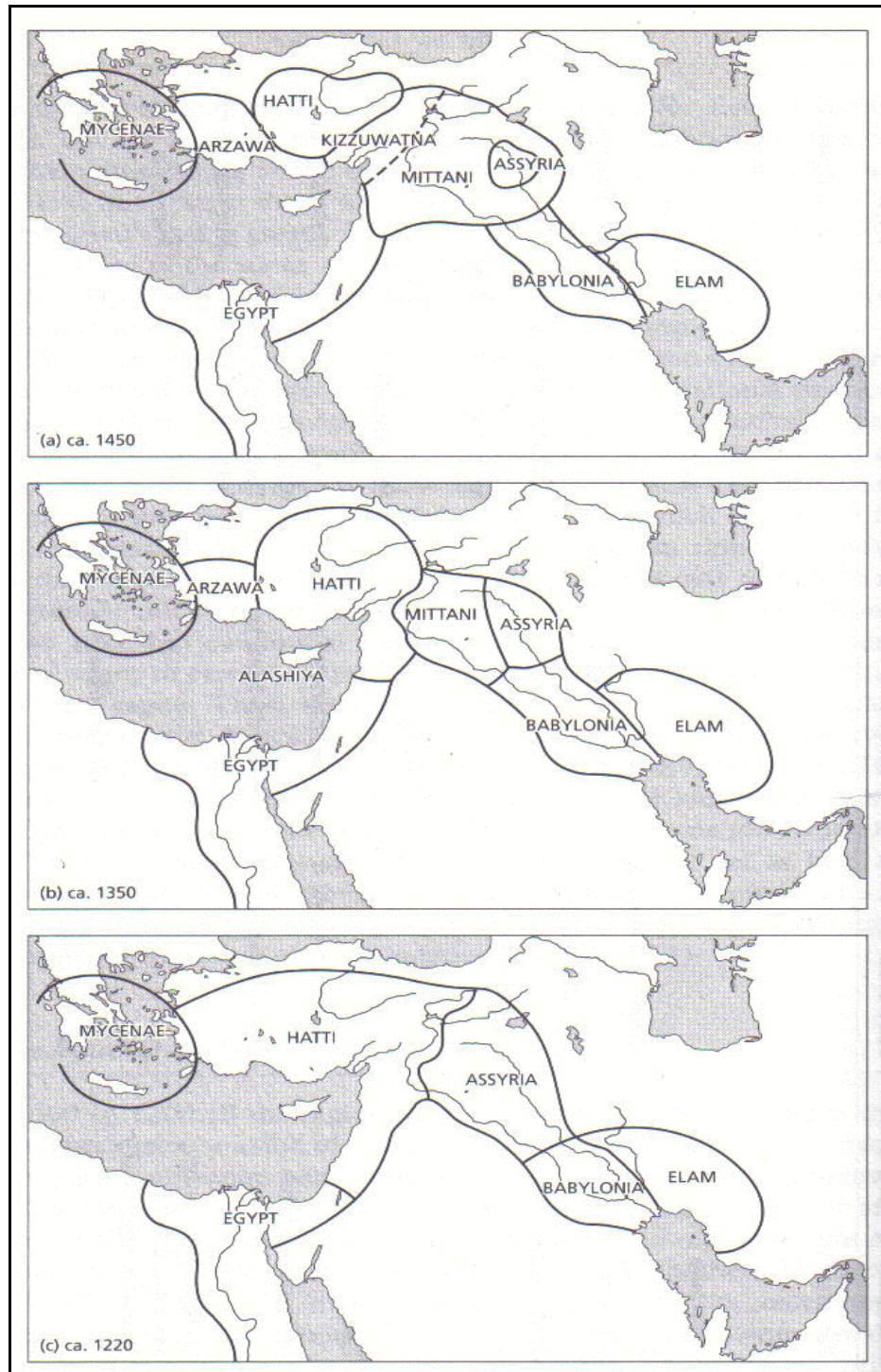
5. Tukulti-Ninurta I of Assyria responds to a complaint, by the Hittite king, Tudhaliya IV, about skirmishes and raiding by Assyrian troops. The Assyrian king though assures his ‘brother’ that nothing of the sort had happened. The form of address ‘brother’ indicates that a monarch views another monarch as of equal status, which in this particular relationship rather lacking, since these two kings were more antagonistic than amicable towards each other (cf Morgan 2006:152,153).

The use of the term ‘brother’ found full expression from the late sixteenth to the twelfth BCE, a span of time which included the Amarna period. The five areas, which were ruled by an enclave of ‘brotherhood’ kings who each saw himself as ‘Great King’, were Mitanni, Babylonia, Hatti, Assyria and Egypt (Cohen & Westbrook 2000:6,7; cf Campbell 1960:5,6). These powers believed themselves to be of equal status, and hence the term ‘brother’. Their relationships hinged on reciprocal treaties, marriage alliances, mutual economic interests and, the assurance that war between themselves were not on the cards. The letters of correspondence though, especially the Amarna ones, indicate that war was never far away, since vassal states obviously were not content to remain in submissive positions. One of Egypt’s vassals, Aziru of Amurru in the north, played a double game of placating the Egyptian authorities with promises of good behaviour but, in the meantime he negotiated with the Hittites for restoration of his kingdom (cf Cohen & Westbrook 2000:8; Campbell 1960:15).

The whole Mesopotamian context, during the plus minus 1300 years from ca 2200-900 BCE, was one which had peaceful periods, but the shifting of alliances, the breaking of treaties, the constant campaigns against rebellious vassals and the sheer lust for power, which had been founded on a solid Sargonic foundation, was the actual reality of that landscape.

The following letter, written during the Mari period ca 1760 BCE, is from one of Zimri-Lim's officials, and reflects the inter-political scene during the reign of this king (a reflection too of later kingdoms and their rulers). It illustrates the delicate balance of alliances which could lead to sudden and precarious explosions of tempers and, the military attacks of expansions of territories. This well known letter is crucial in illustrating the powers of the times and how relationships between these royal powers operated, and often did not operate at all (cf Kuhrt 1997:98). The letter reads: 'There is no king who is strong enough by himself: 10 or 15 kings follow Hammurabi of Babylon, as many follow Rim Sim of Larsa, Ipalpi'el of Eshunna and Amutpi'el of Qatna, while 20 kings follow Yarim-Lim of Yamhad' (quoted by Kuhrt 1997:98).

It is within the greater picture that the lesser finds itself. Therefore, as was done regarding the geographic context, I shall now more fully locate the warrior within an historical context. This exploration shall be concise, with an overview of the military-warrior participation. The full investigation of the warrior, in all its aspects of status, relationships to the king, and so forth, shall then be presented in Chapter Eleven. Due to the wide expanse of the Fertile Crescent, my concentration will be on the Mesopotamian and Israelite context, whilst the landscape and peoples of the Levant (Canaan, Phoenicia) and Egypt shall be used as "background" references only.



Map 9 The recurring change of political systems
(ca 1800 - 1000 BCE)

This period saw cycles of creation and fall of centralized states.

CHAPTER SIX

6 LOCATING THE WARRIOR - THE SUMERIAN AND AKKADIAN CONTEXT

A **Warrior**, by definition, is the difference between the man who has a background based on a lifelong, trained ability to fight and to wage war, and the 'man in the street' who only participates, with lesser ability, spasmodically. This distinction was especially applicable in the past (ages) due to the immense power the king exercised over his domain and his people. These were not technically orientated times with machines in place. The workforces in place were the people who worked in the fields and the artists who produced the goods for daily use. The man trained for war, with his elevated position in society, was not the one who stooped to manual work.

A **Class**, by definition, is the difference between groups of people who, due to a background, based on wealth, influential friends and property, acquire social, political, economical and military power. Those *sans* these social requirements, generate a posture of submission and hence become a 'lesser' group. A **warrior class**, especially in ancient times, can thus be postulated by means of such definitions. Within the Mesopotamian enclave this progression to a special class of men came as a result of the establishment of cities.

6.1 Sumer and its city states (ca 3000- 2000 BCE)

Sumer flourished along the banks of the lower Tigris and Euphrates rivers (cf Map 10) ca 3500 BCE. The Sumerians' diversion, of the river's waters to irrigate their fields of grain, enabled them to produce sustenance for themselves as well as a surplus. This surplus was used to nurture and sustain city states, such as Uruk, Ur, Lagash, Umma, etcetera. The first of these city states was Uruk, a city which was to become the proto-type for other cities within the Fertile Crescent. By ca 2700 BCE Uruk was, according to the Epic of Gilgamesh, 'ramparted Uruk' (ANET p96) and may be a sign of the troubled times. Dalley (1995:413) suggests that at this early period, some walls may have been built for special reasons, such as to keep cattle and sheep safe within the walls, or as barricades against floods. However it can be projected that high and strong walls implied wealth and power, and that greedy eyes were ever present.

City states would either align themselves against each other, or else wrest supremacy away from each other, such as Uruk from Kish, Ur from Uruk, and so forth, until ca 2500 BCE, when the strongest cities were Lagash and Umma. King Eanatum of Lagash commemorated his victory over Umma (ca 2450 BCE), a conquest that is depicted on the Stele of the Vultures (cf Figures 1a, 13a). His power play was short lived though, when Lugalzagesi, ruler of Umma (ca 2360), invaded Lagash, burnt it and slaughtered its citizens. The actions and counteractions of these rulers (kings) of the cities provide a unique illustration of the hegemony a powerful and ambitious Sumerian ruler might attempt to establish in the east (Potts 1994:94). The city states, of the geographical landscape of Sumer, became an area of almost constant confrontation amongst themselves. Subsequently these continuous conflicts, due to squabbles over water supplies (cf Cornelius 1984:53-55; Rowton 1967:268 ff), the diminishing fertility of the land (cf Larsen 1975:43), and hence less production of food, provided an opportunity for conquest by those around the perimeters of Sumer. The last of the Sumerian rulers, Lugalzagesi, was conquered by Sargon the Great (ca 2334-2279 BCE) the initiator of the Akkadian dynasty. Lugalzagesi was led, in a neckstock, to the temple of Enlil. This display of the subjugation of a person, whether in a neck-stock or by a rope-ring (cf Figures 14b, 14c), was a common practice found in the aftermath of a battle (cf COS 2.89).

6.1.1 Economic and social life. In an article on the economics of Sumer, Lamberg-Karlovsky (1976:59) observes the following:

‘A consideration of Sumerian economy reminds us that there are four factors of importance which are still fundamental to the modern economy of the area:

- 1) monoculture of agricultural grain production;
- 2) irrigation technology;
- 3) the availability of new lands for settlement beyond the alluvium, and,
- 4) necessary defence against marauding nomads.’

Within these observations one can derive a fundamental economic base which pertained in Sumer. Her surplus grain production, due to canal and water courses, saw an increase in population and an increase in additional labour. A state of corvee (force labour) could have been in use (cf Van de Mieroop 2004:139). An enlargement of the base of any economy allows for

an increase in the degree of social stratification (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1976:62). Thus, when the surplus increased, the opportunity was there for trading with the surrounding states, and this lucrative investment brought an amassment of wealth. The funds generated was not only applied towards the upkeep of the city states, but was also applied to sustain traders, artists, priests (temple) and so forth (Halla & Simpson 1971:49). This development was inevitable, since a city was not a small hamlet, and each inhabitant was not self-sufficient but relied on those inside as well as outside the city walls.

The city's main role was that of mediator, of being the collector and distributor of goods, the supplier of services and the provider of shelter and protection against invaders and raiders (Van de Mieroop 2004:21). The city was the recipient of goods by means of trade, and in the process exchanged their own produce and merchandise. All of these conditions could remain in place, and intact, only by means of the necessary mechanisms of order, of which the order of military control was the most effective (cf Halla & Simpson 1971:46-54; Van de Mieroop 2004:43-45). Organized warfare became the norm and the military leader (with his corps of warriors) became prime role players. Dalley (1995:413) summarises three reasons for war, namely: lands capable of agricultural wealth, control of water and the wealth of trade. All of these prerequisites were present in the geographical areas and cities of Sumer.

The collection of groups of people, in ever larger communities, established an interaction which was based on a division of labour, in order to keep the city running, and its surrounding agricultural wealth *actively employed*. In order to regulate this process, a system of government had, of necessity, to emerge. Such a system would address matters relating to illegal water tapping, distribution of the wealth generated by the agricultural sector and the appointment of *those to oversee* these new institutions (cf Lamberg-Karlovsky 1976:62, 63).

Consequently religion was ordained the task of the priests in their temples, and laws were laid down in order to protect these emerging and innovating institutions. The difference between these institutions which now governed social and religious matters, and those who tilled the fields was a new order of social classes, all based on the wealth 'actively employed'. Those with their new wealth, in other words the landowners and officials who *did not need to work*, now

became not only the power behind the running of the city as well as the crops in the fields, but became the aristocrats with status and the wealth to sustain that position (cf Lamberg- Karlovsky 1976:64; Van de Mierop 2004: 54,55). This wealth also included land, which led to a class struggle.

Until about 2800 BCE, the aristocratic elders made decisions in matters. They would chose a *lugal* (single man) to attend to serious matters (Van de Mierop 2004:44,45). When the problems had been resolved, the *lugal* returned to his normal household life. This method of solving problems finds echo in the way the ancient Israelites confronted their enemies by means of their ‘judges’, who also stayed for the duration of the conflict (war) and then left to return to their homes. The rulers of the cities, then, had shared power with a ‘nobility’ based on their ability to render military assistance, together with a class of commoners organized into clans (Hallo & Simpson 1971:49). However, as confrontations became the norm, the *lugal*’s term of office (and its power) extended into longer periods. The *lugal* position turned into a kingly authority and eventually into an hereditary system. Hallo (1980:189) sees these titles of ‘royalty’ thus as having no debt to any foreign precedent, but as a result of an indigenous evolution, and are more often than not the model for later concepts of kingship. Again this ‘way’ finds echo in the Israelite context when their temporary, chosen leader evolved into that of a permanent leader (king). Hallo (1980:189) therefore postulates that the innovator of royal titulary was Naram-Sin, 2254-2218 BCE (Akkadian dynasty), since he introduced the concept of ‘kingship of the four quarters’(cf COS 2.90 ; 2.91).

Though the king’s power grew to rival that of the temples, cordial relations remained, the king being considered the deity’s representative on earth: he was a ruler by divine right, and thus committed to obey the commands of the gods, a perception which became the cause and reason for wars, since the sin of the enemy had to be punished (Dalley 1995:416; cf Hallo & Simpson 1971:49). This power, of the king, also facilitated the continuous land purchases for royals, priests and nobles (cf above). The ensuing result was a reduced class of commoners who served as estate workers or clients of the palace, where they subsisted on rations of cereal, oils and milk (Gelb 1965:230-235; cf Milano 1987:520; Van de Mierop 2004:74).

As mentioned above, laws became a necessary factor in the implementation of an ordered and efficient society. The earliest code of laws to be unearthed were those of Ur-Nammu (cf Fig 2b) king of Ur of the twenty first century BCE. Though of later origin than the period described above (ca 2400 BCE) it can be postulated that similar laws had been in practice (Moscatti 1957:80). Though badly damaged, those of readable countenance reflect surprisingly humane laws (Moscatti 1957:86, 87), in contrast to Babylonian and Assyrian legal rights and punishments. However, it is unlikely that mercy was a constant. Those in power, the ruler and his warrior barons, stayed in power *because* of the extreme penalties and harsh treatment that could be applied, and as illustrations in pictorial inscriptions graphically relate (cf Figures 10a, 10b, 14b, 14c). The Ancient world, like its western counterpart during the dark ages and medieval times (ca 600 - 1400 CE), and periods of religious 'wars and conquests' (ca 1400- 1900 CE), was one of brutal and cruel punishments, of subjugation and oppression, of continuous confrontation and its consequences.

What can be deduced, from abovementioned brief historical overview, about the 'first' civilization, the proto-type for most of Mesopotamian histories, in order to locate the warrior.

6.1.2 Military warriors. Any country-side, city or village, in Sumer, was open to attack by an army, a group of insurgents or a 'dissatisfied' populace/ nomads. The reasons, for such a situation, are many and very diverse, but can be collectively sorted under political, economical and trade related. Political is where people jostle for a position of power over others, as per the kings of Akkad (Van de Mieroop 2004:60-65), whereas economical pertains to the invasion, or annexation of land, since that is where the resources for livelihoods and goods originate from (cf Lamberg-Karlovsky 1976:66-68). Trade flows from successful streams of economical commodities (cf Crawford 1973:232, 233). Sumer's city-states were not lacking in these areas, and thus constituted a source for confrontation.

Sumer was not an isolated geographical area, and had its hinterland with which it maintained in some symbiosis (trade, agriculture). The nomads on the fringes of Sumer were less friendly. So it can be presumed that the 'forces of disorder' were not absent, and that a city, in order to be at peace, was reliant on groups of men in readiness to defend the city (land). Before the entrenchment of the king's power, the huge number of staff members needed for government, and the military

groups for protection of the city, the role of defender was one of embassies and single combat and, failing that, small groups of warriors, tied by loyalty to their leaders, who would go out on sorties or rapid attacks (Halla & Simpson 1971:51).

However, the amassing of wealth, and ever increasing animosity between city-states, must have become reasons why this type of combat was changed. Our information though, on these changes, are not sufficient to present a full picture. But, archaeological discoveries such as the Stele of the Vultures (cf Fig 1a, 13a) reveal an organized battle-phalanx as well as weaponry, head protection gear and shields. A chariot, driven by Eannatum of Lagash is also visible. He wears a flat cap with upturned band, one of the three symbols of kingship. The other insignia was a stick and stool (Postgate 1992a:261). A cylinder seal, dedicated to Ur-Nammu of the Ur III Dynasty (cf Fig 22) shows him wearing this distinctive cap. The 'battle side' of the royal Standard of Ur (cf Fig 12a) portrays the heavy chariot which was not only unwieldy and needful of a certain expertise to handle it, but must have been very expensive to obtain and to maintain (horses, grooms, feeding). Therefore they are intimately bound with an elite/ noble class (Postgate 1992a:246). We can thus distinguish that there was a class who had a status higher than the able-bodied members of the state, who would have been conscripted to fight (Postgate 1992a:241).

The treasures from the graves at Ur (cf Figures 11a-11d) also reflect the wealth which was available, and which would have rested in the hands of the kings and their barons (governors) and army commanders of troops. This emerging type of warrior was still in its infancy stage during the pre-Sargonic period. However, this state of 'warrior-ship' was to develop to its full potential when Sargon created an empire, a feat not possible without troops and capable commanders to lead them. The territories which had been conquered, too, needed the right people (officials) to administer them. These positions of authority he would fill with family members, nobles and chosen administrators (usually with a military background).

The ruthlessness of warfare, and treatment of captives, somewhat contradict the humane laws prescribed in the Sumerian code of laws but, the severed heads (Fig 23a) and entrails of the slain men, carried off by vultures (Fig 23b), and highly-heaped bodies (Fig 1a) tell their own stories. Reflected here, is an ethos based on the belief that the 'enemy is the enemy' and punishment is

legitimate because of a transgression. These aspects I shall address in Chapter Eleven

6.2 Akkad and Neo-Sumer. First Empires (ca 2000-1800 BCE)

As rulers of southern Mesopotamia and the region to the north (Akkad), the Akkadian Dynasty called themselves King of Sumer and Akkad (Postgate 1992a:35). The Great Sargon (ca 2334-2279 BCE) was, seemingly, a man of humble birth from Kish. As an usurper he seized power in Kish, but soon left this city and founded a new capitol, Agade. This practice will find reflection in the ambitious rulers of future kingdoms and dynasties (cf David and Jerusalem) Like Sargon, other conquerors will substantiate military achievements as he did (cf COS 2.89; Potts 1994:100). Sargon razed the walls of Uruk, Ur, Lagash and Ummar, and extended his realm to the east by conquest of the Elamites, to the north by annexation of upper Mesopotamia and to the west as far as the Mediterranean Sea, and thus founded the first Empire (Postgate 1992a:40; cf Map 10).

According to the Sumerian King List (cf Postgate 1992a:28; Fig 24a), this dynasty was regarded as a family of city dwellers, but one with a difference since, contrast to the prevailing traditional civilian hierarchy, he introduced a policy of central intervention, which he placed in the hands of so-called “Akkadians” (family) as governors (Postgate 1992a:40; Van de Mieroop 2004:60). This period of centralization in political administration was founded in Sargon’s military pursuits. This system though, could not work since sentiment of independence could be rallied (amongst city-states), and hence the Akkadian kings forever had rebellions and uprisings to contend with (cf Potts 1994:100). Sargon was succeeded by his two sons, of whom Rimus (ca 2315 BCE) was the first. He had to contend with a situation which usually occurred after the demise of a strong king. The leaders of cities tried to rid themselves of their adversaries in other city-states, thereby testing the new ruler, in order to see his reaction. But, Rimus beat these obstreperous governors, and like his father continued with conquest campaigns, which took him as far as Elam (cf Potts 1994:100-102).

Naram-Sin (ca 2291), grandson of Sargon, was a chip of the old block, and in matters of internal policies institutionalized those set by Sargon. He also stretched the empires’ boundaries to reach from the Persian Gulf to the north (Subartu), to the north-west (Lebanon) and the Mediterranean coast (Halla & Simpson 1971:62, 63). Between this empire, and that of the Sixth Egyptian dynasty

(present in Palestine), lay the semi-arid fringes of the Syrian desert. Here the Amorites dwelt, in a territory which extended to the Euphrates, and so were in a position to become a threat. And this came true at the death of Naram-Sins' son, Shar-kali-shari, when these nomadic Amorites, as well as foes beyond the Tigris (Hurrians, Elamites) and the Gutians attacked Akkad, and the Akkadian empire disintegrated (Hallo & Simpson 1971:71-77; Postgate 1992a:41).

The Gutians, a fierce race from the Zagros mountains, sacked the capital city of Agade and set up a loosely organized rule over the northern plains. The expulsion of these invaders, who were seen by the Sumerians as barbaric and untutored, was due to Utu-Hegal of Uruk. But they remained a thorn in the side of Ur-Nammu (ca 2112 -2095 BCE), the successor of Utu-Hegal, who had to wage war against them (cf Postgate 1992a: 41; Potts 1994:124). Ur-Nammu, who was probably one of Utu-Hegal's governors, was the initiator of the Ur III Dynasty, which lasted until the demise of Ibbi-Sin (ca 2029 BCE). At the disintegration of this Neo-Sumerian dynasty, the land found itself again divided into numerous small states, which are referred to as the Isin-Larsa period [(Amorite ruling houses) cf Hallo & Simpson 1971:87-89].

These Amorite houses had close contact with tribes further north and west. The complexity of the political, military and economic situation becomes apparent when the archive of cuneiform tablets, found at Mari on the Euphrates river, are scrutinized. Contained within these sources are the breadth of the diplomatic connections which stretched from Elam through to Aleppo to Syria (Postgate 1992a:43, 45). This city was destroyed by Hammurabi of Babylon (ca 1759) but, due to his fiery destruction of Mari (and the clay tablets), ensured the preservation of the correspondence between himself and Zimri-Lim, the last ruler of Mari. The letters portray how allies became enemies, and how they turned on each other, and how this same Hammurabi speeded the end of the last of the principal Mesopotamian dynasties and rulers, 2350-1759 BCE.

6.2.1 Economic and social life. The conquests of the Mesopotamian basin and the regions towards the Iranian plateaux and Persian Gulf and to Syria and the Mediterranean Sea, created trade links which inevitably affect the economies of the Empires. Trade routes would have supplied different goods for different contexts, and hence many items for the elite, whilst conspicuous items, such as salt, raw materials, textiles and so forth, would have filtered down to

the general public (Postgate 1992a: 206). The availability of sea-ports, especially, contributed not only to the supply of exotic and unusual goods, but benefited merchant families who undertook sea-borne trade (Postgate 1992a:216). Overland trade increased and city-states (governors) reaped the benefits. However, the other side of the story was the fact that land was the principal means of production. But, increasingly the land was acquired by the nobility and the official authorities of the temples. Many of the royal inscriptions commemorate the construction or repair to temples (cf Ur-Nammu, COS 2.138B; Shulgi, 2.139A), an indication of the role the temple played in daily life and the king's extensive support of this religious institute.

The royal house drew many resources to itself, as well as the necessary output which the agricultural sector could produce. On the Obelisk of king Manishtushu (cf Fig 24b), a son of Sargon, is recorded his purchase of eight large fields, to enable their distribution to his supporters. This granting of land, to privileged persons was introduced by the Sargon dynasty, and must have produced much resentment (Van de Mieroop 2004:62; cf Lamberg-Karlovsky 1976:67). The ensuing effect was that some landowners (the elite receivers/warriors of royal grants) became more wealthy whilst the lesser classes were reduced to an "economic" client relationship. By the end of the third millennium the state increasingly controlled the land, and by the end of the Ur III period the state had the upper hand (centralized) on trade, production and the agricultural lands needed for crop planting. Lamberg-Karlovsky (1976:08) observes that though warfare was endemic towards the end of the third millennium, there is very little mention of loot and booty in the inscriptions, since the victor simply took over *in toto* the means of production of the defeated state. So, what was the outcome of this type of militaristic background, on the emerging warrior? Being an affluent member of the community, how did he react and conduct himself?

6.2.2 Military power. The last centuries of the third millennium were dominated by two dynasties (Sargonid and Ur III) who ruled the city-states and land of Akkad/Sumer. Both dynasties shared characteristics such as:

- 1) centralization of power, by
- 2) means of military control, and
- 3) both had been founded by "commoners" (cf Van de Mieroop 2004:59).

A characteristic not shared, was the achievement of the 'First Empire' in the Ancient Near East by

Sargon and, use of the title king by ‘ ... Ur Nammu, mighty man, king of the lands of Sumer and Akkad ...’ (cf COS 2.138 B). Two empires within a period of some 330 years reflect a military context, one which rolled on relentlessly. This military route which Sargon took, is the sole subject of his inscriptions. He claims victory over Uruk, over fifty rulers he conquered with the mace of his clan god, that he won Ur in battle, that even Mari and Elam stood before him, and so forth (cf COS 2.89). Naram-Sin projects the same, intense military actions. He proclaims that Armanum and Ebla (Syria) belongs to him (cf COS 2.91), whilst Ur-Nammu claims campaigns against Elam (cf COS 2.138D). In contrast the inscription by Ibbi-Sin (ca 2028 BCE), last king of the Ur III dynasty describes the wall built around Ur ‘... in order to make the land secure ...’ (cf COS 2.141 A). He had good reason to do so, since Ur was captured and Ibbi-Sin carried off to Susa (Van de Mieroop 2004:78). A turbulent period, and as indicated on Map 11, a turbulence which would stretch long into the second half of the second millennium BCE.

The leaders of these various campaigns were men with a military background (the context was one of military requirements). Kings were not always succeeded by heirs and, as per Sargon and Ur-Nammu demonstrate, kings’ positions could be taken over by commoners. The civil administration of governors was paralleled by a military one, headed by generals (warriors). These men were chosen by the king and they were personally tied to him, and so received their income from estates and properties, as payment in exchange for service.

Their world, one of continuous wars, can be discerned in the five early Sumerian Lamentations, namely: 1) the destruction of Ur, 2) the Uruk lament, 3) the Eridu lament, 4) the lamentation over Sumer and Ur and, 5) the Nippur lament. These lamentations bewail the destruction of Sumer along with the abandonment of abovementioned cities (Green 1984:253, 254).

The lamentation of Ur (lines are in brackets) speaks thus: corpses were piled (213); heads lay in heaps (214); (those) who were slain with axes (219); whom the spear had struck (221); by the battle mace (223); in the field ... no grain, their farmer gone (271); my orchards ... my plains parched (273, 274); my daughters and sons carried off as captives (283); the storm which knows no mother, father (400); knows no sister, brother (402). The rest of the lament paints a poignant picture of the woes of the defeated, of the realities of large-scale destructions and the devastating

impact the “king’s men” had on a city they had besieged and taken.



Map 10 The Akkadian Empire
(ca 2350 - 2200 BCE)

The world's first empire under Sargon of Akkad, extended so far that rebellion was almost inevitable.



Fig 22 Sumerian Seal of Ur-Nammu of Ur

The king's authority is symbolized by the flat cap with its upturned rim

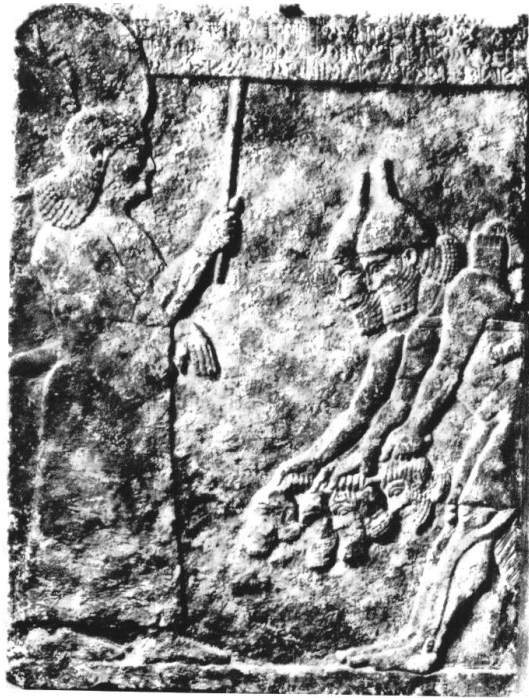


Fig 23a Severed heads brought before a general
(ca 900 BCE)

Decapitation was a common method of execution of prisoners taken during a battle.

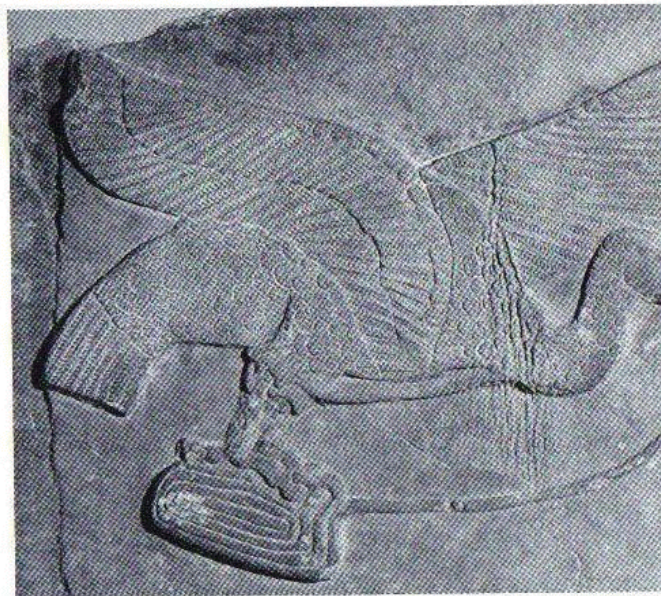


Fig 23b Vultures feasting on slain men

The dead victims of war were often the supplier of entrails for hovering vultures.



Fig 24a The Weld-Blundell prism

This prism is the record of Sumerian kings and lists their lengths of reign, dynasty by dynasty. It stops at the Ur III period (Isin dynasty).



Fig 24b The Obelisk of Manishhtushu
(ca 2306 BCE)

This son of Sargon I recorded the purchase of eight large fields in order to distribute them to his supporters.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7 LOCATING THE WARRIOR - THE BABYLONIAN CONTEXT

Babel stood on the Euphrates where the main trade routes of the ancient world met. Merchant caravans reached deep into the lands beyond the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, and consequently the city was a busy centre of trade and commerce. Scribes were kept busy by keeping accounts and trading agreements on cuneiform tablets (cf Figures 15a-15c). Babel was a great centre of learning and religion. Herodotus the Greek (ca 484 BCE) wrote in Chapter One of his *Histories* (112-115) that it was a renowned and powerful city, to which the seat of government was transferred after the fall of Nineveh (612 BCE) and, he further continues, ‘...there was a wall, 25 metres wide ... on top of the wall ... enough space for a four-wheeled chariot to pass’ (cf pages 112-115). This Babel was taken by the Persian king, Cyrus the Great, in 539 BCE, and was the end of a dynastic history which had lasted from ca 1900-539 BCE. Her most famous ruler, Hammurabi (1792 -1750 BCE), was a man who most certainly would have been worthy of the splendid city as described by Herodotus. Hammurabi was an ambitious conqueror, an able man of diplomatic and political acumen, and a witness to many alliances. We know much about him, and the context of that period, due to his destruction of the trading city, Mari on the Euphrates (ca 1760 BCE) which, ironically, ensured the safeguarding of the interrelationship correspondence as written on thousands of cuneiform tablets which were found there since 1933. But Babel did not start as a famous city, nor was her context, then, similar to that of her destruction in the year 539 BCE.

7.1 Babylonia and historical fluctuations (ca 2000-1000 BCE)

The Near East in the Early Second millennium (ca 2000-1600 BCE) from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean retained basically the same characteristics namely, city-states and their (mostly) military rulers. This situation we can deduce from the written correspondences (cuneiform tablets), which prevailed then, since Akkadian had survived, to some extent, as the Neo-Sumerian spoken at the end of the third millennium. The Amorite wave of Semitic-speaking peoples though broke this unity, and henceforth two Akkadian dialects (Assyrian in the north and Babylonian in the south) are distinguished, of which the Babylonian Akkadian became the lingua

franca of the Near East (cf Van de Mieroop 2004:61; map 8). Therefore the source materials of Mari, Ebla, Elam, Nuzi, Ugarit (cf Figures 15a-15c) and other sources, contribute to an understanding of the contemporary type of society during that period (Halla et al 1971:153, 154; cf Van de Mieroop 2004:80, 81). The end of the Akkad dynasty is traditionally ascribed to the Gutian invasion, but probably climatic conditions accelerated the influx not only of the Gutians but other ethnic peoples, such as the Amorites and Hurrians (cf Postgate 1992a: 42, 43; Saggs 1995:91). The search for new lands were patterns for conflict, and as the city-states subjected the nomads to taxes, it became ever more possible. There was also the risk of flocks and herds entering the corn fields and destroying the crops, or military and labour levies imposed on the nomads, and so forth (Van de Mieroop 2004:81-83).

Under the rule of the founder of the Akkadian dynasty, Sargon, the state had transformed into a centralized organization. This tendency, to universal monarchy, with its emphasis on the exploits and greatness of its kings, would now permeate the history of the Fertile Crescent (Moscati 1957:50). A first millennium BCE cuneiform map of the world (cf Fig 25), as seen from Babel, illustrates this tendency, since the map highlights the land conquests made by Sargon I, a hero of one and a half thousand years ago! Dozens of dynasties sprang up after the demise of the Ur III Empire (ca 2029 BCE), and city-states had re-established themselves under Amorite leaders (cf Saggs 1995:97). These Amorites were a Semitic people who had also asserted itself in Palestine and Syria (ca 2000 BCE). The dynasty of Isin lasted until its conquest by Larsa, ca 1794. Larsa, in turn, lasted from ca 2025 until taken by Babel in 1763 BCE. Eshnunna too had extended her territory, only to be defeated by Babel (1762 BCE). These dynasties (and many others) were all part and parcel of the push and pull of competing city-states which involved alliances, counter-alliances, treaties, reneges on treaties, all actions and conditions which led to confrontation and conflict (cf Saggs 1995:95-98). Some of the Amorite houses had political and economic links with tribes further north and west (Aleppo and Qatna) and even Elam to the south east. The main texts illuminate the complexity of these shifting patterns and the effect this had on society, but especially the military preparedness each city had to maintain (cf Postgate 1992a:45, 46). The cities had their own army of soldiers, led by the king and his corps of highly trained, elite warriors. There often were also mercenaries included in the ranks since they, like the kings of the city-states, were part of the political intrigues and see-sawing of loyalties (Van

de Mierop 2004:103, 104).

Amongst all these aspiring dynasties, for control of the Mesopotamian basin and beyond, one Amorite dynasty gained ascendance, the so-called First Dynasty of Babel, ca 1900 BCE (Moscati 1957:50, 51; cf Saggs 1995: 95, 97). Until then Babel had been like the other cities with a king and his staff, and a standing army. The first 'settled' ruler, Sumu-abum (1894-1881 BCE) and his successors increased Babel's importance by their concern for the city's defence and the upkeep of the irrigation systems. Due to the political upheavals, it is likely that the irrigation systems were probable also victims of these turbulent times, since many cities were dying on their feet, whilst the Euphrates' movement towards a more western channel, led to much land to fall out of use (Postgate 1992a:45; cf Saggs 1995:97). Abovementioned undertakings, by Babel's rulers, provided the basis for expansion, which soon included the territories of Borsippa, Kish and Sippar

At the end of the rule of the fourth king of Babel, a general of Amorite descent, Shamsi-Adad (1813-1776 BCE), established a kingdom by annexing Assur, at that stage a city somewhat constrained by merchants (cf 8.1.1), by taking Shubat-Enlil (Habur river area), Ekallatum (a city under Eshnunna's control and, eventually, the rich and wealthy city, Mari (cf Saggs 1995:98; Postgate 1992a:48, 49). This pattern, of monarchical expansion policies, was to repeat itself until the migratory shifts of 1250 BCE. The death of Shamsi-Adad enabled Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE) to give free reins to his ambitions and to act against potential rivals (cf Saggs 1995:98).

As a skilled diplomat and supreme military leader, Hammurabi played city-states against each other. His military campaigns bagged him Larsa, and gave him victory over hostile coalitions east of the Tigris. He gained control of Subartum (Assyria), Mari and Nineveh. Areas of the north-eastern mountains also became targets of conquest since they controlled trade routes from beyond Iran. Hammurabi had thus created an empire comparable with the Old Ur III Empire (cf Saggs 1995:99, 100; Map 11). When Hammurabi died (1749 BCE) he left a legacy of conquests '... when the gods Anum and Enlil gave to me the lands of Sumer and Akkad to rule ...' (cf COS 2.107 B), but also of peace and justice. His most lasting achievement is his code of laws (cf Fig 2a) which, besides being a proclamation of laws for all aspects of life, also indicates the context

of those specific times (Van de Mieroop 2004:108). A more detailed application, of these laws, shall become apparent in Chapter Eleven. The next 200 years saw the steady decline of this First Dynasty of Babel. During the reign of the last king, Samsu-ditana (1625-1595 BCE) the Hittite king Mursilis I sacked Babylon and then withdrew. The fact that he could accomplish this (looting) campaign without hindrance, indicates that the states along the Euphrates could have been of no military significance (Saggs 1995:114).

The rise of the Kassites (ca 1570-1157 BCE) from the Zagros (as per the Gutians) brought a decline of the dynasty of Babel. They had already been on the fringes of the city-states, acting at times as migrant workers or as mercenaries (Postgate 1992a:50). Another group, the Hurrians, also appeared on the scene, and introduced the two-wheeled- chariot, drawn by horses (Saggs 1984:115). This innovation became a feature of this time (ca 1500 BCE), and obviously brought great changes to the art of warfare. Their kingdom of Mitanni was ruled by a band of Indo-Aryans, a chariot-owning elite class known as *mariyannu*, and Hurrian nobility (cf Dalley 1995:416; Hallo et al 1971:110). By 1400 BCE Babylonia had trade relations with Egypt, but soon Babel felt the awakening of Assyrian power (ca 1300 BCE) when their campaigns started to infringe upon the regions. However, another group of invaders from the Syrian steppes, the Arameans, got underway from ca 1200 BCE, a people set in motion by adverse circumstances (Hallo et al 1971:117-120; cf Saggs 1995:128, 129). The collapse of the Kassite dynasty occurred in 1157 BCE when Elam invaded Babylonia. From then onwards Assyrian interventions (950-700 BCE) and hegemony became the norm, and in 689 BCE Sennacherib sacked Babel.

7.1.1 Economic and social life. Under the Ur empire the economy had been a state monopoly, with one share of gain going into the temple coffers, whilst the rest went to the royal domain. Part of the royal land was used as payment for military service to the king, in other words his keymen, such as his commanders and high officials. This tight control started to loosen and by ca 1866 BCE changes are seen which increased until by 1763 BCE trade voyages were privately financed and run by business partnerships (Saggs 1995:95, 96). These ventures, whether overland by caravans, or by means of boats and rafts which plied the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, created great, private wealth, an incentive towards trade further afield, since Babylonia

lacked materials such as metals, building stone and timber. Old Babylonian boats seem to have been able to carry up to 40 *gur* (2000 litres) of weight, whilst some had a capacity of 300 *gur* (cf Fig 26). The construction of these boats was one of the responsibilities of the *Ensi*, as a text on materials for ship-building demonstrates ‘... 12,384 bundles of reeds, 3170 *gur* of purified bitumen ... for caulking ... boats. Under the *Ensi* of Girsu.’ (CT 7 31a, quoted by Postgate 1992a:218). The merchants and their agents operated from bases which were not always close to home. The laws of Hammurabi legislates the relationship between these two groups and their dealings with the public (cf COS 2.131).

Commercial laws therefore regulated the input and output of economic matters. However, within the Mesopotamian basin the economy could only be successful if attention was given to defence, irrigation and agriculture. Hammurabi did just that and, as we can read in his proclamations:

- 1) his building of canals at Sippar (cf COS 2.107A)
- 2) “Hammu-rapi is the abundance of the people”, denoting another canal (cf COS 2.107B).

The expansion, due to conquests further north and north-west, had opened up wider horizons for trade and diplomatic relations. The Mari texts and El-Amarna tablets attest to correspondence between the kings of Egypt and the Hittites, Hurrians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Syria and Palestine. These interconnections though had their reverse side, and military matters were never an absent factor. The stele of Dadusa of Eshnunna (ca 1790 BCE) relates this ruler’s military exploits, his conquests and prisoners taken (cf Fig1d), but was soon defeated by Hammurabi in 1760 BCE. There was thus always the possibility of here today, gone tomorrow!

7.1.2 Military and political interrelationships. At the end of his reign Hammurabi had altered the political playing field of Mesopotamia. Babylonia was the single master, with former rivals in a weakened position (cf Dadusa). Yet, though Hammurabi built a canal at ‘eternal Sippar’ he also built the walls of this city which was supposed never to be attacked, “I built (that) high wall” (cf COS 2.107A). The canal, of which he is *the abundance*, was also accompanied by him building a fortress, named after his father, Fort-Sin-muballit (cf COS 2.107B). Significantly, he mentions that the gods Anum and Enlil gave him the lands ‘... and entrusted their nose-rope into my hands...’ (cf Fig 14c). Prisoners were often ‘constrained’ by this cruel method.

Hammurabi's son, Samsu-ilma (ca 1749-1712 BCE) built a fortress on the banks of the Diyala river (cf COS 2.108) whilst his grandson, Ammi-Ditan (ca 1683-1647) built the wall of Babylon (cf COS 2.109). These 'military urgencies' of the time is reflected via the political systems which prevailed from 1500-1200 BCE, when the Near East went through periods and cycles of creation, fluorescence and decline of city-states (cf Van de Mieroop 2004:122; Map 11).

We can thus postulate military assistance, to the tune of hundreds of troops, or military attacks, which resulted in control for shorter or longer periods; and of alliances and treaties which would bring either prosperity or destruction. However, the empire could not implement 'dominance of empire' and be everywhere at all times. Enemies waited in the shadows of time and patience. The mightiest of these, the Assyrians, would soon steamroller across the landscape with an aggression and brutality unheard of previously.



Map 11 Hammurabi's Babylonian Empire
(ca 1700 BCE)

Babylon dominated Western Asia, more or less, for thirteen and a half centuries.



Fig 25 Cuneiform map of the world
(ca 1000 BCE)

A map of the world as seen from Babel to illustrate the exploits of Sargon of Aggad.



Fig 26 A bituman model of boat Ur
(ca 2000 BCE)

This type of vessel was used to ply goods as far away as India.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8 LOCATING THE WARRIOR - THE ASSYRIAN CONTEXT

The geographical position of Assyria in the north-eastern corner of the Fertile Crescent, placed her in a precarious position, being surrounded by various kingdoms. To the south-east lay the area of Babylonia and in the north was Urartu. The kingdom of Aram (Syria) was in the north-western corner of the Crescent, whilst to the far east lay Elam. Far to the south Assyria had the arid Arabian Desert, and its nomadic inhabitants as a deterring border.

The ancient city-state of Assur, and future capital of a great empire, was during the early Dynastic and Akkadian periods an important trading city, whilst under the Ur III Empire it was the seat of a governor or *Ensi*. Assyria's earliest connections were mostly with the lands to the south since, similar to Mari on the middle Euphrates, it was a position which allowed control of boats and rafts to the cities of Sumer and Akkad. Assur had a lucrative trade in tin from the east, textiles from Babylonia and silver from Anatolia. This system is known to us by the discovery of tablets which the Assyrian colonists left on the outskirts of Kanesh (cf Van de Mieroop 2004:90, 91). The lucrative trade enriched the Assyrian traders, but the risks were high, since their caravans often travelled through hostile areas. The solution to this problem lay in treaties and paying taxes, which ensured some protection. In the process their observations and experiences of war conditions, amongst the powers of the city-states probably, unwittingly, founded a basis for their future search for their own power base. From these 'trade' beginnings the history of Assur would develop into a great Empire which stretched far across the Fertile Crescent (cf Map 12).

8.1 Assyria and historical eminence (ca 1800 -700 BCE)

Assyria's historical existence had started when the first Semitic dynasty of Sargon I of Akkad (ca 2334-2279 BCE), and his successors, had forced practically all of the Fertile Crescent into submission (Hallo et al 1971:115). This period of bondage, according to Olmstead (1923:23), was also the time when the 'Assyrian character' was being formed. Her central position (as in the case of Israel) amongst fluctuating kingdoms, made her open to attacks from all sides, and

resource to defence would become a part of the lives of the people, just as trading was. Again, however, Olmstead (1923:24) postulates that 'Through this necessity of being always on the alert, the natural warlikeness of the Semite was not lost, as so generally happened when the nomad became sedentary; rather, it later on was heightened to an extreme which sometimes became unjustified delight in human suffering'. This assessment, on the Assyrians' 'world view', justifies to a great degree the fearsome reputation they would attain throughout their future military campaigns.

Assur fell to the forces of an Amorite sheik, Shamsi-adad (1808-1776 BCE), who incorporated the city into a larger polity. However, the Amorites had their own capital at Ekallate, and soon the indigenous 'Assyrian' kings were back in control and trading activities continued as before. The Kassites had controlled the middle Euphrates for about one hundred and fifty years, and were to rule Babylonia for over four centuries (1595-1157 BCE). These kings also entered into relationships with Assyria. Burna-Burrash II (1359-1333 BCE) married the daughter of Assur-uballit (1363-1328 BCE) which indicates Assyria was sufficiently powerful to enter into such marriage agreements (Saggs 1995:118; Van de Mieroop 2004:164). Another ethnic group, the Hurrians, also came into prominence during this period and, by ca 1500 BCE were forming themselves into kingdoms. Of these the Mitanni, centred on the Khabur east of the Euphrates, became the most powerful (cf Map 9; Saggs 1995:115). During these years Assur had been incorporated as a vassal into a loose Mitannian confederation. Internal weaknesses undermined Mitannis' power and this gave opportunistic rise for the military birth of Assyria (Saggs 1984:41; Van de Mieroop 2004:169, 170).

The first 'king of Assyria' was Assur-uballit I (1363-1328 BCE) who transformed the peaceful merchant city, Assur, into the capital of Assyria. He built the walls of Assur, a sure sign that she was potentially independent (Saggs 1984:41). He proved to be the first of a long line of successive war-like rulers, who now embarked on 'an exercise of conquest', but with a difference - the Assyrians were more warlike and militaristic orientated. Their strategies would be based on analysis of the contexts of the time. Hence Assur realized the danger (south) of any ambitious Babylonian ruler and, the danger (west) of ever-increasing nomadic movements. Thus the clever move made by Assur-uballit to go north and to incorporate the fertile grasslands which

had been under Hurrian domination. The annexation of the corn-growing lands, between Arbil and Assur, indicate a policy towards the achievement of military success by means of a good commissariat (cf Van de Mieroop 2004:169), since fighting men need provisions. However, Assyria's future campaigns would be determined by the geographic limitations of her boundaries.

A short lull followed but this was soon shattered by three kings who raised Assyria to be one of the powers of the time: Adad-nirari I (1307-1275 BCE), his son Shalmaneser I (1274-1245 BCE) and his grandson Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 BCE). Assyrian campaigns encompassed Carchemish on the Euphrates, northward to the Hurrian tribes and south to Babylonia. These expansions also introduced the implementation of a new 'war' scheme by Shalmaneser namely, transportation of captured peoples away from their homes (cf Fig 27; Saggs 1984:24-48). Business and administration records, found at Tel Al-Rimah (1966), reveal that by the time of Shalmaneser's reign, 'old' Assyrian families were resident there, combining their official status as administrators and as persons with private commercial activities. These policies, of adapting commercial finance to governing heads, was entrusted to those who were almost surely descended from family firms who had been "running trade" for past decades (Hallo et al 1971:177).

A quiet one hundred years followed in which Assyria had no opposition from other powers since these powers had problems of their own, since this was the period of the 'Sea Peoples' (ca 1250 BCE), with its migrations, confrontations, wars and displacement of peoples (cf Map 4; Hallo et al 1971:117-120). Again a 'silence of decline' followed, which burst into a noisy revival with the ascension of Tiglath-Pileser I, 1115-1077 BCE (Saggs 1984:55-58). This king reached the Mediterranean, received submission from the Phoenicians, and felled cedar trees for the building in Assur of a temple to the gods Anu and Adad. Once more there was no opposition, either from the Egyptians or the Hurrians as they were too busy repulsing incursions by the Aramean nomads (Saggs 1984:61, 62). Because of their vulnerable southwestern flank (the Arabian Desert), the Arameans were a threat to Syria, Babylonia and Assyria, and so they were at the mercy of these nomads who infested the trade tracks and hence controlled the trade routes (cf Saggs 1984:65, 66). Their mobility and specialist knowledge of their inhospitable land made them very elusive,

and hence not easy to capture. The reasons for their harassment of caravans was mostly for loot, but they probably also experienced famine, caused by drought (cf Neuman & Parpola 1987:161-182). Famine was a recurrent theme in the lives not only of the nomadic peoples, but the Assyrians too felt the harsh brunt of this scourge, as the annals of Ashur-dan relate when he writes about ‘... the toil-worn people of Assyria who had left cities’’ Such a situation brings an economic and administrative collapse (cf Saggs 1984:70).

A stagnant period was followed by Assyria’s re-establishment of her lands which the Arameans had penetrated. Tukulti-ninurta II (890-884 BCE) campaigned from Assur to Samarra, to Baghdad, to the confluence of the Habur and Euphrates, then back to his country, a route indicating restricted movements as a result of the Aramean tribes and rulers encountered (Van de Mieroop 2004:192, 193), since the further one looked, the more firmly one found Aramean dynasties. Again Assyria survived these conditions (very reminiscent of the Amorite take-overs), but at the cost of continuous unrewarding military expeditions. During this time Assur-nasir-apli (883-859 BCE) founded a new capital, Nimrud, where he built a palace. The calculated ‘frightfulness’ of this king is documented on the walls of this palace (Olmstead 1923:81-97; cf Van de Mieroop 2004:219). This king did not hesitate to kill, loot, burn, blind and mutilate rebels and captured people and to force kingdoms into submission (Saggs 1984:72-77). His son, Shalmaneser III (858-824 BCE) engaged in considerable military operations which involved the hotch-potch petty states of Damascus (Aramean), Hamath (Hittite) and Israel (cf COS 2.113B, 2.113D; Van de Mieroop 2004:227). On the bronze gates of a temple at Balawat (cf Fig 27) Shalmaneser has portrayed captured prisoners and on the Black obelisk (cf Fig 8a, 8b) we find tribute paid to this king. Despite military activities, Assur did not expand but rather kept her borders safe and obtained loot and booty in order to do so. The Assyrians kept a clear distance between territories, hence those of the land of Assur and those under the yoke of Assur (Postgate 1992b 251, 252, 256, 257; cf Van de Mieroop 2004:228).

The final chapter of Assyria’s military excellence and dominance of the Near East, came as so many others before, with the creation of an Empire, which surpassed all that have been. Onto the scene now came Assyria’s most vigorous and warlike conqueror, Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BCE). He may have taken his name from an Assyrian ancestor, but his consistent failure to cite

his genealogy may indicate that he is not of the royal family. He put an end to the system where governing of provinces were done by established Assyrian families, who had turned these duties into very profitable endeavours as well as passing it on from father to son. These ventures were turning into exercises of excessive personal power. Seeing the danger, Tiglath-Pileser broke these into smaller units and placed them in the hands of his key men, the high officers of the state. Likewise he changed systems abroad. Here an age-old system had been in place where local rulers, as vassals, had administered their own territorial states, but Tiglath-Pileser III expected military assistance and tribute as tokens of their submission, and appointed an official over them (cf Saggs 1984:85). His campaigns into Syria and Palestine heralded the most illustrious period of Assyrian conquests and control of the Fertile Crescent.

His successors, Shalmaneser V (726-722 BCE), Sargon II (721-705 BCE) and Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) kept the reins of empire firmly in their hands. But, Assyrian power was approaching its natural limits, and the campaigns into distant regions were repulsed or unsuccessful (Hallo et al 1971:141). The period of Assyrian domination came to an end when Nineveh, Kalah and Assur were annihilated (ca 615-612 BCE) by the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562 BCE) began the start of a new era for the whole Near East. Assyria, lacking an army and a monarch, became de-urbanized and reverted to a powerless and insignificant civilization (Hallo et al 1971:143). So, what was the economic and military situation like during these Assyrian ups and downs?

8.1.1 Economic and social life. Northern Mesopotamia was a land which lacked vital raw materials but, she had plains where wheat was grown. Not only the early merchants of Assyria but traders throughout the Fertile Crescent realized that the exchange of food supplies, for desired materials, would lead to the survival of hungry people, and wealth to those who appeased that hunger. The early native 'Assyrian' kings, ca 2000 BCE were very much aware of this reciprocal process of economic prosperity, and its merchants of the state were actively involved in trade, exchange and the generation of wealth (cf 8.1.1; 11.1.4.3).

Assur was built on a cliff right up against the Tigris where rainfall was marginal and crop failure an usual event (Saggs 1984:21), and hence her recourse, to trade, was a natural reaction to the

geographical and climatic situations. Other cities, such as Calah and Nineveh all lay alongside the Tigris, which constituted important means of transport for the traders who used the river to get from one end to the other of the central part of Assyria. The Assyrian trade was not only very well organized, but was dominated by a group of families from Assur. These were therefore private enterprises without palace involvement (Halla et al 1971:95; cf Van de Mieroop 2004:90, 91). They adhered to the Assyrian *karum* (board of trade) and the *wabartum* (association of traders). These institutions were protected by treaties with various rulers who supplied military protection in the area. The economic destiny was thus controlled by private families who used their wealth to sustain that control (Halla et al 1971:95).

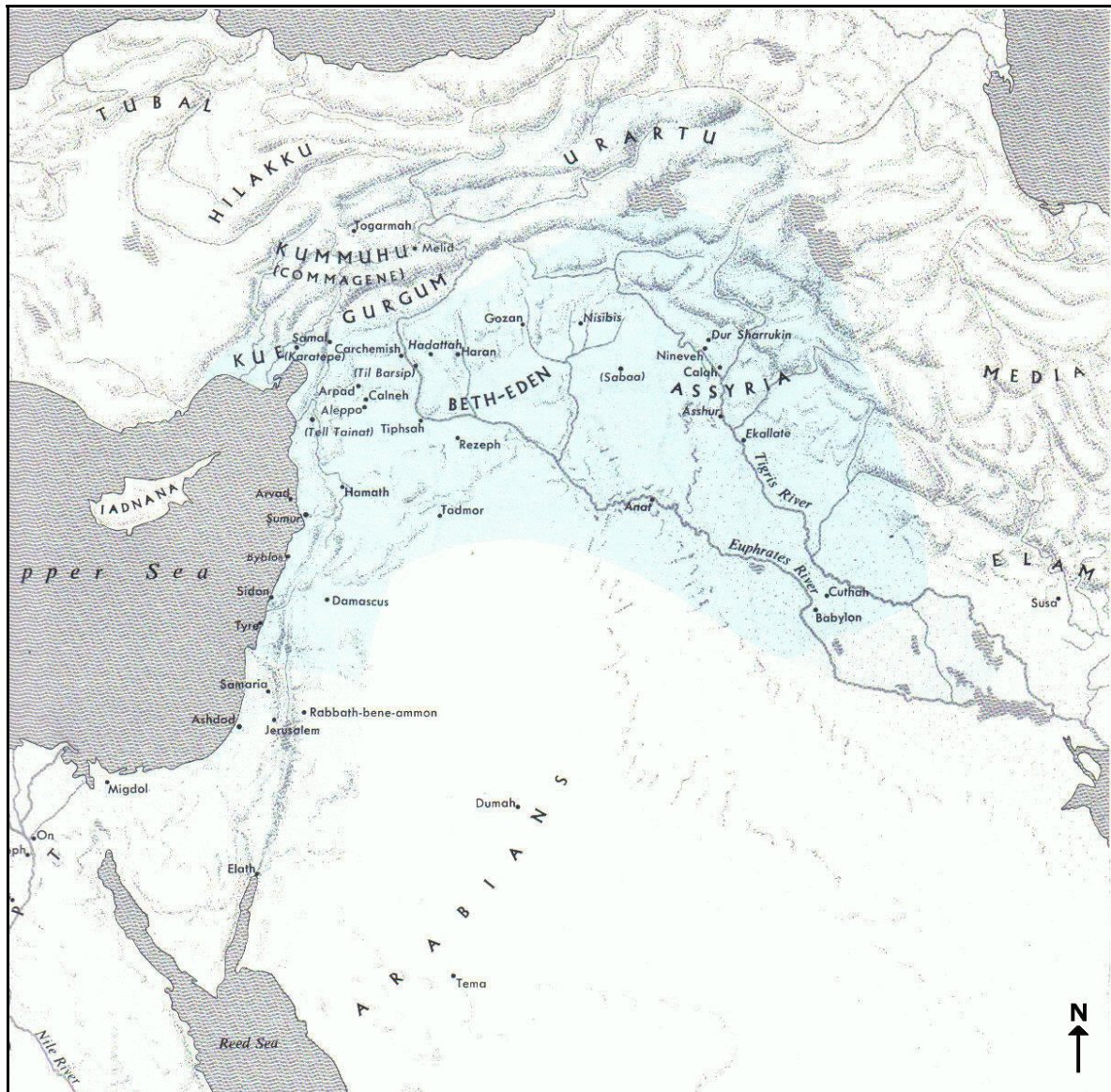
The traders established trade centres (colonies) from which to operate. One such colony being at the Anatolian city of Kanesh, 1000 km away from Assur, which denotes the importance attached to international trade (Van de Mieroop 2004:90; cf Postgate 1992a:214, 215, 219-221). This trading network foreshadows similar phases of trading in other places. Presumably the demand for tin, used for alloying copper to make bronze, was addressed by the Assur merchants who exported tin and textiles from across Mesopotamia to their colony, exchanged the tin for gold and silver, and then returned to Assur. Whilst the trade in metal did impact mostly on the business of transport and waging of war, it also played a role in, and benefited, the realm of agriculture. Hence the temple and palace, due to their access to capital and labour, must have aided in a development of the metal industry (Postgate 1992a:226; cf Fig 29a). A discovery, made at Tell Sifr (Kutalla) near Larsa, consist of a stack of corroded copper vessels and tools, of which the sickles and spade blade tools (cf Fig 29b) are mostly for agricultural purposes (cf Postgate 1992a:226).

The documents found at Kanesh (ca 1900-1800 BCE period) highlight a system of economic wealth according to which all expenses were shared by groups of traders, who then paid for the animals, merchandise, personal guards for protection of the caravans and the necessary taxes. These merchants (acting as messengers) also had the duty to present 'gifts of exchange', an act which tied rulers to a common system (Van de Mieroop 2004:132; cf Postgate 1992a:221). As these gifts focussed on luxury items for a tiny group of elites, they constituted a small part of

trade but, a very significant one. The world was interconnected and trade and diplomacy were thus intrinsically linked through valued goods and merchandise (Van de Mieroop 2004:135). In between her trade activities Assur, like the city-states of Babylonia, the Amorite Dynasties, the Hurrians and the Kassites, were involved in confrontations and war with other groups. War and trade walked hand in hand. The invasions of the period 1200 BCE affected the whole of the Fertile Crescent but, Assyria managed to survive these upheavals.

8.1.2 Military conquests. Considering the time-span between the first Sargonid empire and the eventual domination of the Assyrians across the Fertile Crescent, one fathoms their success, throughout this period of some 1500 years, as due to their staying in the background as merchants, plying their trade from north to south, east to west. During these dormant years, before Assur-uballit I became the 'first' king, the Assyrians experienced subjugation and the official rhetoric of the Hittites, Egyptians, and others, which revolved around warfare, the careers of their kings and military campaigns (Van de Mieroop 2004:135). That, and constant experiences of conflicts and skirmishes, necessitated attention and resources towards their own military situation. Assyria was no stranger to border wars and subsequently she found her fighting force increasingly involved in these confrontations.

Due to her merchant background where her traders could travel extensively and hence notice and experience the weaponry, tactics and deployment of troops, Assyria accumulated necessary 'know how', which gradually cemented into a mind-set which sought independence (Saggs 1984:41). This independence was further facilitated by the practice of giving agricultural land, which was held by the crown in the heartland of Assyria, to men for 'military' services rendered. These lots were passed on from father to son and could be sold without obtaining permission from the palace (Van de Mieroop 2004:169-173). This was an incentive towards young fighters to join the army. The Assyrians had the benefit of having been the inheritors of established military systems, which had advanced to a stage where the weaponry, protective armour and siege machines could aid them to conquer effortlessly and effectively. Added to this was their policy of terror, a combination which guaranteed them an empire greater than their predecessors.



Map 12 The Kingdom of Assyria
(9th Century BCE)

Tiglath Pileser III renewed Assyrian expansions which eventually swallowed up Syria and Palestine.



Fig 27 Transportation of people

After a successful siege or battles, the Assyrians transported the captured inhabitants to areas away from their homeland.



Fig 28 Gates of the temple at Balawat
(ca 900 BCE)

The panels on the gates record the prisoners taken in many campaigns of Shalmaneser against Babylonia, northern Mesopotamia and Syria.

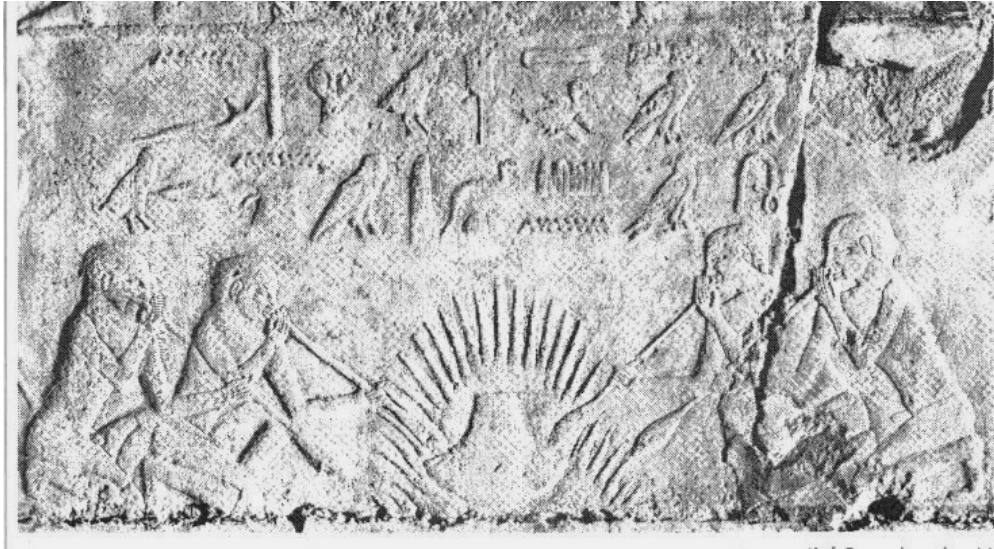


Fig 29a Metal workers. 5th Dynasty, Egypt

Men with blowpipes are smelting metal. Metal workers were usually craftsmen par excellence.



Fig 29b Tell Sifr: Copper sickles and spades
(ca 1800 BCE)

The copper sickles were definitely an improvement on flint set in a wooden handle with bitumen.

CHAPTER NINE

9 LOCATING NEIGHBOURS - THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCES

The western arm of the Fertile Crescent seems far removed from the eastern part, with its concentration of cities along the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris. Thus it would have remained: but as detailed in Chapters Six to Eight, these neighbours became very much a part of the world of Mesopotamia due to the economics of the trade routes. With the expansion of the empires of Sargon I and Hammurabi, western and eastern relationships became enmeshed, since economic welfare induces greed, and breeds war which, in turn, can be assuaged by treaties, gifts and vassal commitments. But, empires fluctuate, and therefore Canaan related and interacted more closely with those nearer her borders namely, Egypt and Syria. Phoenicia, being much a part of the western arc of the Crescent was, due to her geographic position, always focussed on trade. She had her conflicts and confrontations, but was rather the one who supplied her neighbours, near and far, with the diverse range of goods which she collected on her sea and land based trade journeys. Egypt, the neighbour in the western part of the Crescent, made excursions beyond her borders as far as the Mesopotamian basin but, like the land she conquered, Canaan, she remained close to her life-giving river, the Nile.

9.1 Canaan. A ‘midpoint’ history (ca 2000-1000 BCE)

Ancient Canaan can be equated with modern Israel, Trans- Jordan, coastal Syria and southern inland Syria, although her frontiers have varied throughout history (cf Map 13). As to her inhabitants, Tubb (1998:13) defines them as Canaanites, who lived in the land of Canaan from time immemorial! This statement contradicts a viewpoint which is based on a hypothetical westward movement of the Amorites into Palestine. In the absence of written records it is difficult to reconstruct the political, social and economic situation prevailing ca 2400 BCE but, types of independent ‘city-states, must have experienced Mesopotamian-like fluctuating supremacies.

Archaeological excavations have shown the destruction of city walls, often repaired and re-repaired,

an indication of troubled times (Tubb 1998:38). Trade was done with Egypt as well as the north of Syria. The Ebla texts (cf Fig15b), found in 1975, indicate that by 2400 BCE Ebla had ties with Palestine/Canaan, which can be attested for by a particular type of Canaanite jug, found in royal tombs at Abydos (Tubb 1998:39). By 2000 BCE agriculture, a semi-sedentary and pastoral life was largely determined by external variables, whilst full urbanism is reflected by grave goods which include decorated pottery. Excavation of burial sites at Tiwal esh Shargi have produced particular graves which are stone-lined, containing weaponry and fine pottery, which project elevated social status (Tubb 1998:58). Canaans' urbanism finds echo in the Egyptian Execration Texts. These are inscribed clay figurines in the form of captives, bearing the names of rebels and enemies of Egypt (ca 1900 BCE, accompanied by curses and maledictions which mention well known sites, for example, Jerusalem, Ashkelon (cf Fig. 30).

The Hyksos who ruled Egypt from Avaris (1750-1550 BCE) were recognised by the Egyptians as drawn from the Canaanite population. The leadership though, of these Hyksos, seem to have come *via* the Hurrians, a people from the Caucasus region under the leadership of a group of Indo-Aryan origins, the *Mariyannu*, recognised as chariot and horse owners (cf Dalley 1995:416,417; Reviv 1972:218,219,221), and characterized as a horse rearing, aristocratic elite. Tubb (1998:62) postulates that the stone lined graves reflect the burial of these upper classes. Another specific custom of this elite class, Tubb stresses (1998:64), is the burial of horses in the same grave as the warrior, as demonstrated by graves found at Avaris and Tell el -Ajjul in southern Palestine.

An expanding economy allowed Canaan to flourish and as a result better protection of their cities became a necessity. Also, these cities had become unstable (due to accumulated debris) and the Hyksos 'glacis' system was implemented as strengthening and defensive precautions. This 'new' defensive method is indicative of the advances made towards protection against the siege of a city, as well as the adoption of that method by another group of people. A similar wall construction was used, by Ahab ca 860 BCE, when he fortified Jezreel (cf Schneider 2001:83).

The Pharaohs' expulsion of the Hyksos (1550 BCE) forced these warriors to seek refuge in Canaan.

Under a highly decorated commander, Ahmose of Nekheb, the Egyptians pursued the fleeing Hyksos (cf COS 2.1), and soon his sovereign, Thutmose I (ca 1492 BCE), followed and swept through Palestine into Syria, leaving city after city in ruins. Thutmose III met with resistance from the Hurrians, but defeated a coalition of Syrians and Canaanites at Megiddo in 1470 BCE, and thus turned Canaan into a land of city-states, and their vassals under the firm control of the Egyptians (Tubb 1998:72). Trade flourished due to the Egyptian connection and luxurious goods came into Canaan and into the homes of the elite. The necklace, in Figure 31a, and the 'banqueting in style' in Figure 31b, is indicative of such prosperity.

Not all of Canaan came under Egyptian domination. Ugarit, situated in the far northern part of the Levant, was an independent state. The large number of cuneiform inscribed clay tablets which were found there, are written in Akkadian and relate to matters such as legal affairs, administration and religious issues. The religious texts have allowed for a reconstruction of the Canaanite beliefs and rituals, and hence the religious background to which the later incoming Israelites would be subjected to (Tubb 1998:73; cf Craigie 1983:71-73). The Amarna letters attest to Egypt's decline in Canaan with rebellious rebels, either engaged in quarrels with their neighbours, or else petitioning for military help from Pharaohs Amenophis III and Akhenaten (1402 to 1347 BCE), in order to address the Habiru (bandits) problem. Canaan was now in the grip of lawless social misfits, who often acted as mercenaries for one city-state against another. The next two hundred years saw the re-establishment of Egyptian control under Ramesses (1279-1213 BCE), a great campaign against the Hittites (ca 1270), the 'conquest' incursions of the Israelites (ca 1250 BCE) and the invasions of the Sea Peoples (ca 1200 BCE). The social, political and economic situation was thus one of turmoil with a continuous effort to defend the land from invaders.

The military tactics of Ramesses, when he confronted the Hittites at the city of Kadesh, reveal that his armies were aware of the advantages of the surprise attack, the necessity of knowing the enemies' position, the deployment of troops into chariot or infantry units, and so forth (cf Paul & Dever 1973:238, 239; Beal 1995:545, 548-551). The Philistines brought with them the use of body armour, they wore helmets and employed the use of the chariot, and were armed with swords. The scene was

thus set for the Israelites who, *sans* all of these military apparel and weaponry would, in the way the Canaanites had observed, experienced and learned, do the exactly the same and, soon they too would be conquering and wielding the same power over their neighbours.

9.2 Phoenicia. The trade partner (ca 1000 BCE)

As a people of Canaanite origin the Phoenicians occupied a very narrow strip of coastal land which had the Kingdom of Israel to its south, whilst its eastern boundary consisted of the mountains of Lebanon. Their main (coastal) cities were Sidon, Tyre, Byblos and Arvad. Because of the geographical environment of the land (cf Map 1), the Phoenicians had no choice but to go west, and seek an outlet by sea rather than by land (Harden 1971:23). The ‘outlet’, the Mediterranean Sea, therefore became the provider for a lucrative trade in a varied assortment of merchandise.

The Palestine coast possesses many small bays flanking headlands, which ensures the adequate defence of a city. This was a geographical feature which the Phoenicians exploited to the full, not only on their own home territory, but also in their choices of sites for colonization (Harden 1971:23-25). Their founding of a colony of settlers on Cyprus enabled them to use that island as a useful staging post for Phoenician vessels going further afield (Harden 1971:53). Their vessels sailed across the whole of the Mediterranean Sea and thus established a flourishing sea trade which accommodated wares such as slaves, gold, wheat, cattle, metals, textiles, wild animals, ivory, precious stones and wood (cf Map 14). Additional to these goods were the raw materials which their own land and coastal waters provided, such as forests of various species of trees. The overland trade within the Mesopotamian Empires was just as lucrative, since the kings of the interior too coveted the luxury goods which the Phoenicians could supply (cf Elat 1991:23,24).

These magnificent forests of pines, cypresses and cedars (in particular), were renowned, and supplied them with the wood needed to foster their joinery and their skill at building in wood and stone, of which not only the Hebrew monarchy but other kings of the Near East made such good use of (Harden 1971:127). We read in 1 Kings 10:11-22 about the riches of Solomon, and how he used that

wealth to trade with Hiram of Tyre. This alliance with Hiram, is epitomized by the cedar wood which he supplied to Solomon for the building of the temple in Jerusalem. Being thus in the dual business of trade as well as manufacturing goods themselves, enabled the Phoenicians to become experts and masters at various crafts such as ivory carving, the production of items of glass, jewellery designs and use of building material.

Excavations at Samaria, Nimrud and Arslan Tash have unearthed the expert and finely crafted works, in ivory, which the Phoenicians were famous for (and which many other schools copied). Some of the Samarian ivories indicate Egyptian influences, such as the ‘cherub’ and ‘woman at the window’ (cf Figures 32a, 32b; Shanks 1985:45, 46) whilst other ivories from as far away as the palace of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud, have more virile themes. The contrast between the rigid, poised lion (cf Fig 32c) and the ‘killing machine’ lion (cf Fig 32d), find echo in the character of the Assyrian, since maybe we can discern the royal poise and control versus the royal action and destruction? The local style ivories from Ziwiye in Iran, are likely imitation of Phoenician art (cf Culican 1966:86, 87; Fig 32e). As a source for dress codes, religious beliefs, customs, popular themes, persons and events, these ivories provide visual information and better understanding of the literary texts and, of course, the contextual reality of daily living. These visual representations form a platform from which one can construct a larger picture.

The Phoenician religion was based on the gods and goddesses of the Canaanite pantheon, with *El* as the supreme god, his consort *Asherat-of-the-sea* as the mother-goddess and their son, *Baal*, as the god of storms and rains (cf Clifford 1990:57, 60, 61; Harden 1971:74). The worshipping of such a multitude of gods made this very close neighbour of Israel, to be forever lashed by the tongues of the prophets as a heathen kingdom. Ahab’s marriage to Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal of Sidon, brought this pagan worship, of *Baal*, to the city of Samaria (1Ki 16:31), where Ahab had an altar built for *Baal* in the ‘house of *Baal*’. However, alliances with Phoenicia brought economic implications which could not be ignored. This enterprising trade partner brought the luxuries which enhanced the life-style of those in power, and those who benefited from contact with the powerful. The elite kings, nobles, commanders, barons and so forth, would have the necessary

wealth to enable them to order the creation of such beautiful objects, and thus to establish their status in the eyes of the ordinary citizen (cf Shanks 1985:43). The Phoenicians therefore, like the traders before them, played a role in ‘goods communication’, an effective way of spreading ideas and customs, and ensuing the growth in interrelationships. The independent states of Phoenicia ended with the Assyrian conquests of the eighth and seventh centuries BCE.

9.3 Egypt. The isolated neighbour (ca 2000-1000 BCE)

Egypt and its life-giving river the Nile, lay in the south-western end of the Fertile Crescent. In contrast to its counterparts, within the ‘arc-arm’ part of the Crescent, Egypt was far more isolated and geographically confined (cf Maps 1 & 15). This resulted in a steady, uniform and conservative civilization which lasted, with little change, for hundreds of years and with only various dynasties succeeding each other from the time of the Early Dynasty, ca 3100 BCE, through the Middle into the late Dynasty, ca 525 BCE (cf Hobson 1987:14-18). Such confinement isolated Egypt to a great extent from other invaders, and thus did not make her prone to the invasions which the kingdoms within the Fertile Crescent were subjected to.

However, she did venture beyond her borders for economic reasons as well as to go on military campaigns. Mesopotamian cylinder seals have been found in Egyptian graves, whilst some graves at Abydos and Sakkara contain Lebanon wood and jars of Syrian oil (Halla et al 1971:210; cf Dalley 1984:6,7). Several motifs too, were borrowed from Mesopotamia. The intertwined necks of serpents on the stele of Narmer (cf Fig 33) are represented on seal impressions from Uruk (cf Culican 1966:16; Halla et al 1971:209). These indicate interactions mostly through trade, since the trade route ran from Mesopotamia through Palestine to Egypt (cf map 6). An inscription from a tomb of Uni at Abydos, a commander of the army of Pepi I (ca 2300 BCE), relates the conquest of the plain of Acco and a part of the Jezreel valley (Aharoni & Avi-Jonah 1968:25; cf Buttery 1974:3). Egypt might be isolated, but that did not refrain her from going beyond her borders and even further, than the boundaries of Palestine.

The early years indicate that whenever Egypt fell apart, it was mostly due to her own internal weaknesses rather than threats from outside. The Old Kingdom, (Dynasties III-VIII, ca 2650-2200 BCE) underwent such a period of chaos when Pepi I (ca 2200 BCE) died, and a decline of central authority ensued (Halla et al 1971:234). The Middle Kingdom (ca 2050-1800 BCE), managed to bring order and a period of prosperity ensued.

The event which brought this kingdom to an end was the invasion and takeover (ca 1720 BCE), by a band of horse taming western Asiatics known as the Hyksos (Halla et al 1971:250-252). They arrived, wearing body armour and wielding scimitars and bows, and they rode 'horse and chariot' (Moorey 1986:210; cf Spalinger 2005:1-36). To the Egyptians this was a new, fearsome weapon of war, and one which gave the Hyksos the necessary upper hand with which to subdue them. The chariots of the Hyksos, in contrast to those of the other nations, carried three men, two fighters and one driver. The other peoples who had chariots used only two men, one to drive and the other as the fighter (cf Fig 34; Moorey 1986:203, 204). The building method which the Hyksos used, of a massive embankment, glacis and moat, finds echo at Jezreel, and seemed to have been a method of fortification used in *protecting large areas for horses and chariots* (cf Aharoni & Avi-Jonah 1968:30). Ahmose I (1558 BCE) eventually expelled the Hyksos from Egypt in 1573 BCE.

Dynasties XVIII - XX of the New Kingdom (1570-1090 BCE) established their own power-base, and soon the 'new kings' Ahmose, Thutmose I, II and III marched their armies to Palestine and beyond. The campaigns of Thutmose III (1468 BCE) took him up to Kadesh and then to the Euphrates. His Syrian campaigns are detailed on the Jebel Barkal Stele from Sudan (cf COS2.2B). There is also a series of reliefs in the temple at Karnak which record the large booty Thutmose exacted from the Syrian coastal towns, a record confirmed by one of his nobles' narrations, who mention horses, silver, jewels, copper and many more items. All sorts of plant specimens, which Thutmose had brought home, are also drawn on the relief (cf Culican 1966:36; Fig 35). Somehow this act seems to reflect a sensitivity one does not expect in a man of such militaristic inclinations! This campaign of his was set in place by the withdrawal of Megiddo from Egyptian control. Many

of the kinglets were trying to rid themselves of the Egyptian yoke. The first known chariots used in battle was here at Megiddo, 1456 BCE (King 2000:275), when Thutmose defeated a large coalition of Syro-Palestinians (cf COS 2.2A). Thutmose spared Megiddo after he had besieged and took the city. As detailed in my chapter on Tells (cf 4.2) Megiddo, due to her location, defence position and importance as a city of trade and wealth, became not just a target for conquest, but became a cause justifying an effect (Spalinger:2005:83-84), and in the process an act of conservation. Worthwhile noting is Thutmoses' reckoning of the number of *maryanna* troops captured and transported back to Egypt. These were able warriors, considered to be of a higher status than an ordinary soldier, usually well trained drivers of chariots, and hence fighters of format for his army (Spalinger 2005:110).

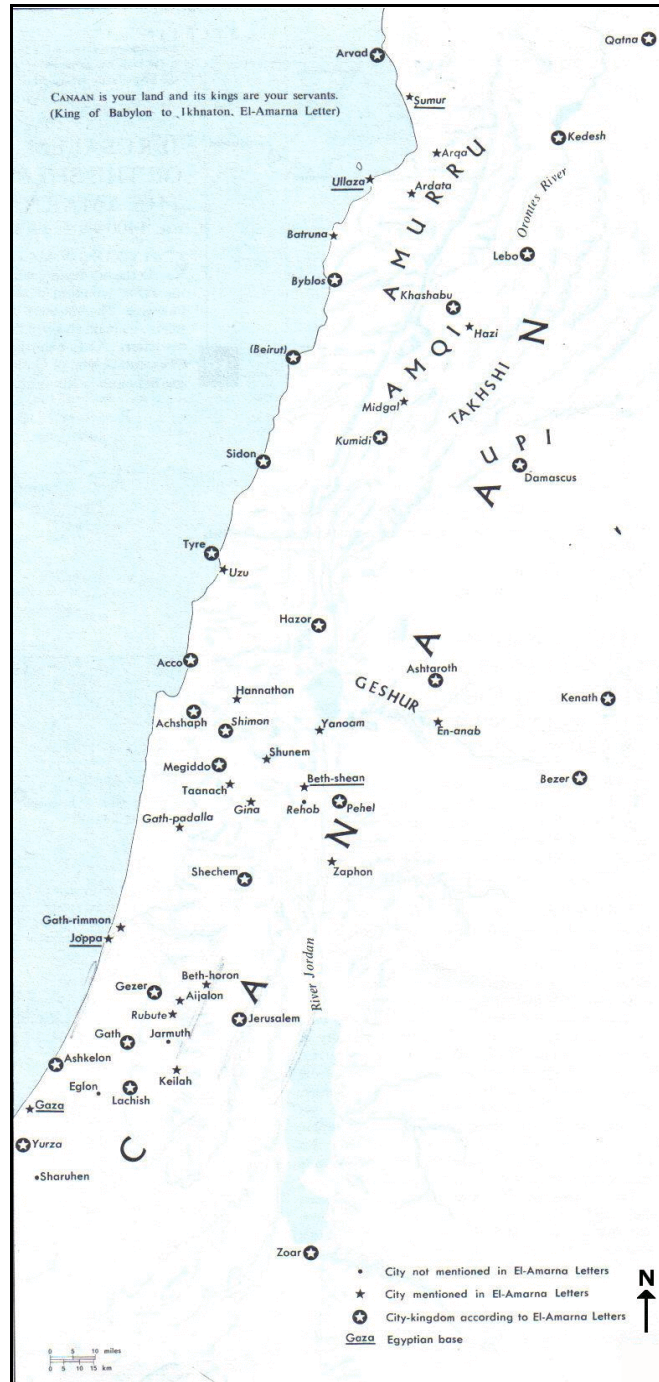
The hostile confederation of Libyans and Asiatics allies (Sea Peoples) forced the Egyptians into an operation of defence. The boast, by Merneptah, that he had won this battle (1220 BCE), can be read on the 'Israel Stele'(cf Fig 36). The inscription reads, '... Ashkelon is taken, Gezer captured Israel lies desolate...' (cf COS 2.6). This inscription *places the Israelites in Israel at that time*. In contrast to conquests which were fought on land in the Fertile Crescent, the Egyptians fought the invaders, such as the Sherden, Peleset and Shekelesh by means of sea-battles, a method very alien to peoples like the Akkadians, Babylonians and Assyrians (Tubb 1998:91-93).

However, a gradual decline was setting in, even though during Solomon's reign we read, in 1 Kings 3:1, that he had married Pharaoh's daughter and, in 1 Kings 10:28 that he had imported horses and chariots from Egypt. After the death of Solomon, Egypt tried again to dominate the two kingdoms when Shishak invaded the land (924 BCE). That was a last foray into Palestine. At the end of the sixth century the Persian tide had washed over the Fertile Crescent towards Egypt, and that ancient civilization's days were numbered.

Even though the empire was gone, the influence Egypt had on the people of Israel and the Syrian enclave, whether politically, socially, economically, militarily or religiously, was of great impact. The northern part of Egypt had the Mediterranean Sea as a coastline and border and hence her sea

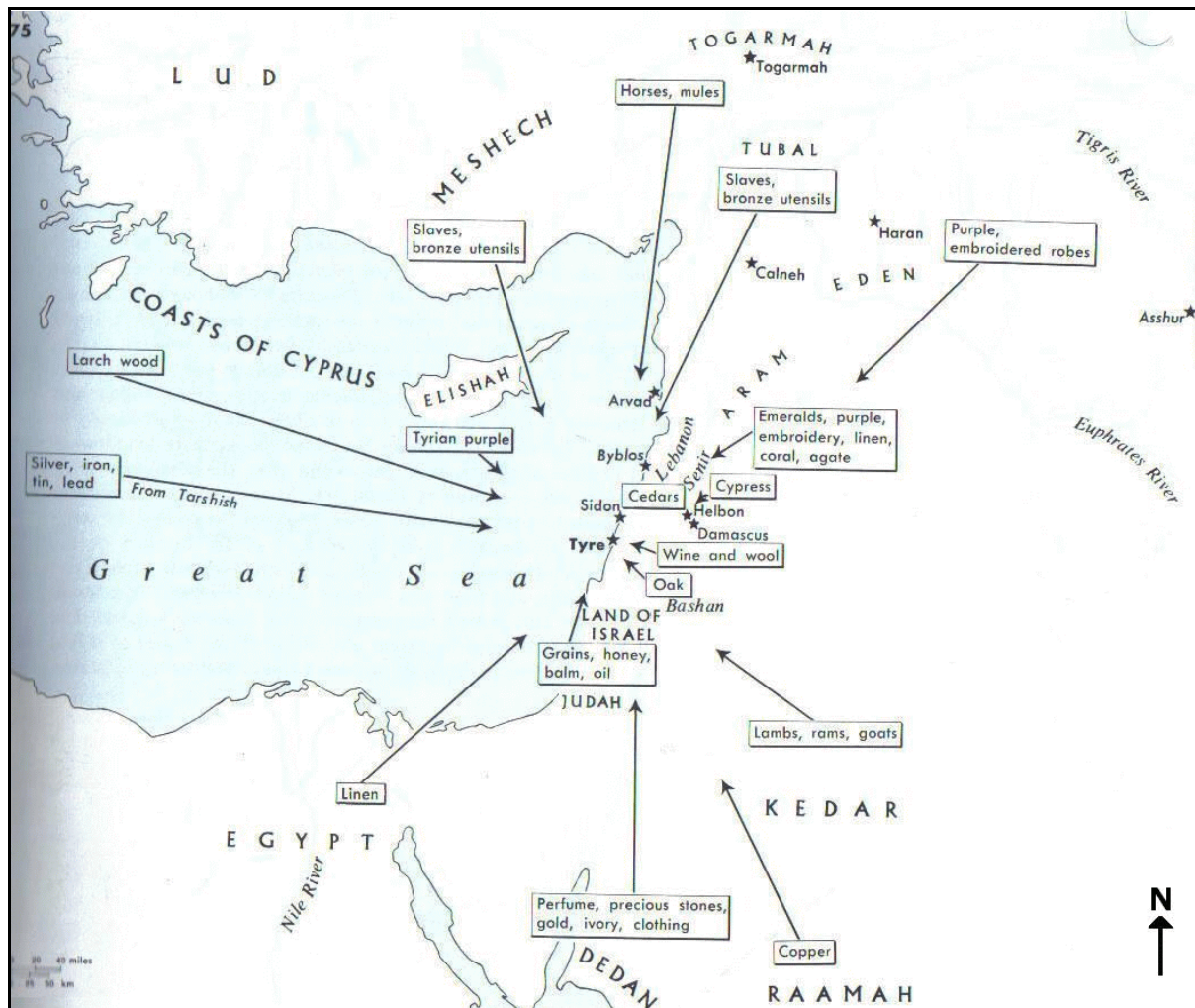
battles. She therefore had her own economic wealth via her maritime trade and her relations with sea traders such as the Phoenicians. Thus, from Egypt came not only merchandise such as slaves, perfumes and the gold of Ophir, but also the various motifs, which found expression in the arts and crafts used for buildings, for carved ivories and for other objects of beauty. Some of the motifs used were palm fronds, lotus flowers and sphinxes. These motifs are found reflected in the ivories which were discovered in the 'ivory house' at Samaria (cf Figures 32a, 32b) and in the rooms of the palaces of the kings (cf Fig 32c-32e) and rulers, and the homes of the wealthy classes, from all areas of the Fertile Crescent.

As to her military background? We find the shift from the Old Kingdom to the New Kingdom as one where the bow, spear, club and shield were still in full use but, the military had become more organized. A new introduction was the use of 'shock units', where more intensely trained men were employed. Then came the introduction of the war chariot and the more sophisticated weaponry of the Hyksos, and soon troops were led by a *caste* of professional soldiers, whilst the charioteers were drawn from the higher ranks of society (cf Buttery 1974:6). A colourful representation of Egypt's 'enemies' can be seen on tiles found in the mortuary temple of Ramesses II at Medinet Habu. The varied hairstyles and dress codes, with different kilt lengths either to foot or knee, indicate the traditional backgrounds of these Nubians, Syrians, Canaanites and Philistines. However, they all seem to prefer very colourful and beautifully patterned cloth to wear (cf Fig 37). These adaptations and refinements to the Egyptian military force, if compared with the Babylonians or Assyrians, came at a much later stage in their military history (cf Spalinger 2005:249) than those of her neighbours in the Fertile Crescent - a consequence of geographical limitations.



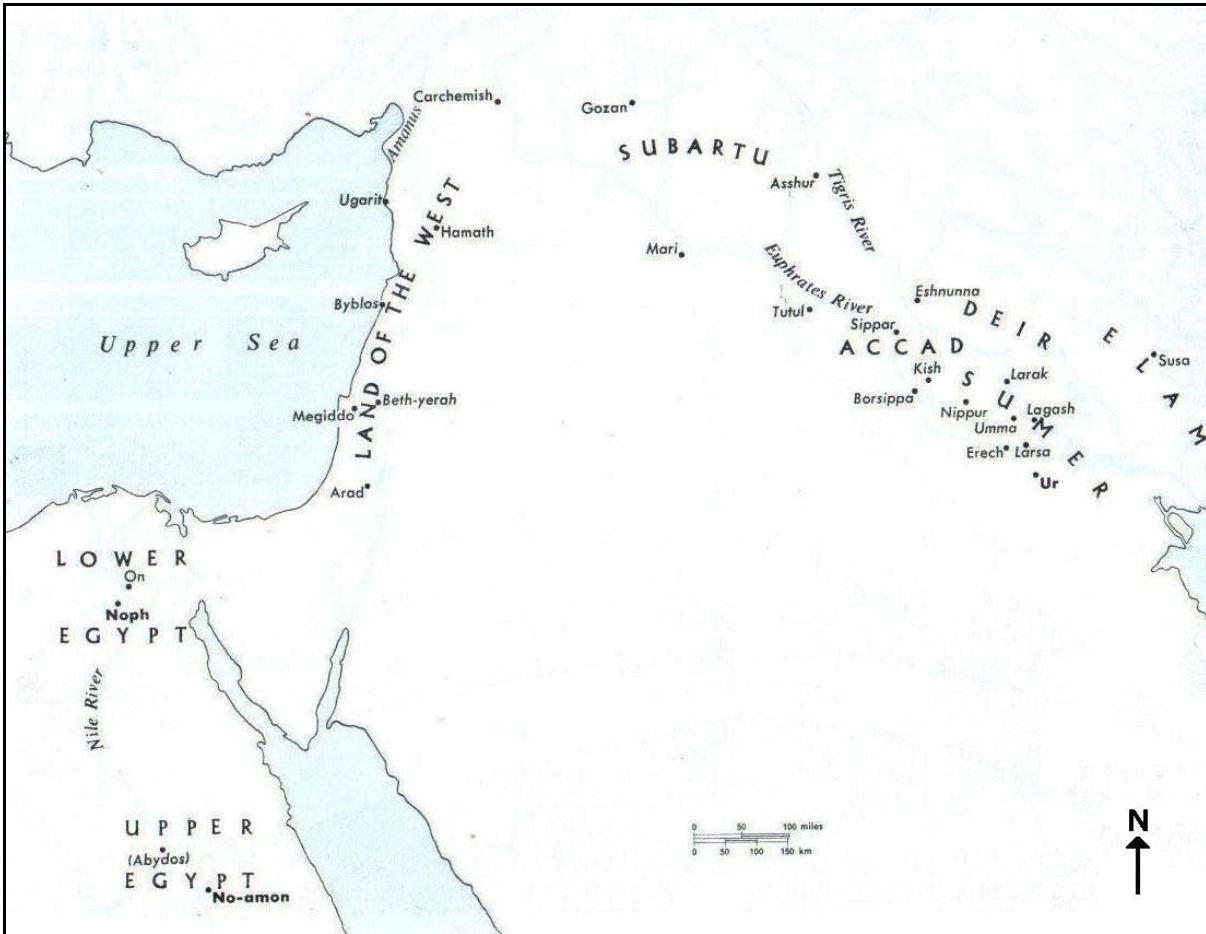
Map 13 Canaan / Syria: The Amarna Age
(ca 1400 BCE)

The El-Amarna letters are an informative source on this area of the Near East, and portray the correspondence between Egypt and the Canaanite kings.



Map 14 Trade Map Phoenicia
(ca 1000 - 650 BCE)

The extensive routes which Phoenicia could travel, was largely due to her geographical position. Her sea and land routes of trade spanned the Near East to the coasts of Spain and France.



Map 15 Egypt and the Ancient Near East

Egypt was largely self-contained due to her economy which was agriculturally based. For many raw materials Egypt had to rely on foreign trade, outside her borders.



Fig 30 Egyptian Execration Text
(ca 1900 BCE)

These clay figures bore the names of enemies of Egypt and were accompanied by curses.

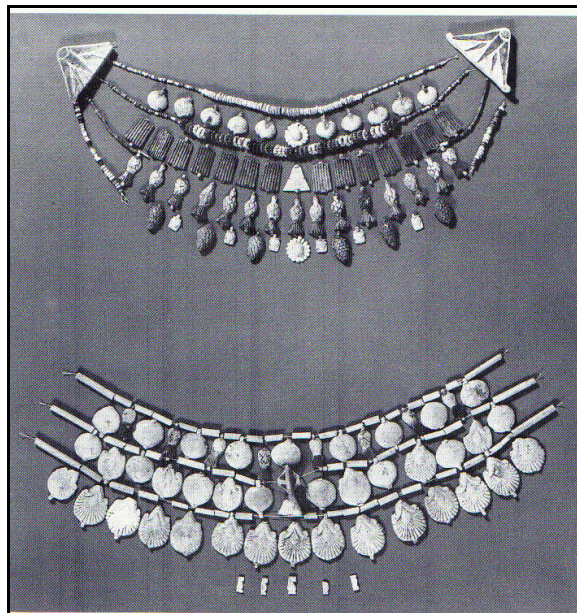
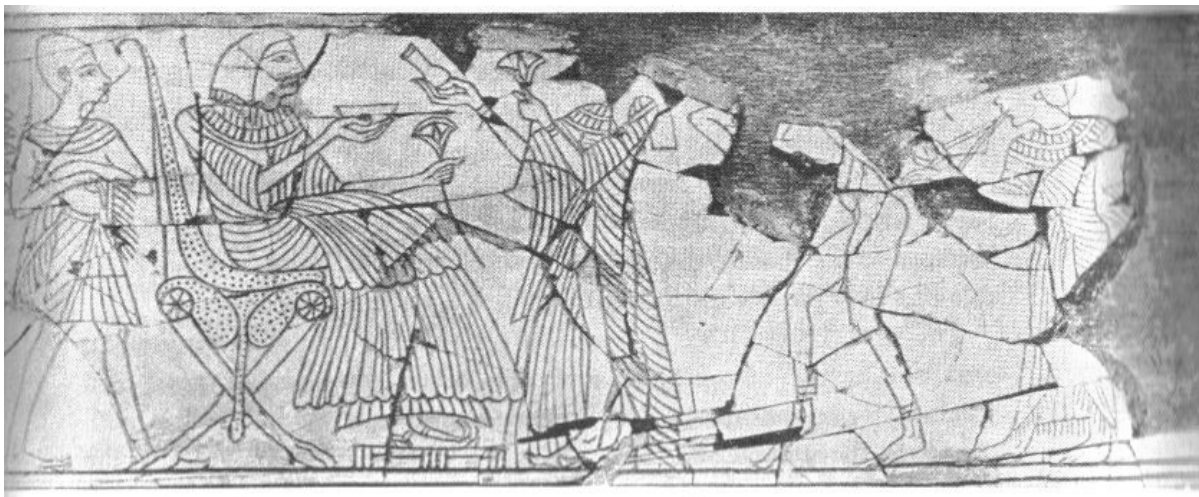


Fig 31a Necklaces from Lachish
(ca 1500 BCE)

Composed of faience beads and pendants, they illustrate Egyptian styles within Canaanite art.



31b Ivory casket from Tell el-Far'a
(ca 1300 BCE)

Banquet scene showing a dignitary being entertained by a dancer and pipe player.



Fig 32 a Samarian Ivories: Cherub-Sphinx

The cherub-sphinx retains a vestigial Egyptian royal crown. Egyptian influence very strong.



Fig 32b Samarian Ivories: Woman at Window

The 'woman at the window' was a favourite motif. It might represent a prostitute for Astarte's temple.

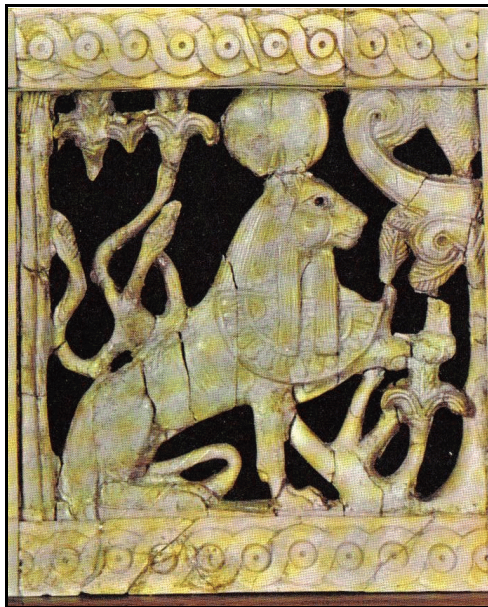


Fig 32c Nimrud Ivories:

Lion in Lily-Grove

Lion in a lily-grove. The head-dress is Egyptian. The cable-border motif would spread to Greece and Italy.



Fig 32d Nimrud Ivories: Lion attacking Boy

Lion attacking a boy. The cruelty portrayed here contrasts strangely with the lion scene in Fig. 32c which depicts a majestic serenity.

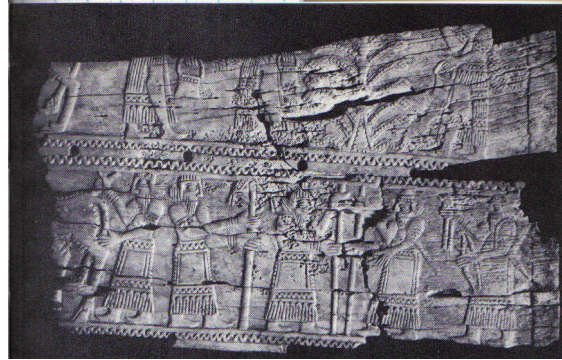


Fig 32e Ziwiye (Iran) Ivory

A local style, inspired by Phoenician influence, depicting Iranian dress, which contrasts sharply with Assyrian armour.



Fig 33 The Narmer palette
(ca 3000 BCE)

The upper part possibly portrays an expedition to Mesopotamia, and perhaps here, as at Uruk, the intertwined necks symbolize the Twin Rivers' tamed by Narmer.

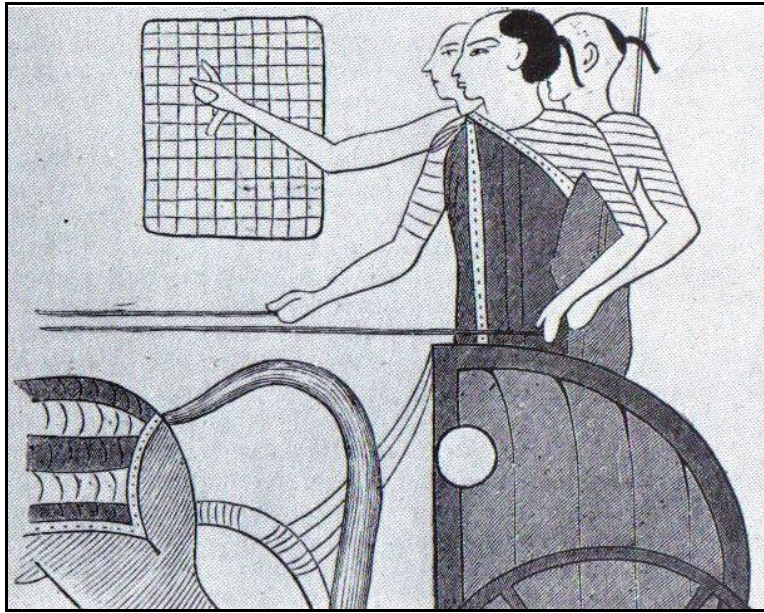


Fig 34 The light war chariot (Hittites)
(ca 1700 - 1200 BCE)

The Hittites made use of this chariot in order to draw the enemy into the open, where these vehicles could be used effectively. They used a three-man team in contrast to other nations' two-man teams.

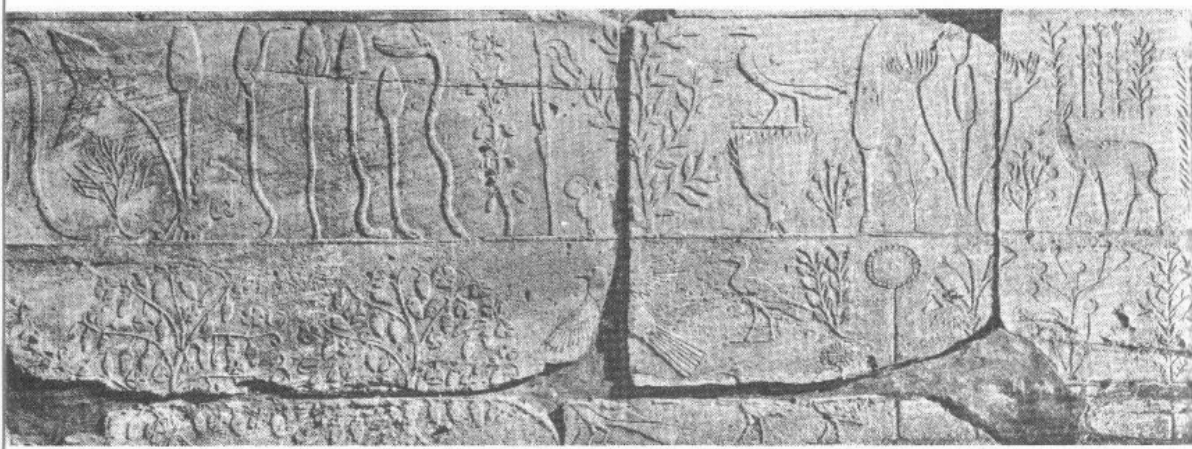


Fig 35 "The Karnak Botanical Garden" Relief.
Temple of Amun, ca 1475 BCE

This wall relief depicts Thutmoses' expedition to Palenstine and includes this picture of plants he had brought back.



Fig 36 The Merneptah (Israel) Stele
(ca 1250 BCE)

Found in the mortuary chamber of pharaoh Merneptah, this stele has the name "Israel" inscribed as one of the defeated enemies of Egypt.



Fig 37 Tiles, representing the enemies of Egypt

Found in the mortuary temple of Ramesses II at Medinet Habu. Depicted from left to right is the colorful clothing worn by a Nubian, Canaanite, Philistine, Syrian, Nubian and Syrian.

CHAPTER TEN

10 LOCATING THE WARRIOR - THE ISRAELITE CONTEXT

According to the biblical text Abraham was called by Yahweh to leave his home town Ur and to settle in a promised land called Canaan (Gn12:1-9). This settlement though, was not accomplished until much later (ca 1300 BCE), when the Hebrew 'slaves' from Egypt entered Canaan under the leadership of Joshua (Jos 1-3). Before entering the promised land, a covenant had been concluded at Sinai, between their god, Yahweh, and themselves as his chosen people. The war-like character of Yahweh (Ex 15; Jdg 5) is very evident and so, as their supreme champion and warrior, the conquest was to be a matter of speedy resolve (Jdg 1-8, 12). Few details of this initial birth, of the land of Israel and the Israelites, can be conclusively verified by other sources (Moscatti 1957:125, 126; Tubb 1998:60). However, Exodus 1:11 reports that the Hebrews built the cities of Pitom and Ramses, which date the 'Exodus' to Ramesses II (ca 1290-1223 BCE), and there is Merneptah's (1224-1214 BCE) listing of Israel as a socio-political entity on his victory stele (cf Fig.36), whilst archaeological excavations have located the destruction of cities, such as Lachish, Hazor and Debir, within the period of the Judges (Mazar 1990:332-334).

The general picture though must contain historical kernels of truth, since Abraham's immigration probably reflects the movements of Amorite and Aramean peoples in the first half of the second millennium (Halla et al 1971:73). The reference to God as 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', seem to reflect the Sumero-Akkadian idea of a personal god, while use of the divine name such as El-Elyon, El Shaddai reflects an older stage in Israelite or even pre-Israelite religion (Tubb 1998:74; cf De Vaux 1961:289, 291, 294). However, a total conquest of Canaan did not occur and the Canaanites remained in the land (Jdg 1:21, 27-35) which means that the Israelites lived amongst a people who, like themselves, were of Semitic stock. The Ugaritic tablets, found in 1929, can be interpreted that the non-urbanised Canaanites were probably the core of the later Israelite nation (Tubb 1998:108). It therefore seems that Israel originated, as a nation, only on Canaanite soil (Moscatti 1957:126,127; Tubb 1998:110).

10.1 Israel and biblical history (ca 1300-900 BCE)

The border of the land of Canaan stretched from the south-eastern shore of the Dead Sea to the north up to ancient Lebo-Hamath, and further north-east to Damascus (cf Map 13). These borders reflect the Egyptian provinces of Canaan at the time of the emergence of the Israelites (ca 1250 BCE). The Canaanite city-states had always been weak, and relied on the Egyptian empire and the Hittite kingdom for support. By the late thirteenth century BCE though, these powers became enmeshed in the onslaught of the Philistines, one of the 'Sea Peoples' (cf Wright 1962:87,88). The Israelites moved into the vacuum left by the departure of the Egyptian garrisons (Herzog & Gichon 1997:40,41). All was not smooth sailing though, and archaeological evidence of the destruction of cities during this period, such as Lachish, and Hazor indicate confrontations and war. Likewise the absence of destruction of all the Canaanite cities, points to the fact that the Israelite settlement was by no means one of warfare only.

These people found themselves bound juridically, militarily and religiously to each other and their god, Yahweh, whilst they enjoyed a kind of political egalitarian tribal organization (Bergant 1992:48). In this they differed from the Canaanite city-state system. To these independent minded people, who clung to a God who directed all things, such a submission was inconsistent with their personal relationship with that deity, Yahweh (cf Wright 1962:88). They had judges rather, whom the 'lord had set over them' (Jdg 2:16) and who saw to the protection of the people, either by leading them into battle or by counselling the bravest in how to do so. Thus when the Israelites sought protection against the Canaanite king, Jabin of Hazor, Deborah (the seer and judge) was consulted about the matter. She selected Barak, a valiant warrior and told him to call volunteers and to enter into battle, since Yahweh will lead them to victory (Jdg 4:15). The battle was won and the Canaanite commander, Sisera, fled the scene and took refuge with Jael, wife of Heber, an 'ally' of Jabin. Jael, however, took the opportunity to kill Sisera by driving a peg into his skull (Jdg 4:21; 11.1.5.1). The Israelites then pressed home their attacks upon the king Jabin, and 'made an end' of him (Jdg 4:23, 24).

By the middle of the eleventh century the Israelites faced an enemy which had already made inroads into Canaan. Besides their trading activities, along the Canaanite coast, the Philistines had also installed military rule in Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod and Ekron (Herzog & Gichon 1997:80-82; Tubb 1998:110). Like the Canaanites these fighters had the technology to manufacture all manner of iron weaponry. This knowledge they kept to themselves, thus preventing the Israelites from making spears and swords (Jdg 13:19, 20). The Philistine threat became increasingly violent. The Israelites consulted their judge, Samuel, on the matter of *a king*, one who will govern and protect them, just like the neighbouring peoples. Despite Samuel's dark forebodings (I Sm 8:11,15,16), the initial anointment of Saul, the warrior chosen by Yahweh, took place (I Sm 9:15-17). He massacred the Ammonites and is finally anointed king at Gilgal (I Sm 11:15). He stemmed the Edomites, Amalekites, Moabites and Philistine threats (I Sm 14:47, 48). Then he settled in a fortress at Gibeah (I Sm 15:34), made his son Jonathan and cousin Abner lieutenants and David (his harp player) a commander in his army (I Sm 18:5). Saul died heroically by falling on his sword (I Sm 31:4). In this episode of a first king, Saul embodies the 'charismatic' judge who was chosen by God for a mission. But, unlike the temporary judges Saul continues the work of a judge, and so the charismatic leader, the *nagîd* (I Sm 9:16; 10:1) became the *melek*, the king (I Sm 11:15; cf De Vaux 1961:94).

David, his successor (ca 1000 BCE), was different in some aspects. His royal rank, as well as his captaincy over a band of warriors, and his period of service for the Philistines made him a man who had attained experiences which would make him better prepared for the task of kingship ahead. This he does by his accomplishment of the capture of the Jebusite city of Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6-10), which then became the city of David. This is very reminiscent of Sargon of Akkad, who built a new city, Agade, and made it his own (cf 6.2). David embarked on military campaigns, where he routed the Philistines, made inroads into the surviving Canaanite cities, and took his aggressive conquests beyond Israel to Moab, Edom, Ammon and Syria (cf Map 16). David's diplomatic treaty with Hiram of Tyre (2 Sm 5:11), was Israel's early beginning of the use of Phoenician materials and craftsmen,

a precedent which his son Solomon, and later kings, would utilize to the full. His empire was one recognised by the other powers of the Near East.

David's son, Solomon, inherited a secure and prosperous realm, and hence was no warrior, and did not engage in warfare but concentrated on building projects and internal development. He built the temple in Jerusalem to house the Ark. This action too is reminiscent of the Near East. Ur-Nammu built temples to the deities of Uruk, Larsa and Umma (Hallo et al 1971:78). He utilized the craftsmanship of the Phoenicians, as builders and ivory workers, in the building of this temple. Solomon though, introduced the system of forced labour (corvee), which brought dissatisfaction amongst the people (1 Ki 9:15-19; cf Paul & Dever 1973:188,189). After Solomon's death, his son, Rehoboam, handled the corvee matter badly, a schism ensued, and the two kingdoms of Israel in the north, and Judah in the south were born (1 Ki 12:16-19). From now on the two kingdoms would fluctuate between being either allies or enemies, a familiar pattern in the Ancient Near East.

The diminished status which both kingdoms had now acquired was a far cry from the greatness of the previous United Kingdom. Judah in the south had less fertile land than Israel in the north. However, being geographically removed from the countries which were the neighbours of Israel, Judah had greater stability militarily, whilst the presence of the temple in Jerusalem (the capital of Judah), embodied the centre of worship for all Israelites (cf Wright 1962:144,145), and was infused with the authority of its priesthood and its personification of the 'Davidic' line (2 Sm 7:16), a line of continuous succession which lasted until the exile by the Babylonians in 586 BCE.

The instability of the throne of Israel, in contrast to Judah, is reflected in a succession of usurpers, starting with Jeroboam (who experienced the invasion by the Egyptian, Shishak ca 925 BCE), followed by his son Nadab, then Baasha a military commander, Elah and his son, and Zimri a chariot commander. The rule of Omri (882-870 BCE), also an army commander, and his son Ahab (870-851 BCE) brought stability as well as a dynasty which ushered in a period of prosperity and wide interrelationships. Omri too, acquired for himself the prestige and power-display of a city of his own namely, Samaria. It was however, also a time of military campaigns and the need to

protect Israel's borders. In corroboration with Hadad-ezer of Damascus, Irhuleni of Hamath and troops of Byblos, Egypt and Arvad, Ahab could, with a contingent of 2000 chariots, count himself as a power to reckon with at the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE, against the Assyrian, Shalmaneser III. These exploits are inscribed on the Monolith stele of Shalmaneser III. Jehu, the (grand)son of Nimshi (842-814 BCE), became the successor to Ahab's ineffectual sons. His obeisance to Shalmaneser III, after that king's conquests of Syria and Israel (cf Figures 8a, 8b), is in contrast to the successes of Ahab who had no need to kneel before the Assyrians. Samaria fell to Sargon II in 722 BCE, from whence he deported parts of the population to regions in the Assyrian kingdom (2 Ki 18:9-12; cf Fig 27). Israel remained a province of Assyria until 628 BCE.

The kingdom of Judah was, in contrast to Israel, somewhat of a backwater state. She had her share of confrontations though. Shishak (925 BCE) made inroads there, Jehoshaphat (867-851 BCE) had offensive and defensive alliances with Israel, Jehoram (851-843 BCE) tried to stem the Edomites, Joash (812-810 BCE) came under pressure from Damascus, whilst Amaziah (799-785 BCE) captured Edom, and Hezekiah (724-697 BCE) managed to repel the Assyrian Sennacherib (2 Ki 18:13-16; 19:32-36). The weakness of Assyria allowed Judah to incorporate much of the former Israel, but soon pharaoh Necho battled against Josiah of Judah (628-609 BCE) at Megiddo. The final loss of this kingdom happened when the Babylonians captured and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BCE (2 Ki 25:8-17).

10.1.1 Economic and social life. Considering that the Israelites were very late-comers to the political and military scene of the Ancient Near East, it took them only about 200 years to establish themselves as part of that milieu. Their economic situation was an agricultural one, with animal husbandry as an additional means of goods and food supply. The lives of the masses were thus very much a subsistence type of economics. The campaigns of David brought the trade of those peoples he had conquered into the realm of the United kingdom. The adjacent Phoenicia was an added bonus, and David's connection with Hiram of Tyre set the scene for future trade and its benefits. The manner in which the adjacent lands and city states were managed by their rulers, soon became a manner imitated by the monarchy of the United kingdom. Solomon had no hesitation in building

palaces for himself and his numerous wives. His building projects were not only costly in materials and craftsmen, but also costly to the lives of men who were not used to such forced manipulation (corvee) of their 'freedom'. A seal, of unknown provenance, but belonging to Pela'yahu, a 'king's man', clearly designates him as one '... who is over the corvee' (cf Avigad 1980:171,172) an indication that corvee was a reality for the Israelites. However, just as the trade relations of David had brought riches to the merchants and upper classes, so the merchants of Solomon brought luxury goods and items to adorn the person and abodes of the elite. Egypt was not a threat anymore, and from her domain now came slaves, perfumes, gold and the various motifs found in the ivory arts and crafts used for the homes of the rich (cf Fig 33a, 33b; Schneider 2001:52).

Although Solomon's reign was seen to be one of affluence, the period of the Omrid dynasty eclipsed these economics of the United kingdom. Solomon had not been a warrior and had not fought wars. Like David though, Omri and his son Ahab (873-853 BCE) were warriors who successfully fought battles and who kept their interrelationships with 'pagan' kingdoms alive, despite dire admonishments from the prophets (cf Elijah the Tishbite, 1 Ki 17:1). The kings of the two kingdoms could not isolate themselves, whether for religious or political considerations. The task involved in the establishment of the new city, Samaria, and the subsequent labour needed to do the job, could only have come about with the help, expertise and materials from neighbouring kingdoms. The magnitude of the defence system, which Ahab built at Jezreel, illustrates the other side of the coin, since neighbouring kingdoms could also declare war, and preparedness was thus the order of the day. Jezreel was a different reality to that of Samaria, one which looked beyond grandeur towards the contextual realities of the ninth century (cf Schneider 2001:28).

However, the realities of the economic boom were that the monarchs of the Israelite kingdoms increasingly became mirror images of Near Eastern kings and kingdoms, and that meant that only royalty, governors and high officials benefited from this affluence. Abuse of royal power is reflected in 2 Kings 21:1-4, where we read of Naboth's vineyard which became the property of Ahab since he wanted it. When drought forced Ahab to seek fodder for his (chariot) horses and mules (1Ki 18:1-6), he did so believing it to be his prerogative to save the royal animals. We can assume

that all available fodder was confiscated and that the peasant had to silently accept the starvation of his own mules. Amos rails against 'ivory beds' and 'ivory houses' (2 Ki 6:4; 3:15) and speaks of the destitute who have their heads ground in the earth (Amos 2:6-7). The Israelite monarchy and its elite members, had easily adopted the ways of their neighbours. The days of the Judges, with their egalitarian jurisdiction were over.

10.1.2 Religious stances. Israel was the only one amongst the nations of the Ancient Near East with a belief in one god. This was a notion which necessarily impacted on their world view. The other peoples had not only an own god for their own city, they readily adopted foreign gods into their pantheon of gods. They had no qualms about creating images of these gods, an activity forbidden to the Israelites (Dt 4:15-18). Their God was a warrior who fought on their behalf, and he was the only one to rule over them. However, the new kingship was slowly transforming into an hereditary office and the judges no longer functioned as the traditional ideals of the past. The prophets therefore took that onus on themselves and as such the authority to disclaim, praise or condemn the kings of Israel or Judah. This is in great contrast to the monarchs elsewhere in the Near East who would not have allowed such infringement on their divine status of kingship.

10.1.3 Military emergence. The realities, which the 'invading Israelites had to face, was one based on war. Right from the beginning these people faced one or the other enemy. In the process they obviously learned how to address this matter. If we look carefully at the incident of Deborah and Barak's handling of the attack on the Canaanites, the following becomes evident (cf 10.1).

1) Deborah commands Barak to find *volunteers*, an action which denotes the lack of a standing army, a situation similar to Gideons' plight (cf Judges 7:1-8). This military 'lack', which Israel experienced at that time, was thus in contrast to the city-states with its corps of warriors and troops. However, only a short span of about fifty years later, Saul has a personal band of 300 warriors who accompany him on his campaigns, and has command of troops when they are needed. He also names members of *his family* as commanding officers. David improves on this matter by his personal army of 600 who accompanies him on his campaigns, as well as staying at his side when David 'defects' to the Philistines. The commanders he appoints are from within the rank of these warriors, namely,

Abisha (2 Sm 23:18) and Benaiah (2 Sm 23:23).

2) The *execution of the king and destruction of his city* which Deborah and her 'army' inflict on Jabin, are of the pattern one discerns in the inscriptions of kings from within the Fertile Crescent. Iahdun-Lim of Mari states: '....vanquished their troops, heaped their bodies ...' (cf COS 2.111), and Hammurabi of Babylon says: '... I wiped out the enemies everywhere ...' (CH xI vii 22-31 in Roth 1997:133, quoted by Van de Mieroop 2005:123), and so forth.

3) *Allegiances* are made to ensure the co-operation of ones' allies. Jael, the wife of Heber, showed how easy allegiance could be switched when she killed Sisera without any qualms. There are many instances, of such covenants or treaties being broken, ignored or simply switched to suit contextual realities. We find good examples of this type of behaviour during the period when Hammurabi was on the ascend. He played the field as it suited him. His conquest of Mari was due to the opportunistic games international allies played (cf Van de Mieroop 2005:68-75).

4) The importance given to *women* in this war scene. In the Near East such stress, placed on the part of women, is not so obvious. Her role as judge puts her in line to advise and to command, but not to enter the field of conflict (cf 11.1.5).

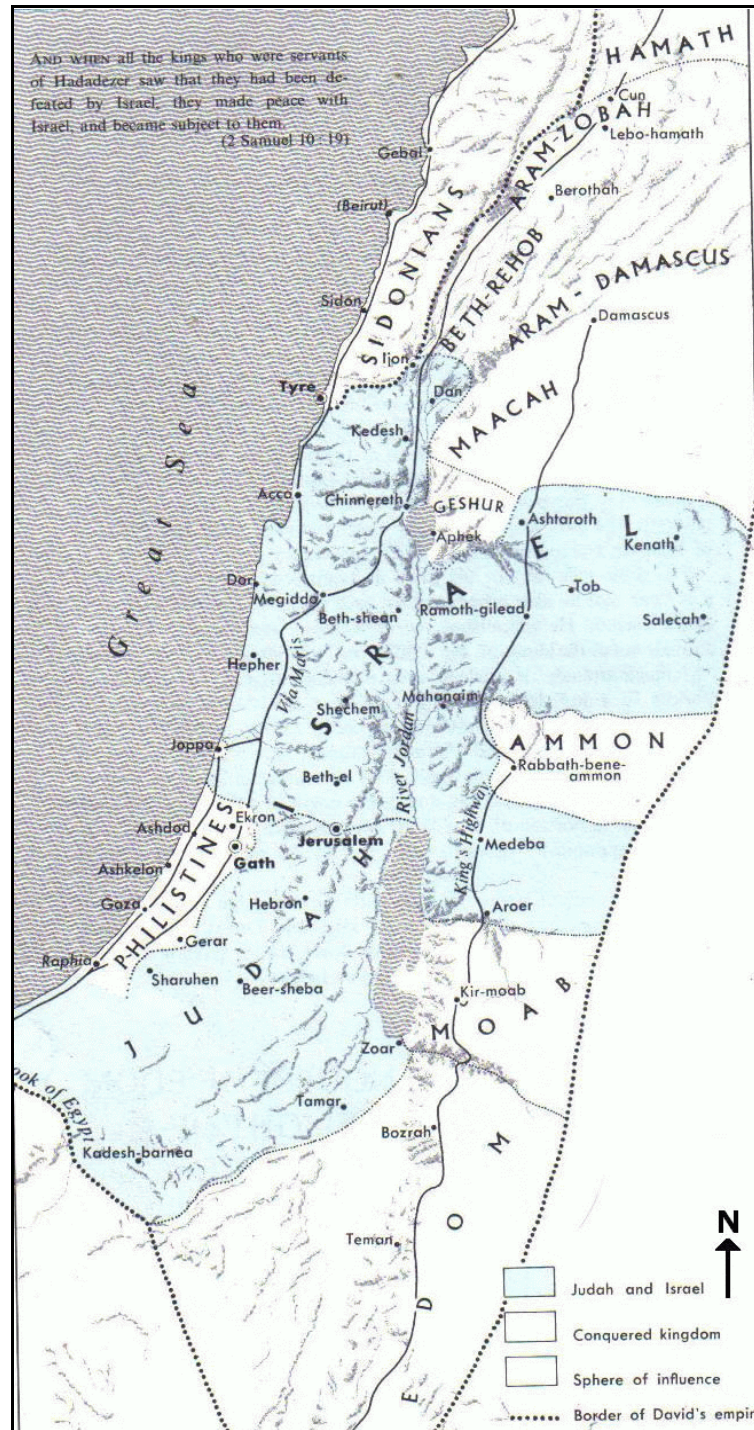
5) The *pattern of warfare* in the Deborah incident closely resembles the general route such a confrontation took within the conflicts of the Near East, namely, Divine intervention, preparation for battle and the aftermath (cf Cornelius 1995:15-23). Included in this pattern according (Richter (1966), quoted in Ackerman 1975: 8,9), would also be 'allusion to distress', since the people are suffering (cf Jdg 6:13 or 1 Sm 9:16), and, 'objection to the task', where the leader, such as Barak, will not go to battle unless Deborah accompanies him (cf Jdg 4:8).

6) The part *Yahweh* played in the story of Sisera's defeat. Deborah assures the people of Yahweh's victory over the Canaanites, since it is Yahweh who fights the battle. This belief in a god leading and fighting a war differs from the notion that the god commands the king to go to war. Shamsi-Adad is the pacifier of the land, by the command of the god Ashur (cf COS 2.110), and Hammurabi achieves victory by means of the god Marduk (cf COS 2.107B).

Consequently, we find that the Israelites emerged as a warring nation amongst people who, though similar in some aspects, differed in (actually) very few others. The comparisons indicate that the

Israelites were not alien to the context within Canaan. As mobile nomads in their sojourns across the lands of the Fertile Crescent, they were not always intent on routes of conquest. However that did not mean that they were not prepared for such eventualities. A wall painting in the tomb of Khnumhotep at Beni Hassan in Egypt (cf Fig 38), shows Asiatics bringing eye-paint and two gazelles for the prince (1890 BCE). Very obvious are weapons, such as spears and a throwing axe, which the men and the little boy are carrying. These are signs of a climate, never completely safe. But, once they adopted a sedentary life, the situation changed, and defence of property became a critical issue.

The Canaanite and Philistine military and social norms which they had experienced and observed in the past, became a basis for their reaction to these confrontations. Hence their familiarity with iron technology took but a couple of decades to become a reality. Exploration of the valley of the Arabah and Ezion-geber, Solomon's seaport on the Red Sea, have revealed not only copper and iron ores, but smelters and heaps of slag, all indications of mining activities. Built during Solomon's reign, the extracted ore was smelted, put into crucibles, further refined by means of fire and then worked into ingots for shipment (Wright 1962:135,136; cf Fig 39). Therefore the Israelites, though late-comers to the 'conquest syndrome' could achieve military success so quickly. The contextual vacuum, left by the Egyptian departure, and the Philistine threat to the security of the land, combined in an application of the familiar methods of the past.



Map 16 Israel: The Kingdom of David
(ca 1000 BCE)

Israel reached its military peak under David, who subjugated the surrounding nations.



Fig 38 Wall Painting at Beni Hassan, Egypt
(ca 1900 BCE)

This illustration depicts the type of clothing worn by Semitic men and women. Also shown are their defensive weapons as well as tools and utensils.

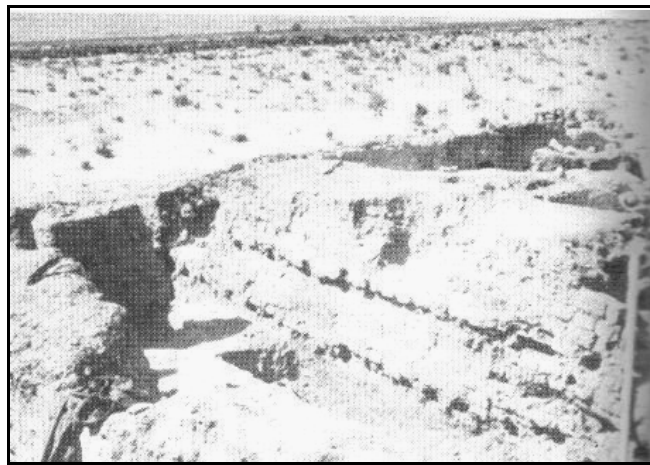


Fig 39 Smelter and refinery at Ezion-Geber

The south side of the smelter has a double row of flue-holes. These holes created a draft which made the fire hot enough to refine metal.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

11 IDENTIFYING ASPECTS OF THE WARRIOR ETHOS

Within the previous chapters I concentrated on factors such as geographical settings and historical events which influenced trade contacts, invasions by foreign tribes and military confrontations . Within this exercise it became obvious that the human element was very much a part of the overall, and in many cases, the specific essence of the scheme of things. Here the specific denotes the almost continuous refrain of confrontation and conflict, one which started to escalate with the emergence of cities. Our sources, on the whole, reflect the actions and deeds of kings rather than ordinary people. However, correspondence between rulers of city-states and empires proliferated, a fact which the numerous cuneiform tablets from Mari, Ebla, Ugarit and so forth can confirm. It is here amongst the letters that we meet those who were ‘next to the king’ and who ‘ate at his table’. Here too the logical deduction can be made that no king or kingdom can be governed and protected by the king alone. He needs the assistance of officials, administrators and military officers in order to effect the smooth running and prevention of chaos in his land. The inherent factors of the required services and obligations, can be discerned by the contents of the cuneiform tablets. Subjects range from administration, accounts, tax deliveries, temple offerings, letters, state reports, trade relations, land grants, loans, ration lists, famine relief, marriage proposals and many more daily necessities of life (Gelb 1965:230, 232, 242; Weinfeld 1970:185,187,189).

This scope of subjects thus required a diversity of expert persons who ranged from the highest command to the most mundane in order to control the economy of the country, to address religious rites and rituals, to defend the realm and to be at the side of the king when matters of political importance arose. Last but not least, to be the king’s companions in the hunt and at enjoyable banquets. Within this context we find a class structure, based on a relationship to the royal family and the palace and the city state, where wealth (economic) and the military background (land grants) were the main criteria but, as Gelb (1967:4) stresses, it is impossible to understand individual aspects of a society without placing them in the context of that society, hence all classes must be taken into consideration in order to emphasize a specific class. To speak of a warrior class and its ethos is thus

to address that ethos within the ethos of the king and his equals; the man who dwells in the city who works and pays taxes; the warrior who is trained to fight and defend, and the slave who is chattel, but who provides society with a backbone.

When we turn to the ‘official’ warrior, as a class separate from the other classes, we locate a man who performs a service (highly dangerous) and who applies an expertise, in vivid contrast to his fellow citizens. His warrior ethos will thus not only be of the elite world of wealth, power and the king’s rewards, but be of another world which encompasses war machines, weaponry, leadership of men, booty, death, kill, captives and so forth. How did the two worlds mesh? The king expected a reliable and efficient man. Shamsi-Adad installed governors and garrisons everywhere and kept a close watch on all matters in order to have no problems within his kingdom. He expected an organized chain of command (Halla et al 1971:36). A weak ruler soon had a warrior corps who defected or who had a strong commander who would acquire a measure of independence and start his own dynasty. Sargon of Akkad, cupbearer to the king of Kish (ca 2350 BCE) did so (cf Halla et al 1971:19). There is therefore an interconnection and an interrelationship (Læssøe 1963:23). The warrior could be born into an elite class or could have been born without such privileges, but one which could change by chance of circumstances. I therefore want to identify the warrior ethos by means of the various aspects of the context of his world.

This context, which spans the period ca 2100 - 800 BCE, is a very lengthy one of 1300 years. I therefore intend only to highlight specific eras. Within these eras (as was typical outside these periods) the main occupational hazard remained one of confrontation, which entailed military intervention. Transformation thus occurred mostly on the war-front whilst the agricultural scene would not change unduly. Trade would maintain its middle position, between the two opposites of war and peace. Consequently those who ‘ate at the king’s table’, whether governors, generals or high officials would be the most likely to be affected by changes. However, similarities of culture and language would temper the melting pot and often some old traditions, ancient laws and institutions would remain intact. The tendency, of administrative roles and military control, thus kept to a fairly regular pattern. The concentration will be as follows:

- 1) The Hammurabi / Zimri-Lim context, ca 1800-1600 BCE
- 2) The Assyrian emergence, ca 1400-900 BCE
- 3) The Israelite emergence, ca 1000-900 BCE

11.1 Cast and class

When the terms class and caste are mentioned, it must be borne in mind that there is a comparison as well as a difference in their meaning. Both terms denote people into acceptable or non-acceptable layers of society. Caste is one of the fixed and unchangeable social classes into which people are born or, a group of people who have the same position in society. However, when they lose caste, they lose their social position. This happens when a person is sold into slavery (Longman 1995:196). Class, in comparison, is a system which divides people into classes by means of their wealth, jobs, family and the quality of their life-style (Longman 1995:232). Classes have categories, such as upper, middle lower, professional and working. Within each category codes of ethics would decree that which is allowed and that which is disallowed. Sumerian proverbs, contained within cuneiform tablets from Nippur (ca 1900 BCE), allow glimpses of meanings of ethical behaviour:

‘A hand will be stretched out toward a hand stretched out’ (and) ‘A hand will be opened toward an open hand’(cf COS 1.174 § 22). The ethos of empathy and magnanimous gestures.

‘I promise!’ does not mean ‘I promised!’ (and) ‘Something is finished’ does not mean ‘It is finished’ (cf COS 1.174 §107). The ethos of responsibility and honourable intentions.

When the warrior breaks codes the rewards are taken away, shame is endured and execution could follow. Of course, there are always exceptions. When power, wealth and the king’s ear are available, it is likely that ‘codes of conduct’ were adapted to accommodate the context.

I shall now investigate the king, the man esteemed to be the superior warrior, the man who sets the tone of ethos. Then I shall take his wife (and harem) into consideration by means of a marriage ethos, and lastly the sons and heirs to his throne: an ethos of succession.

11.1.1 The kingly warrior. *'L'Etat c'est moi* could, with practically full justification, have been put into the mouth of a king of the Ancient Near East, since any aspect of state life, whether political, social, religious or international was the domain of the king. His all powerful status though, was tempered by the operation of certain taboos (Saggs 1984:147). As the man who ordered, ordained and controlled war and peace, his degree of involvement was based on religious considerations. This concept of divine rule finds expression in royal inscriptions and various documents which indicate that state relations were the creation of the gods, and humans were the instruments of the gods. Therefore responsibility rested with the gods but, he made his commands known to the king by means of omens. Hence wars were the wars of the gods and the king was their general. A number of Mari letters express the wish that '... the god smash the weapon of the enemy' (ARMT 111 15.5-8, quoted by Munn- Rankin 1956:71). A king was thus assisted by his deity when campaigning. Hammurabi of Babylon speaks of the mighty weapon, given by Zababa, to annihilate enemies (cf COS 2.131; Dalley 1995:416)

Alliances and treaties, made in order to help and aid an ally, were thus the direct results of a war situation. If a party failed to adhere to these written contracts, which were placed under divine rule and accompanied by sacrifices, the consequences would be defeat or deposition of the guilty party. In the case of the king the punishment the deity inflicted could or would be the bestowal of the crown on another (cf Munn-Rankin 1956:84,85). Military co-operation was probably the most oft aim of these treaties. The warrior ethos involved here is represented by a symbiotic binding which could not be broken. However, considering the volatile context existing between city-states, confrontations with nomads, greedy officers and agricultural/social conditions such as crop failures and famines, the warrior ethos accommodated itself to the situation. The example of the general Ishbi-Erra, (ca 2000 BCE) pertains. He used the spectre of famine to apply a warrior ethos of opportunity in contrast to one of honourable conduct when Ibbi-Sin, of the royal house of Ur, proved unable to defend his kingdom against the onslaughts of the Amorites, which resulted in a shortage of food-stuffs. Ishbi-Erra took control of the situation by stockpiling for himself and his men, and hence forcing Ibbi-Sin to cede to his demands.

When the father of Shamsi-Adad, Ila-Kabkabi (ca 1760 BCE), was king of Terqa, he made a pact with Jaggid-Lim of Mari, one which was not kept by the latter. Following the assumption of power by Shamsi-Adad, he appointed his son, Jasmah-Adad, to rule at Mari. This son wrote his father a letter in which he says: 'In my family there is none who has sinned against the gods: they all keep to the oaths ... Ila- Kabkabi and Jaggid-Lim swear a binding oath ... Ila-Kabkabi not sinned ... it is Jaggid-Lim who has sinned ...'(ARMT V, quoted by Læssøe 1963:41).

The king thus epitomized the highest warrior ethos, and his co-warriors, the nobles, the high officials, the commanders and generals would, simultaneously, adhere to these codes of conduct. Yet, despite the striving towards a 'good' and 'just' ethos the kingly face could turn to the dark side, and executions and maiming implemented. The Hanaens, coming from their pastures, pestered the city of Mari, and were summoned to military service, a command they ignored. The official in charge wrote to Shamsi-Adad: 'If it is in accordance with my lord ... one of the guilty men in prison be slain ... head cut off and taken around the towns ... they may take fright ... assemble quickly ...' (ARMT II, quoted by Læssøe 1963:48). This type of letter signifies that the king was no stranger to such requests!

The Assyrian kings did not call themselves 'kings' but, instead, saw themselves as a 'vice regent of the god Ashur', and as the gods' representatives on earth (Saggs 1984:148). As the empire and area of control expanded, the Assyrian warrior ethos found itself enmeshed in the heady application of a power which brooked no opposition. Due to the king being imbued with a semi-divine status, he was not readily accessible to all the people (even those at court). However, occasions did occur when all the high officials appeared before the king in order to pay their respects. On these occasions they were expected to present substantial gifts, an ethos of reciprocal gesture.

The Israelite kings, in contrast, were late-comers to the scene. Anointed by the prophets as the chosen of their god Yahweh, Saul and David (ca 1000 BCE) did not have divine status. Not only was their warrior ethos based on the belief of Yahweh as their supreme warrior and fighter of their battles, they also had a very recent 'nomadic' history. In an article on Habiru and Hebrews, Na'aman

((1986:273) highlights the nomadic Habiru ‘bands’, as being independent bodies, and having a single prominent leader, and hence sees their ‘predatory’ nature as an outcome of their contextual background (wars, famine and so forth) and thus as the stepping stones which led not only to employment as mercenaries, but also to military careers (cf Hauer 1978:68). Hence Saul and Davids’ warrior ethos was reflected in their performance on the battlefield (Meier 1991:64). Thus, in keeping with the rulers of Mesopotamia, we find the ethos of ‘strategies for own benefit’ and the ethos of killing ‘the unwanted’ in Davids’ appropriation of Jerusalem and the killing of Uriah (Sm 4:6-8; 2 Sm 11:14-17) and Saul’s killing of the priests of Nob (1 Sm 22: 18-19).

Now for a more domestic scene (although with its fair share of violence), where the king takes a lady as queen or concubine. The ethos of status, shall now be addressed.

11.1.2 Queens and harems. Monarchial society, throughout history, has reflected the importance of the ‘royal’ marriage as a means towards cementation of political, economical and military alliances (Postgate 1992a:148,149). In this respect princesses were a valuable asset, since they constituted the correct class and bloodline. They also signified the acquirement of land, goods and wealth. A king blessed with many daughters therefore, had an advantage over his less fortunate royal ‘brothers’ (brother being a term used amongst the royal houses). Thus Zimri-Lim, with his plethora of daughters, had “marriage” connections with almost every king in Upper Mesopotamia (Dalley 1984:151,152). A harem consisting of the chief wife, secondary wives and concubines, was thus a supply of lucrative, human assets, and constituted a status symbol (Bryce 2003:107). An added bonus was that the king was in touch with the stresses of enemies and friends within and without his kingdom. This was especially the case when a great king, a famous royal ‘brother’ (and by implication his actions, decisions and military movements) requested the hand of a daughter. A code of reciprocity and honour would act as a treaty (Dalley 1984:151), and the approached king would only submit the highest-ranking daughters, ie daughters of the chief wife (Bryce 2003:107).

David's harem at Hebron reflects a geographical supply of wives closer to home than those of his Mesopotamian counterparts (2 Sm 3:2-5). The 'wives of his sons at Jerusalem' though are more diverse and include alien origins (2 Sm 5:13-16). David's son, Solomon, 'a lover of women' had no problem in acquiring many foreign wives (1 Ki 11:1-3). His harem of seven hundred royal wives and three hundred concubines stretches the mind but, many of these were probably tokens, an indication of his status and prestige. The contrast, between a king's harem in ca 1800 BCE and that of one in 1000 BCE, is that there is no contrast but rather a comparison. To have been the daughter of a king was not a privilege to be envied, since their reality was one of being high-class chattel, to be bartered and exchanged for gold and precious commodities (Bryce 2003:111).

The harem thus constituted as a part of the king's personal possession and affirmed his power to please his aesthetic concerns and intentions to want to have the best, an ethos suitable to one who gets the best. Zimri-Lim demonstrates this in a letter to his wife, Shiptu, on a shipment of conquered female weavers. 'Choose some ... who are perfect and flawless ... let their status be altered (from weaver to the more prestigious position of singer) ... concern their food ... so that their appearance may not be displeasing' (ARM X, 126, quoted by Bottéro 2001:138).

The king, within an ethos of marriage was, as customary in the Ancient Near East, the patriarchal head of his family. His authority, as those of his male citizens, defined descent and inheritance, punishment and reward. Hence his right to inflict punishment and mutilation and, in the event of proven adultery he could, and probably would, condemn her to death (Saggs 1984:140,142). In an Old Babylonian case the wife's adultery is presented as the final and ultimate expression of her disdain for the marital bond. Her husband, having found her with a man '...seized them ... carried the bed (together with them) ... to the assembly ...' where various physical mutilations were ordered to be inflicted on the woman (IM 2805, 12-15, quoted by Roth 1988:196).

Another Old Babylonian case refers to an appeal directed to the king to redress the situation of Ninsigga, the wife of Lugal-me-urur, who had committed adultery with a certain Puturam. The king condemns both sinners 'to the stake', a punishment implying being impaled or, 'a mouth into

which a peg has been driven' or, 'a peg driven into the eye' (UET 5 203, quoted by Roth 1988:196; cf Saggs 1984:142). These methods of punishments were also used for other crimes. The king applies here an ethos which combines the world view of a patriarchal society, combined with the harsh, cruel laws of a military order, one in which disorder, disruption and disobedience is punished in a swift and brutal way, as a public display of the futility of wrongdoing. The display of a prisoners head pertains as another, albeit in a different context, example.

The biblical laws are of the same intensity as those of the Mesopotamian contexts. Sins against the marriage makes a person 'unclean' (Lv 18:20), whilst the stories in Genesis 20:1-16; 26:6-11 represent adultery as a sin against God. Punishments carried the death sentence and could vary from being stoned to death or to being burnt alive (Dt 22:23f; Ez 16:40). In the matter thus, of queens and concubines, the king's 'ethos of choice' allowed him the pleasure of the company of beautiful ladies but, also the (ugly) realities of choices for the sake of peaceful and fruitful interrelationships with his royal 'brothers'.

Kings are succeeded by sons and sometimes by 'appointed' heirs. Some sons are a blessing and some should not be considered as worthy successors to a ruler's throne or, in the case of sons of citizens, to their father's estates. What were the ethic guidelines?

11.1.3 Sons and heirs. In a similar way as daughters became a link between (royal) families in being sent into 'marriage alliances', so too sons were sources the king used in order to link and accomplish matters such as cultic duties (priest of a temple), diplomatic engagements (to courts of vassals, rulers), governing areas beyond their father's city-state seat and commanding armies. The realities were that a king could not attend and see to all matters, and thus he would tend to refer aspects of his authority to the royal appointments he made to any particular city within his realm. Also, the ethos of family bonds would expect such sons, or family members (uncles, brothers) to be loyal, trustworthy and committed to the smooth running of the father's kingdom.

Not only were sons a necessary part of a family, as specified above, but in a system based on patrilineal inheritance and succession, male offspring perpetuate the blood-line, secured the succession of father to son, son to grandson, and conserved the patrilineal identity and self-consciousness of the family (or group). Such identity shows itself in the inclusion of a list of ancestors, in (funeral) prayers. We find the royal Shamsi-Adad attending such a ceremony at his father's tomb in Terqa, whilst in an Old Babylonian libation prayer the ordinary Sin-nasir, son of Iqpur-Annunitum, '... I am pouring water for the family ...' (Postgate 1992a:98,99).

In the royal context confirmation of legitimacy of a son was all-important due to the possible machinations of the other brothers to contest the succession. Solomon's usurpation, of Adonijah was due to the scheming and manipulations of his mother, Bathsheba (1 Ki 1:5; 15-20). In other instances the 'ethos of just and rightful inheritance' could not be applied because of the assassination and murder of the son by his father or, even more gruesome, murder of the father by the son. Such a climate of lack of moral and ethical conservation of the patrilineal identity was exercised when one of the most successful rulers of the Hittite kingdom, Mursili (ca 1620 BCE) was assassinated by his brother-in-law Hantili and his son-in-law, Zidanta. Hantili became king but, when he died, this same Zidanta usurped the throne by killing off Hantili's son! Zidanta, in turn, was killed off by his own son Ammuna who, after a short reign, died, leaving sons behind who were all killed by the next usurper, Huzziya (ca 1525 BCE). The famous / infamous 'edict man' Telipinu (1525-1500 BCE) escaped being murdered by this Huzziya and succeeded, at last, to become king (Goedegebuure 2006:228,229). The attempt, by Telipinu, to establish internal order by a reformed system of succession (the edict), was quite modest, since after Telipinu succession was no more orderly than before, and unpredictable persons kept vying for the throne (cf Liverani 2004:35,36).

The Assyrian context, in contrast, seems to have been far more stable in the matter of father to son to grandson, and so on. The competing political and military units (city states) of Babylonia and the interrelationships of the dynasties of the Amorites, whether on a friendly basis or as foes, presented a climate where it could be possible to disrupt the order (succession). The Assyrian elite, on the other hand, consisted of great merchant families (ca 1900-1400 BCE) and did not play

commanding roles. Even under the later empire (eighth and seventh centuries) the king exercised sole authority and did not share his prerogatives with any assembly of elders (Tadmor 1986:205).

The Mari letters give an insight into the relationship between Shamsi-Adad and his two sons. Yasmah-Adad, the younger, is the indolent and luxury-loving king of Mari, perpetually reminded of his responsibilities. Ishme-Dagan, the elder, is the energetic king of Ekallâtum, dedicated to his position of rule and effective conquests. The letters reflect interest in each others' business, care for another, good advice and an ethos of a strong family bond. As quoted above there is pride in the family ethos of correct conduct. There is also the opportunistic ideology when Ishme-Dagan writes to his brother: 'Time is propitious ... let your troops seize booty ... these three towns are not heavily fortified ...' (quoted by Læssøe 1963:60). There is admonition when the father writes to the indolent one, '... your brother has won a victory ... (you) recline amongst the women ... but as you advance (military) towards Qatanum, quit yourself like a man'(quoted by Læssøe 1963:47).

Whether abovementioned letters from Mari reflect typical relationships during the context of time, place and people of the period ca 2000-900 BCE, is hard to say. We have this wonderful collection of correspondence, which does not occur in many stretches within the span of 1100 years (except the El Amarna letters). However, that which does impress, are the very human glimpses we see of the care and worry of fathers, the responses of sons and the feeling that we know them since nothing has really changed by way of human nature!

Next to the king, in order to assist and aid, are those men who do not form part of the immediate royal family; in other words, the outsiders, those who can be called 'the king's men.' These men were either promoted to high positions due to their administrative abilities, or who led men into battle and performed their military duties with bravery and honourable acumen, or else managed, by means of marriage to a 'lesser' noble daughter, entry into the magic circle of wealth, status and power. Being members now, of this specific class, many of them would use this privilege for the good of the populace whilst other would see it as an opportunity for enrichment, the abuse of power and the possible chance to acquire the throne for themselves.

11.1.4 The king's men. Plato, the Greek philosopher (ca 428-347 BCE), was no admirer of the idea of a democratic government. In his two treatises, 'The Republic' and 'The Laws', he criticized the unprofessional way in which it addressed politics. To Plato politics was a teachable science, one in which the pupil was taught and trained to apply the necessary *philosophy of expertise* in administering government. He wrote that unless king and rulers became genuine and able, with a combination of political power and philosophy '... there will be no end to the troubles besetting our states ...' (The Republic V, 437D, quoted by Arnheim 1977:160). As a scion of a noble family, it is to be expected that he would question the capabilities of those not belonging to the hereditary aristocracy, since non-nobles did not possess the combination of wealth and dignity in order to control a government (Arnheim 1977:12).

Homer (ca 850 BCE), author of the 'Odyssey', stresses that a man's worth is based on his lineage and his actions. He relates that when Menelaus, warrior king of Sparta, saw Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, warrior king of Ithaca for the first time, he remarked: 'Your pedigree has left a stamp upon your looks ... for no mean folk could breed such men as you are' (Odyssey VI, 60-64).

Embodied within these two 'archaic' tales is the continuous theme of a man's ordained place in society. Homer presents us with the ethos of the noble man and warrior, since within the social order of that period, the noble was a warrior and the warrior was a noble, each with an ethic code of conduct due to an inbred upbringing, all related to the sphere of nobility. Thus Plato too hinges kings and king's men on such exalted and lofty ideals, but has to contend with realities of change, whether of a political, social or philosophical nature which can, and did, alter established norms. Hence the non-noble too finds an asserted place in society, albeit without the required pedigree.

How do the two stories relate to the Mesopotamian, and Israelite, scene ca 2000-1000 BCE?

In the traditional Old and Middle Babylonian literature the social order was ranged as king, noble (prince, royalty), advisor, eunuch. By the first millennium these terms have either fallen away, been replaced by another or had taken on a new meaning (Tadmor 1986:209, 210). If we take Sargon I

as an example: he arose from among the people as king, his being able to do so due to an army and the support of the people. This victory set in motion a positive element of political unity but it also generated a negative power, since temple estates were seized, which created a new military and administrative nobility (Diakonoff 1969:191).

Similarly Israel, before her entry into the realm of kingship, had a simple system of governing or, rather, of gathering the necessary authority to address problems. Hence her adherence to a tribal league and the *Šōf'îm*, who were men who exercised authority and acted in military matters, hinged on a system which only arose when situations of importance decreed so (cf Ishida 1999:41; Marzal 1971:196). When kingship came into being, generals, commanders and officials, for all types of duties were created, and with these positions came a strengthening of despotism elements, a feature which became prevalent in the later Mesopotamian context (Diakonoff 1969:191,192). The ancient tradition of elders had thus transformed into new forces and 'new' keymen.

The necessity, of men to help in the running of a ruler's realm, is a feature of efficient kingship. No king can do such an immense task on his own, and therefore the necessity of a host of court officials, military generals, commanders, diplomats and administrators. Many of these men would have received the approval of Plato and Homer, since they came from the upper echelons of society and carried a correct lineage. Others were chosen, because they earned it by their conduct in war, or loyal service to the sovereign or, had made correct marriage alliances.

I shall now, by means of archaeological finds, try a reconstruction of aspects of these 'men of the king'. My concentration shall, as previously stated, be on the time span of ca 2000-1000 BCE (some overlapping occurs on both sides) and according to the following periods:

1. The Sumerian / Akkadian context. A beginning of change, ca 2100-1800 BCE
2. The well documented Mari documents and texts, ca 1800-1700 BCE
3. The role the merchants played
- 4 The Middle Assyrian revival and its (merchant) governors ca 1300 BCE. The Armudu texts

5. The emergence of Israel and her adaptation within the Ancient Near East, ca 1000 BCE

11.1.4.1 Sumerian officials. A governor is the official who governs a province, state, city or town as the representative of the crown (king). As such he is an administrative, as well as a military officer, who determines, controls and commands within an ethic standard of the principal to serve (Pocket Oxford Dictionary). Our information regarding this position of authority stems from diverse inscriptions and monumental edifices but, mostly from the cuneiform texts which have been found at Mari, Ugarit, Ebla, Assur and so forth. The contents of the correspondence (letters), which travelled from the king to his governors and officials, contain the daily and hence contemporary context of the kingdoms concerned. Since I have detailed the contextual and historical realities (such as the Sargonic and Ur III Empires) in Chapter Eight, I shall repeat only that the change from independent city states to that of empire had, of necessity, to effect changes in the way newly acquired territories were ruled and administrated. The city and its surrounding fields became an expansion consisting now of large tracts of territorial lands, all needful of effective controlling mechanisms. Hence the route of the governor became a path which also changed direction as prevailing circumstances dictated.

In royal letters of the kings of the Ur III Dynasty, the position the governor occupied reflects the varying contexts these representatives found themselves in. Before Ur-Nammu (2112-2095 BCE) ascended the throne he was in a position where, as a son or close relative of Utu-hegal of Uruk, he had acted as the vassal governor of Ur. This was in accordance with the way *sakkanakus* (military governors) at Uruk and elsewhere during the Ur III period, were drawn from among the progeny of the kings of Ur (Halla 1966:137). The military experiences, with its related background of military matters which Ur-Nammu attained during his period of governorship, must have contributed enormously to the effective running of his empire. Having been a warrior and a king's man himself, he knew the qualities required for the 'job', a definite asset when choosing his own 'king's men' to work for him.

The following example illustrates the vagaries which this position of authority could generate. In a rather complaintive letter the prime minister, Aradmu, writes to Ur-Nammu's son, king Shulgi (ca 2050 BCE) that during an inspection visit to the high commissioner Apillashua, (a subordinate to Aradmu), this man did not show respect, his troops had harassed and terrified Aradmu, that Apillashua sits on a throne without removing his feet from a golden footstool, and that this disrespectful servant of Shulgi lives in a tent, with pegs inlaid with gold and carnelian. Shulgi however, remonstrates with Aradmu '... is he not your trusted subordinate? Did he not receive orders from you? If you love me you will not be so set against him ... you are both my loyal servants - come to an understanding and secure the foundation of the land!' (quoted by Michalowski 2006:77,78).

The relationship here, between a king and his representatives, vividly portrays the empowerment accorded the king's men, and also the responsibilities that accompanied such power. Hence Shulgi's letter also highlights why Apillashua probably acted the way he did, since, if he had not elevated himself, had not sat in a screened enclosure, had not set his foot on a stool, had not appointed and removed royal officers (terrified them), had not punished by death and blinding and had not elevated to power those of his own choice, **HOW COULD HE HAVE MAINTAINED ORDER?** The extent of the actions, duties and employment of discipline and order contained in this letter of the king, gives ample evidence of the expectations a king had. The plea, towards the protection of the land, is especially pertinent, since the Amorites, and their increasing excursions across the borders, were a real threat to the stability of the empire (cf Michalowski 2006:78,79).

Abovementioned example illustrates the relationship which ensued between the king and his chosen officials, since it was the king's prerogative to appoint governors to the provinces. However a man could rise above being a lowly official to a point where the king would recognise the man's worth and elevate him to a high position, such as governor.

An early example, of just such a process, is the inscription on a headless statue, found in the Ishtar temple at Assur, and in economic texts found at Drehem (near Nippur) and Djoha. The inscription

informs us that the *sakkanakku* (military governor), Zariqum, had rebuilt the temple for the life of his sovereign Amar-Sin of Ur (2046-2038 BCE), whilst the texts give a synopsis of a period of 18 years of Zariqum's life which, according to Hallo (1956:221-224), indicate three consecutive stages. The first three and a half years Zariqum is an untitled official who handles the receiving and distribution of animals. The following six and a half years he acts as chief magistrate of Assur. The last eight years Zariqum is *ensi* (governor) of Susa. Furthermore, it appears (not conclusively) that he could have been *ensi* for both Susa and Assur for one year or longer (ca 2040)

The transfer of an *ensi*, from one place to another, was also the prerogative of the king (Hallo 1956:224) If we read between the lines it seems that Zariqum had combined activities, of a diverse nature, into an end result which the king noticed and which brought Zariqum to the highest level of authority. Here too the term *sakkanakku* attests to the position of a governor of an outpost. Such a governor would have been a man with a military background, in order to attend to a contextual reality. Distant border towns, provinces or cities were usually the target of nomadic marauders (such as the Amorites), rebellious vassals and power-hungry princes.

As one of the king's men a *sakkanakku*, or warrior governor, would assess the contemporary situation, and if of a conflicting nature, he would strengthen the city walls, gather men (troops) together and sally forth to defend the city and its occupants by means of battle. Such a man would inform the king, by messengers, about the situation. A letter, from the royal commissioner Sharrumban to king Shu-Sin (ca 2037-2029), confirms to the king that he is still busy fortifying the walls to keep the Amorites out. At the same time though, he has to fend against attacking Amorites, and thus he asks '...once my king gives the orders to release the workers (for military duty), when the enemy raids, I shall be able to fight him!' (quoted by Michalowski 2006:79). However, the king finds the fortifications of the city more important, so that the territory is secured, and therefore orders the city walls to be completed before the enemy is confronted.

Within this scenario the warrior defender, of the king's property, is bound by the code of mutual interchange of service and obeisance. The final order, even if contradictory to the plea of the

governor, is also a final command which cannot be ignored. Maybe the king was right in making sure that the kingdom is secure and that the workers see to the tilling of the land and its crops, both instances where the greater (long term) good overrides an immediate (short term) necessity.

11.1.4.2 Official authority at Mari. The royal archives of Mari, with its array of cuneiform documents, belong to the first half of the eighteenth century BCE. These sources consist mostly of letters which the kings of Mari received from their officials and from contemporary rulers, notably Hammurabi of Babylon and Ishi-Adad of Qatanum (Qatna). This correspondence is particularly illuminating towards the contextual period during Shamsi-Adad's usurpation of the throne of Assyria (ca 1796-1775 BCE) and the decline of his rule; the return of the dispossessed Zimri-Lim to Mari and, in turn, his defeat at the hands of Hammurabi of Babylon, ca 1750 BCE (cf Postgate 1992a:48,49; Van Koppen 2006:113).

This was indeed a period of turmoil, confrontations, military campaigns, diplomatic machinations, treaties and economic trade relations. All of these situations, and the men at the steer of them, find echo in the Mari cuneiform texts (Van Koppen 2006:112). However, the two rulers, Yasmah-Addu and Zimri-Lim, received and wrote their letters under different circumstances. Yasmah-Addu, an indolent and somewhat irresponsible vice-king of Mari, received letters which indicate the major role his father, Shamsi-Adad, played in the running of his sons' life and realm. Zimri-Lim, in contrast, became an important, autonomous ruler with a constant flow of reports from keymen in their key positions. These king's men informed him on all matters relating to administrative, military, social and diplomatic importance. Shamsi-Adad's responses indicate an effective ruler.

Yet, despite the fact that these letters from Mari have become a veritable source for this period in Mesopotamian history, it has to be kept in mind that a substantial part of communication lies within involved parties' presupposed knowledge of certain circumstances, a stumbling block which can affect interpretation (van Koppen 2006:112). Hence a reading of these texts, as a foil towards locating the king's men, shall often be based on keywords within the letters and some tentative reconstruction of how the warrior ethos played a part in the lives of king and entourage.

In his research on the appointment of provincial governors at Mari, Marzal (1971:187-217) has given an extensive overview of the difference in meaning of the titles given to men of authority. Interwoven with these appointments was the practice of kingdoms being divided into smaller territorial units, namely *halšum* or *mātum* (:187). Since each of these *halšum*, or provinces, were bonded to their geographic position by factors such as strategic location, trade routes, agricultural production and warring or peaceful neighbours, it becomes obvious that diverse relationships must have existed between king and the officials governing his provinces. Let us start at the top in order to ascertain the man, his duties and manner of implementation of those duties.

At the head of the province stood the *Šāpitum*, the governor, appointed by and only responsible to the king. How would such a man have been chosen? The appointment of the sons of Shamsi-Adad to the position of ‘vice’ king, at Mari and Ekallatum, indicates the king’s royal prerogative to elect someone to such an elevated position. Within this appointment lies the inherent, but limited form of sovereignty under a trusted nominee, and was thus an ethos based on loyalty towards the dynasty (if not the king) as would be expected from sons, nephews and cousins (cf Postgate 1992a:152). On the death of Shamsi-Adad his son Ishme-Dagan, the successor to the throne, wrote to his brother Yasmah-Addu: ‘As long as *I and you* are alive, you shall sit on *your throne*. Let us swear a *binding oath to each other*, by the *life of the gods* ... let us *maintain brotherly relationships (fraternity)* with *each other* for all time’ (ARMT 1V 20.21-6, quoted by Læssøe 1963:76). The inference here, as per the words in italics, is that of one of the closest bonds between people namely, brother to brother. The continuance of the throne is assured. But, most important of all, an oath by the life of the gods, the most binding factor in the world of the Ancient Near East, is stressed, since the whole existence of man was seen to be regulated by the gods.

Munn-Rankin (1956:79) however rather renders the use of *fraternity* as a political relationship between allied rulers of equal status rather than one of blood relationship. This proposal, of a political stance rather than family interests, actually emphasizes the importance of co-operation in all spheres of social, military and economic interactions. The governor had to be concerned with questions on a myriad of diverse issues, of which trade, brigandage, fugitives, offence, defence and

so forth are but a few. Of all these considerations though, that of military co-operation was probably the most important, and often the most urgent. The subject matter of treaties, between sovereign and vassals, allies and ‘great king’ to ‘great king’, was the principal outcome of military confrontations. Thus a man with a warrior background, and having a close connection to the king and the ability to *interpret and follow* the king’s specific orders, would be chosen as governor.

Kibri-Dagan, governor of Terqa received an order from Zimri-Lim to assemble a contingent of men from the settlements of the Jamnites, which he does. On a further order from Zimri-Lim this governor is commanded, in turn, *himself* to order the men not to assist any man in deserting the cause, since such an act of military defiance carries the death penalty (ARMT II 92:5-24, in Marzal 1971:191). In yet another letter Shamsi-Adad orders the execution of the (hostage) family members of the king of Ya’ilanum, since this king refused to surrender and this refusal was threatening the peace. This deed was entrusted to Yasmah-Addu (ARM 18, in Van Koppen 2006 :115). No doubt all these orders were carried out without any qualms, since we have here the military mind and its ethos of obedience to the highest power, which expects governors (and officers under them) to act in accordance with necessary issues of orders (cf Marzal 1971:192).

In Mari it seems that governors could be designated by two different titles. The first being *Šāpitum* and the second *Merhūm*. The latter though was a governor post of a higher grade than the governor titled *Šāpitum*. The *Merhūm* carried greater honour, since he administered a greater territory, and had some authority over the governors of the *Šāpitum*-grade but, he also carried far greater responsibilities than they did (Marzal 1971:200-201). In his letters to Zimri-Lim, it becomes obvious that the governor of Laamaras in the Upper Habur region, dealt with local rulers and authorities as a representative of the king. These matters were of a military and tribal nature, and as such he provided the necessary soldiers to these petty rulers for the protection of their towns.(Marzal 1971:199).

However, though military matters were the usual worries of the day, other credentials were taken into account when seeking to fill these official positions. The governorship of Tuttal became vacant and

Jashma-Adad proposed two names but, listing his preference for the one named Samas-lassu. Shamsi-Adad concurs, but wants the candidate to be ‘... a man of confidence, the best of the country, a man of recognised value, ... in whom you can rely’ (I 9:15-20, quoted by Marzal 1971:206).

This governorship again became vacant (death ?), Jashma-Adad again proposed two names and his preference for Habduma-Dagan. This time Shamsi-Adad responded that this man indeed qualifies to be a *Merhūm* of a vast province, since he is dignified and qualified, is reliable, has slept among those versed in oracles and had never committed an offensive act (II 62:8; I 18:13,16; I 18:14, in Marzal 1971:208). The qualities needed and reflected in the replies of the king, are those of high ethic standard and would certainly have pleased the philosopher Plato, many years later!

Within the correspondence of Mari the governor Sin-tiri presents another side of the ethic coin, one where ambition and the right connections bring to the fore the arrogance of power. He was not only governor of Subat-Samas, but also a member of the royal inner circle. As such he had the arrogance to make independent decisions and, due to his powerful influence, to intimidate governors, high officials and the provinces close to him. His attempt to annex the great province of Tuttal was halted by the king, Shamsi-Adad (cf Marzal 1971:211). The warrior in this case used his privileges in order to abuse the ethic code of conduct, one which expected the military governor to act in the time honoured code of integrity, as a reflection of his class and his service to his liege. From these examples a pattern appears which indicates that the sovereign decreed an ethos of high moral values when appointing his key men.

Before entry into the realm of Assyrian power plays, it shall be of use to introduce the role of the travelling merchant. This man of trade was always there, since commodities were always in need but were not always available in all sections of the Fertile Crescent. He was the connection between goods bought and sold, communication between kings and servants and the means towards great wealth. As described in (Chapter Eight) the merchant especially played a great role between the years of being ‘merchant of Assur’ and the start of empire building, when Assyria started raiding the territories beyond the Euphrates.

These men were not only an integral part of the economical well being of the state, city or village, they were as much a part of the interrelations between the powers of the day. Theirs was a travelling business, one which brought them into spheres ranging from robust bartering with the locals to yielding servility before the king, from staple commodities to exotic luxuries, and therefore a ‘man for all seasons’, and as such a man who could well be one of the king’s men.

11.1.4.3 Merchants as keymen. The book of Proverbs singles out things the Lord hates, and hence we find that ‘... one who is not straight is detestable to the Lord, but upright men are in God’s confidence’ (3:32) and ‘... false tongues’ are an abomination to him (6:17). More to the point and as an outflow of abovementioned abominations, are the ‘false scales’ (11:1) and ‘double standards in weights’ (20:10). Earlier the laws of Ur-Nammu (ca 2100 BCE) established a standardization of weights and measurements: ‘I made the copper BA.RI.GA measure and standardized it at 60 SILA (cf COS 2.153). Hammurabi’s laws declare, ‘If a merchant ... should take ... interest and then not deduct the payment of either grain [or silver] as much as he received ... ‘ and thus signify that a man may not give interest-bearing loans according to the small *sūtu* weight and then receive payments back of large *sūtu* weight. Such an unethical merchant shall forfeit anything he gave (cf COS 2.131).

The impositions of such laws clearly emphasize the misuse of weights, used in the business of commerce, and those who are the ‘shady’ dealers in such matters. It can therefore be postulated that dishonesty was a factor when it came to the role of being a merchant or trader, or even a small shop owner (cf Hallo 1985:36,37).

In his article on Biblical abominations and Sumerian taboos, Hallo (1985:38) distinguishes between a concept of divine abomination, as pertaining to cult and sacred practices, which are anathema to God (the gods) and a concept of ethical taboo, one which involves the infraction of ethical norms and standards of good conduct. Geller (1990:107,108) defines the latter as some aspect of impropriety which may go unnoticed, except by the gods, but, with no sense of abhorrence since it simply indicates the limits beyond which a man cannot go.

The merchant, as a travelling individual, was the means whereby various goods were distributed throughout empires, kingdoms and vassal states. Such widespread travel, and its distributing circumstances and trade contexts though, necessitated systems whereby the merchant would temper some of those trade laws to suit. Consequently the merchants developed their own organizations and code of laws, election of their own officials, arrangement of occupation of city quarters and, of course, special relationships with the king and state (Gelb 1980:34; cf Oppenheim 1954:13; Postgate 1992a: 221).

To designate merchants according to class or caste is not always a clear cut exercise. Seen as persons who ‘trade’ (work with their hands), the merchant’s wealth could not readily bridge the gap between noble and commoner. A contradiction, to this state of affairs, was the great wealth and influence which Assyrian traders of Anatolia enjoyed. Many became great merchant families who, by 1400 BCE, had transformed into the ‘old families of Assur’, and hence conquering Assyrian kings, such as Adad-nirari (1327-1274 BCE) and Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 BCE) deployed them as governors rather than re-employing local dynasts (cf Postgate 1992a:252). The merchant’s commercial tradition, with its exact, accounting skills, enabled these traders to establish the effective running of ‘offices’. Such power, of course, paved the way towards economic exploitation by these governors. This was in contrast to their initial ethical code of conduct which obligated them to be a *mâr awēlim*, ie, to adhere to ethical and social standards in their business transactions, and to act as honourable gentleman (cf Oppenheim 1954:12).

In their relationship to the king, or other influential personages, the merchant, as one of the king’s trade partners, emerges in many guises. As a travelling trader he supplied not only the necessary staples and raw materials, such as tin and silver, but also highly prized luxury goods (cf Saggs 1995:100). As a travelling merchant he also became the means by which ‘investing’ merchants, or kings and high officials could, after a successful completion of a round trip, satisfy their capitalistic yearnings. As a traveller he would have attained considerable knowledge of the geographical, political and social contexts through which his caravans passed. Lastly, as a merchant he was in a position to transport especially valuable objects overland to a specified destination. Oppenheim

(1967:240) gives an example of such a transaction, in which the merchant Nādin-ahi (ca 900 BCE) transported eight boxes, all reinforced with copper bands and sealed to keep them safe and secret. Merchants were therefore seen as valuable members of the king's realm and thus enjoyed the ruler's protection by means of his troops who accompanied the caravan. This protection was also provided for by the governor of a province through which the merchant passed on his routes (Munn-Rankin 1956:105,106).

11.1.4.4 Middle Assyria - governors and officials. The history of Mesopotamia during the fourteenth to eleventh centuries BCE was characterized by the expansion of Assyria and her annexation of territories both to Hanigalbut (Mitanni) in the north, and Babylonia in the south (Brinkman 1970:308). Babylonia would have a fluctuating relationship with Assyria, based on siege successes or failures. A record of Assyrian merchants buying garments from the Babylonian palace attest to periods of peace (Brinkman 1970:311). This interaction of conflict and trade is highlighted by the uncovering of the Tell al- Rimah texts (1964-1968), a site 13 kilo metres south of Tell Afar. The eponym dating of some of the texts indicate a period towards the end of the reigns of Shalmaneser I (1274-1245 BCE) and beginning of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 BCE).

Of particular interest is one of the abovementioned texts which mention large amounts of tin brought from Naira by a merchant, since this tablet contains the names of those involved in the transactions, and also the name of the eponym official, ie *limu* Na-bi-um-bêl-uşur (cf Wiseman 1968:175). This title, *limu*, was applied to the official who presided over state cult functions at Assur. The king and the highest officers served as *limu* in turn, each for a year; the king in his first full regnal year, the others in an order originally determined by lot, but later by seniority. The year was officially known by the *limus*' name who served, resulting in a sequence of years (cf Saggs 1984:273). The frequent appearance of certain names in these texts, seem to indicate that they belonged to the same family group (cf Saggs 1968:154; Wiseman 1968:176). Despite the feasibility of such an idea, it would be rash to assume that *this* family had been prime merchants of Rimah. Hence concentration should rather be on the fact that such families existed (cf Tadmor 1986:205), whether as mediocre traders or, wealthy merchant families with measures of influence and authority

but, always, ‘ ... the monarchy was the real power. It chose the officials ... and they functioned accordingly, as its subordinates’ (Garelli, Sem 17,1967 quoted by Machinist 1982:33).

Due to the vigorous campaigns of the Middle Assyrian kings, large tracts of territories necessitated a firm hand of control. This the Assyrian kings effected by governance through the single-tier system of provinces, and appointment to these provinces done by the king only. Provincial administration was therefore carried out on behalf of the king, a system which survived, despite the fluctuating fortunes of the Assyrian empire, until its final end in 609 BCE. Thus Postgate (1992b:252) defines the land of Assur as a homogeneous territory, which was divided into equal ranking provinces and consequently we can measure the extent of Assyrian territory, since new ones would get new governors. Some indication, of the appointment and role of these governors, are found in a group of five texts originating from Tell Amuda from the Yale Babylonian Collection, and are dated from the thirteenth century BCE.

The significance of the texts is that they clearly denote provincial officials as forming a class which were royal dependents (Machinist 1982:1; cf Saggs 1984:130,131). This came about *after* the initial practice the Assyrians had, which was one of raids and independent influence. By the thirteenth century these methods were eclipsed due to the way the Assyrians now first reduced an area to vassalage, and then into a province, under direct Assyrian (the king) rule and hence control. Hence provincial governors do not appear before the thirteenth century.

Such an area, Hanigalbut (Mitanni), felt the military might of an Assyrian onslaught when Adad-Nirari (1327-1274 BCE) ‘ ... conquered, burned ... destroyed ... imposed the hoe, ... and corvee ...’ (quoted by Greenwood 2006:144; cf Saggs 1984:46-57). This extreme hostility seems to have been in retaliation to Assyrian merchants and their caravan being attacked. Be the excuse as it may, this campaign stresses military belligerency and resort to excessive destruction and shedding of blood. On the other hand we have the Assyrians following the age-old tradition, within the Mesopotamian context, of treaties. A breach of such a treaty was seen as a sin against Ashur, and hence needed punishment (Postgate 1992a:257,258; von Soden 1963:135-136). The particular type of ethos, which

is reflected in these actions, is not only based on a punishment for rebellions, recalcitrant vassals and so forth, but was an ethos which carried the commands of the god Ashur, and encompassed the whole military scene, from king down to the ordinary soldier. This world view would not change and would become an Assyrian hallmark.

The fact is that the acquisition of Hanigalbut carried more weight than a few merchants and their goods, since this fertile region was a major breadbasket for the Habur valley, and it was a cross-axis of the east to west and north to south trade routes of the Fertile Crescent. Thus as a province it carried high status and the governor charged with the overall supervision of the area, was perhaps the highest official next to the king. His title, of *Sukkallu rabû* (ruler or vice-king), also carried the title *Šar Hanigalbut* (governor of Hanigalbut). Hence the other provincial governors would have functioned under the authority of this 'king'. This official though left most of the governing to the lesser governors because as *Sukkallu rabû* he himself resided in Assur. This practice, of major officials being responsible for a province(s) but having them managed by local governors, is also found in the later Neo-Assyrian period (cf Machinist 1982:17). Sculptures from this later period show high officials of government in procession before the king (cf Fig 40). They are bareheaded and have rosettes on the arm, a symbol of high status and, as such, held the eponymate immediately after the king (Reade 1972:94).

The dual purpose of vice-king *cum* governor, catered not only for the replacement of a native vassal king, but eliminated the possibility of uprisings or rebellions. Underlying this policy is that of control. Each war fought by the king was a sacred war commanded by the god Ashur (cf Tadmor 1986:207), and as such the king was the vicar of Ashur (cf Brinkman 1970:304-305). The control of the king was as the control of Ashur.

The *pāhutu* (provinces) itself portray the firm controlling hand of the monarch as they were centred on a particular *ālu* (city) which, in turn, was surrounded by towns, villages, fields, etcetera. In the central city was the seat of *ekallu* (administration) and its functionaries who attended to the business

of running the province(s). Yet, within this system of administration, the governor was still under the firm control of the king. The Assyrian coronation ritual attests to the renewal of the governor's tenure each year (cf Postgate 1992b:252). Thus, as a candidate for 'king's man', the governor carried an authority which was formed by an ethos of control. The tenure of office thus became a deciding factor in the career of such a person as the governor! The king's control acted as a hedge against possible inefficient administration of territories, won by sheer military force.

The various designations applied to the governors may reflect different contextual situations, and thus a governor was called *bēl pāhete* or *šaknu* (officers in central government) and as *hal/zuhlu* (presiding officer over a variety of settlements). Due to the militaristic nature of Assyrian dominion, the governor, in many cases, was a *hals/zuhlu* of military background and hence was also a military commander (cf Machinist 1982:23). A document from Sibaniba records that he would, at command of the king, furnish recruits for the army for campaigns (Finkelstein 1953, in Machinist 1982:25). This brought the governor in contact with military *turtannu* (generals) who, in turn, acted as defence mechanisms within a province, whilst also supplying necessary labour power for projects (building, agriculture). These close correlations between administration and military matters reflect the ideological centrality of Assur with its almost despotic kingship.

Some of the provincial governors were undoubtedly eunuchs (as was prevalent in the Neo-Assyrian period) who, as an elite group, could have posed no problem of founding hereditary families to oppose the monarchy (cf Tadmor 1986:208). The eunuch is portrayed, in late Assyrian reliefs, by their chubby features and obese stature, but also by their beardless faces (*Šūt rēsi*), whilst bearded faces (*Ša rēsi*) were seen as real men (cf Figures 41a, 41b; cf Reade 1972:91). These reliefs show a predominance of eunuchs in the entourage of the king, in positions of high responsibility (cf Figures 42a, 42b). Though of later period than the twelfth century BCE, the reliefs probably reflect a custom which the Assyrian kings had always employed (Reade 1972:92). Originally these eunuchs could have been young captives, or perhaps poor children from Assyria. Both instances deprived these men of heritage or family bonds, and of being without protection. Being apportioned to the king presented opportunities and, through diligent service and loyalty, ambitions could be realized.

A good combination of an ethos based on a client/patron relationship.

There are possibilities that the aristocratic families of Assur did exist, though they seemed not to have played a role in the Neo-Assyrian Empire (cf Tadmor 1986:207). The existence of wealthy (merchant) families though cannot be doubted. A connection between the two instances could have produced a governor to administer a province. The evidence towards such cases are somewhat deficient, and it cannot be averred that the great families of Assur were prominently present in the provinces. Even if they were, it would have been at the king's command and as the king's subordinates (cf Machinist 1982:31).

A document exists which presents such a (rare) connection between Assur and the provinces. Urad-Serua, an official in Assur, is married to a female member of a prominent Assur family. His father is a great landowner there, whilst Urad-Serua himself is involved in a range of business ventures. His father, Melisha was appointed *bêl pāhete* (governor) of Nahur. Soon too Urad-Serua became (overlapping) governor of Nahur. From then onwards he remained active between Assur and Nahur. As this source is an isolated record of such a combination of a great family and wealthy merchants, it cannot be assumed that this was the norm (cf Machinist 1982:31-32). The reasons, as postulated by Machinist (:32), for this being so, is that the great families still obeyed the 'command of the king', and hence goods imported into the city was treated as royal tax, and not family ones and, land transactions indicate that they were not immune from royal involvement. The king was the one who gave and the king was the one who took. A tablet found at Tell Al Rimah confirms the latter on a land sale where 'Adad-sum-eres has received the price for the field ... According to the terms of the royal blood ...' (TR.3004, Wiseman 1968:179).

The underlying imperial ethos, displayed in the abovementioned example, actually defines the position of the 'key men' in the Assyrian period at that time. It reveals a relationship between an absolute monarch with only a few trusted men at his side. Abuse of that trust probably ended in dismissal or death, as so frequently happened in the later Neo-Assyrian Empire. Mutarūs-Asshur, chief eunuch, led military campaigns under Samsi-Adad V, but was never heard of again. Did he

fall from grace? Was he executed? This was a reality which happened when the king became 'dissatisfied' as attested in the chronicles of Esarhaddon '... the king put his numerous officials to the sword ' (Grayson chronicles, quoted by Grayson 1990:22).

The Assyrian context was a harsh one, with great warriors kings, Adad-Nirari I, Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I killing and conquering. A short spell of kingly inactivity brought no relief, and when Tiglath-Pileser like his predecessors, vigorously burst onto the scene, the same killing, plundering and slaughtering continued anew. Such an ethos, of conquest and terror, engulfed the king, his warriors and those who 'kept' the conquered realm in order.

11.1.4.5 Authority- the change within Israel. Hoffmeier (1983:53) states that there has been a tendency to look towards Mesopotamian cuneiform sources to acquire knowledge on Israel's emergence as a people, and not enough tendency towards the use of Egyptian and Canaanite literary and inscription source material. Considering the ancient Israelites' (Hebrew) sojourn in Egypt (a military background) and their later infiltration into Canaan (a land under Egyptian control), it seems that influences should have taken place. It is therefore especially here, in the field of warfare, that Hoffmeier (1983:54,55) compares the Egyptian literary motifs as a foil towards the literary motifs as found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

One such motif is the well known boast of the Egyptian pharaoh that he smites the heads of the enemy. The Gebel- Barka stela of Thutmose III claims this deed '... who shatters the head of evil characters' (cf COS 2.2B). Similarly the inscription of Seti I (1294-1285 BCE) at the Karnak temple in Thebes declares that '...mace was upon the head (s) of every land' (cf COS 2.44). The equivalent in Scriptures is found in Psalm 68:22, 'God himself will smite the heads of the enemies' and in Deuteronomy 32:42, '...will make my arrows drunk with blood ... from the long-haired heads of the enemy'. Consequently, can we deduce that Israel had a similar warrior ethos, and equally similar war practices to that of Egypt? Was her rank of authority one of viziers, generals, commanders of troops and did she have a special corps, dedicated to the ruler? What about weaponry such as the mace, bows, spears, chariots? Did she have a professional army?

As yet more contrast, Hoffmeier notes the Assyrian methods of warfare and their cruel treatment of captive enemies, something which is not found in the Egyptian or Israelite context. The Assyrian Shalmaneser I (1274-1245 BCE) in the act of war ‘... slaughtered horses ... blinded and carried off ... butchered ... the troops ... massacred ... burned with fire (men, cities) (quoted by Greenwood 2006:158). The parallels between Egyptian and Israelite may not match the Assyrian way of doing things but, the extreme measures, found in the *Herem*, were not merciful exercises either. We have no Israelite inscriptions comparable to those of the Assyrians and other peoples of the Levant, but the Biblical texts reveals instances of cruel practices such as was the norm in the Ancient Near East. When the Israelites won the battle against the Midianites they killed off all the men, but spared the women. Moses was not happy with this arrangement and gave the orders that only those who had ‘not lain with the men’ should be spared, whilst the remainder of the women were to be slaughtered (cf Numbers 30:9; 15-18).

What about the Egyptian and Assyrian system of destruction of orchards and forests (cf Cole 1995:29-31)? Pharaoh Thutmose III, in his siege of Megiddo encircled the ditch with ‘fresh branches of all their fruit trees’ (cf COS 2.2A § 8b-16a), whilst Tiglath Pileser III cuts ‘... down orchards without number’ (cf COS 2.117C § 78-81). Here the parallel between Egypt and Assyria does not match the command given to Israel to discriminate between fruit and non bearing fruit trees for the building of their siege equipment ‘... do not destroy its trees ... produce you with food’ (cf Dt 20:19-20). In contrast to those Assyrian kings who were destructive some of them though, established parks in which they grew plants and trees native to other lands (Saggs 1984:165).

Whether resembling or differing, the route taken by the Israelite warriors prior to the rule, ca 970 BCE, of Solomon the non-warrior man, displays singular lack of influence either from the Canaanite, Egyptians or Assyrians (1 Ki 3:7; cf Meier 1991a:71,72). This may have mainly been due to the fact that: ‘Early Israel was contemporary in what she rejected and ancient in what she accepted ... (and this is) ... especially evident in her rejection of the sophisticated machinery of the Canaanites (or any other ruling powers) on the grounds that it required and implied a cast system that would have destroyed personal freedom as well as the social system that allowed maximum expression of

the rule of Jahweh' (Glock, 1968:216, in Olivier 1985:23; cf Weinfeld 1960:36). This conclusion by Glock contains two realities which early Israel, as a people without a monarchy, firmly clung to, namely, no caste system and, Yahweh rules as warrior, protector and judge (cf Olivier 1985:23). It was according to these ideologies that the Israelites lived among the Canaanites, and as such they adhered to their tradition of elders and assemblies, whether under Egyptian dominion, and the rising hostilities of the Philistines (ca 1150 BCE). It is only later, when kingdom and ruler was fully established that old traditions transformed themselves into semblances of contemporary ideologies of kingship and all its appurtenances of power and control.

At the time of Early Israel emergencies, mostly of a military kind, were addressed by the (*softim*) judges, men who handled urgent situations and then, after the matter had been rendered final, went home (cf Neufeld 1960:34-35). Hence we read that the Israelites were subjected to bondage by king Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharim and that their plea for deliverance was heard when God *raised* Othniel, son of Kenaz, to 'judge' them (Jdg 3:8-11). The Israelites became subject to Eglon, king of Moab, and again their plea for deliverance was heard when God *raised* Ehud, son of Gera, to 'judge' them (Jdg 3:12-15; 28-30). Similarly Deborah went with Barak, son of Abinoam, to deliver (*judge*) the Israelites from Jabin the Canaanite (Jdg 4:1-16). These judges would gather (muster) men from the tribes in order to fight and, after the battle everyone dispersed to their homes, including the chosen leader. It was when the better equipped and organized Philistines became tiresome, that the Israelites realized their inadequacy, a situation aggravated by the Ammonites who besieged Jabesh-gilead (1 Sm 11:3). This confrontation between the Ammonites and the Israelites became the turning point in the warrior ethos of Early Israel.

Saul, member of the small tribe of Benjamites, was seen as the best among the Israelites (1 Sm 9:2). On hearing the news about Jabesh-gilead he became enraged, mustered men at Berek (1 Sm 11:6-7) and proceeded to relieve the besieged. His speedy response to the crisis and subsequent victory won him the (first) crown of Israel '... who said that Saul should not reign over us?' (1 Sm 11:12). The emphasis on the warrior-ship of a king is very clear, one which echoes throughout the history of the Fertile Crescent. Before his kingship David had been a warrior of format and one who had

been Saul's armour-bearer as a result of his warrior proficiencies (1Sm 16:18). This reputation would also be a factor in his selection, later, as king over Israel (Mc Carter 1986:122-123).

Saul then went and, by changing the norm of an Israelite militia to one which saw the establishment of a professional (private) army, gave indications of outside influences at work. Were the Philistines a role model? In his investigation into the killing of four powerful Philistines (2 Sm 21:15-22) L'Heureux (1976:83-85) notes that these Philistine heroes are said to be among the *y'îdê hārāpā*. (:83). Based on reinterpretations of Ugarit texts the god El, under the divine epithet *rp'*, was god of an elite group having both aristocratic and military connotations (:84). Thus these 'votaries of Rapha', were fighting men initiated into an elite group whose patron was (*h*)*rp'* (:84). Considering that Israel fought the Philistines in the 'valley of the Rephaim', it becomes possible that such a special, chosen warrior force would have adhered to a warrior ethos not readily found in those who only came temporarily onto the fighting scene, and hence this would have been an attractive policy to implement.

Olivier (1985:20-22) postulates that this radical diversion, from the ideology of *Yahweh as the warrior who led the Israelites into battle and fought their wars*, was probably one of the reasons why the chariot was not to be found in Saul's army. He cites the bitter tirade of Samuel (1 Sm 8:11-12) when the prophet proclaims that '... the sort of king who will govern ... will take your sons ... (to) serve in his chariots ... make (you) run before his chariot ... others will make weapons of war ... for mounted troops'. It assumes that Saul hesitated to push things to far? David similarly limited (his) chariot-forces when he hamstringed the chariot-horses captured from Hadadezer of Zobah and only kept a hundred for use (2 Sm 8:4; cf Hauer 1978:70)..

Saul's professional army rested on warriors, picked from the men of Israel, of which two thousand remained with him and one thousand was sent to his son Jonathan at Gibeah, whilst '... he sent the rest of the people home' (1 Sm 13:2). In effect this action provided Jonathan also with a small army! The Philistine menace increased, and Saul gathered the people who were with him at Gibeah, about six hundred (1 Sm 13:15). David escaped into the wilderness and Saul '... took three thousand men

from Israel' (1 Sm 24:1-2). Throughout trials and tribulations Saul applied a policy of 'any strong man ... any brave man ... he found he took into his own service' (1 Sm 14:52).

Within this gathering of men for war purposes, was the practice of selecting only a few *'iš bāhūr* (chosen warriors) for special campaigns and ventures, or as the personal 'military company' of king Saul (cf Weisman 1981:444). Again David resembles a policy of Saul when he too stabilized an initial force of four hundred into a standing (personal) one of six hundred warriors, as special 'chosen ones'. The contrast though, is that Saul had mustered his fighting men from the militia of Israel, whilst David's force had developed from a company of warriors, would-be warriors, mercenaries and a motley of fugitives (Hauer 1978:68). Hence, though Saul chose strong, brave men, all essential qualities for fighting men, these men probably did not have the close relationship which David's men had with their leader. David and his men shared experiences of periods of conflict, fleeing for their lives, hunger and thirst in the wilderness, etcetera. Some of these men were of a socially lower class, seeking new fortunes, whilst this band, as a whole, had also served as mercenaries in campaigns against their own people (1 Sm 27:1-6; 28).

Na'aman (1986:281) compares and likens this group of David to the brigade of six hundred armed Danites who, as 'angry men' (Jdg 18:25) also used force and threats to kill, and designates the Danites behaviour as more brigandish than that of a pastoral clan, and hence reflects the lives of early monarchial bands. Abimelech, the son of Gideon, also used refugees to help gain political power. As an example of an outsider (and comparable to David), Idrimi of Alalakh, capital of Mukish (early fifteenth century BCE), too found refuge with the Habiru, a term copiously applied in the Amarna letters to an havoc wreaking section of the population in Israel during Egyptian dominion. After a term with the Habiru, Idrimi returned to Mukish, gathered an army, and eventually triumphed and was confirmed as king of Mukish and Alalakh (cf Mc Carter 1986:123).

With the anointment of David as king, the king's men gained prominence, a state of affairs never found in the elder system of yore. Saul had made Abner, son of his uncle Ner, his commander, and

Jonathan his lieutenant (do we detect the use of family and status here?). David's conquests and expansion of Israelite territory necessitated the control of this realm. Saul did not have these considerations and therefore his keymen remained within the military sphere. David had the top position of king, Joab was his field-marshal, Abishai, brother of Joab, served as deputy-in-charge of the 'mighty men', Beniah commanded the royal bodyguard, whilst the foreign elements in his army, the Cherethites, Pelethites and Gittites were led by one of their own country men, whose name was Ittai (2 Sm 8:15-18). Though not yet of the high number of officials, which the Mari or Assyrian context could produce, the relatively modest Israelite tribal militia, and its charismatic leader, were slowly transforming into a standing army with its various positions of authority: and so too the simple path, of a non-cast system, one who trusted in Yahweh alone as the only authority, was transforming.

With the appointment of Solomon to his father's throne, these changes came to full fruit, since the new political, military, social and religious institutions was based on a firm foundation. Solomon could just step in and administer his own autocratic kingship *via* his long list of officials and governors (1 Ki 4:1-20 ; cf Neufeld 1960:38-41). The biblical texts outlines the building projects (1 Ki 9:15), the expensive temple project (1 Ki 6:1-9:14), the palaces, the foreign wives, the trade connections, the conscriptions, the corvee, the luxuries, the exploitation of the poor. The kingdom of Solomon was now the mirror image of all those kingdoms which had come and gone and of those to come. Gone was the defiant, independent and proud warrior ethos, an ethos which had served their people in times of distress, gone the commitment of the tribal consciousness and, most importantly, gone was the idea of the lot (so Saul had been chosen), as an equalizer among all men who gathered to go to war, for it left the selection to God's choice (Weisman 1981:447).

11.1.5 The presence of women. The laws of Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE) had death as the penalty for a number of offences, whilst others carried mutilation such as blinding, breaking a limb or impalement as punishment. Despite these draconian measures though, care was taken to allot fair justice to all citizens except slaves and, to a great degree women: and it is here that the difference in penalties, according to class, clearly illustrates the stratification of society (Postgate 1992a:106),

and where the presence of women, in the context of Mesopotamian society indicate that their daily existence was hemmed in by a patriarchal system of control.

Hence, when a slave struck an *awilu* (upper class), he had his ear cut off (cf COS 2.131 §205), whilst an *awilu*, who blinded another *awilu*'s slave, only paid a sum in silver (cf COS 2.131 §199). So too when an *awilu* struck a pregnant woman of *awilu* status, and caused a miscarriage, he only paid 10 shekels (towards the dead fetus). However, should the woman also die, the *daughter* of the guilty man shall be killed (cf COS 2.131 §209,210)! If the woman was a commoner, and she died, the striker only had to compensate with a payment of silver (cf COS 2.131 §212).

Marriage was brought about by negotiations between the males of the two parties, the purpose of which was to secure sons to perpetuate the male line. If no sons were born, the law and custom permitted the surrogate roll of a slave girl to bear children (cf COS 2.131 §163). The story in Genesis 21:9-13 of Sarah and Hagar illustrates this. Once married, with a document as proof (COS 2.131 §128), a woman had few choices in attaining freedom from marriage, unless there were drastic reasons for an annulment, such as maybe a skin disease (COS 2.131 §148; cf Saggs 1995:107). A woman who sought to end a marriage, ran a great risk, as clearly stated in the laws: 'If a wife should reject her husband and says "You are not my husband" they shall cast her into the river. If a husband says to his wife "You are not my wife" he pays half a mina of silver' (*ana ittišu*, quoted by Postgate 1992a:105; cf COS 2.131 §142,143). In the harsher Assyrian law the husband could repudiate his wife without any compensation, whilst she could not claim or obtain a divorce at all (cf De Vaux 1961:35,36).

This dreary picture, of the female in a male dominated society though, had another side to it. Women did have 'rights' albeit according to the male perspective, and she could assert herself in various fields, again, albeit from the male perspective. Except for their role as wives and mothers, women could be weavers, singers, prophets and business people (under the auspices of husband or son). Seals belonging to women, such as those of Ninhilia, wife of Ayakala, governor of Umma (Ur III period), indicate her active participation in transactions with various officials, receiving and

distributing wool, leather, cloth, and oils (cf Parr 1974:90-92). The biblical texts and the cuneiform writings from Mari, Ugarit, Amarna, Assur, and others, attest to the involvement of women in matters ranging beyond the 'household', and thus we find them relaying information, handling affairs of state, planning, scheming and surviving wars as best they could.

Considering the frequency of warfare, and all its connotations, I want to concentrate on the role women played, since war is no child's play, especially for women. They are the ones left behind, the ones to find protection against marauding troops and, most difficult of all, to find provisions not only for themselves but their children as well. I shall therefore first start with their presence as 'warriors', a temporary designation for women who rise to a specific situation; then their position as scribes and hence messengers (the ability to read, to receive and to send a message of military importance), even if non-literate, since a messenger could pass on information orally and by means of an inscribed tablet. Then, I shall look at their survival of sieges and famine (often an intrinsic part of sieges) and, lastly, their becoming 'booty' victims of war, sadly a consequence of their survival of a siege.

11.1.5.1 Warrior-ship. In most cultures a warrior is consistently defined as being a male member of society. As such the warrior is protector, destroyer, conqueror, aggressive and dominant. Therefore, a female warrior would also have smatterings of these characteristics, and be aggressive, a protector and so on (cf Yee 1993:104,105). Warrior hood is not only defined as male dominion, but is also defined as those who have status and special privileges. This means that female warrior-ship is similarly to be accorded the same privileges as the male warrior, a position which normally would have threatened men in a patriarchal social order (Yee 1993:105). A woman warrior would thus present a *limited* figure, one which can be appropriated for few and even contradictory ends. What it boils down to was that the difference in activity between women and men were circumstantial rather than innate: both used the powers and strategies of the world in which they found themselves (cf Frymer-Kensky 1992:140).

History does record a number of queens, or women, who led their nation in war. The best known and most famed being Deborah, an Israelite prophetess, ca 1150 BCE; Sannuramat, a ninth century BCE Assyrian queen; Artemisia, one of the Persian king, Xerxes', naval commanders, in the fifth century BCE; Zenobia, third century CE Arab queen of Palmyra; Boadicea, the third century CE British queen and the maid of Orleans, the fourteenth century CE peasant girl who led the French against the English invaders. We have, too, the mythological Amazons, warrior women of Greece, who represent the reversal of the ideals of marriage (control of females and reproduction) and the validation of patriarchal customs, by postulating the horrors of the opposite (Blake Tyrell, quoted by Yee 1993:108).

The story of Deborah, and Yael, indicate that certain aspects of warfare made it possible for women to attain leadership in war. Israelite warfare during the period of the judges, ca 1200-1000 BCE, was defensive rather than offensive, protecting the tribes and clans. There also was no standing army and hence the practice of choosing a leader when matters became urgent. Deborah did not physically fight on the battlefield, but used activities such as topographical surveillance, military intelligence and guerilla warfare, where cunning, surprise and unexpected diversions became the strategies which contributed to successful campaigns (cf Yee1993:113).

The introduction of a female, Yael, wife of Heber the Kenite, constitute the role of the assassin, one who kills a top ranking officer, Sisera, the commander of the forces of Jabin of Hazor (Jdg 4:21,22). Yael uses 'beguiling gestures' when she goes out to meet him, invites him in and gives him something to drink, actions which portray reactions to a contextual reality, since Sisera had declared that he will take 'beautiful women as concubines' (cf Jdg 5:30), an unenviable fate which stared captured women in the face. She therefore acts directly and violently (cf Frymer-Kensky 1992:139) instead of waiting for the inevitable.

On the other hand Halpern (1988:85,86) postulates that luring this enemy into a trap, might have been part of Deborah's war plan (Jdg 4:9), one in which Yael and Heber exploited the situation as part of an 'intelligence network', and so the effective elimination of the enemy. If indeed a crafty

plan by Deborah and Yael, it worked on the psychological level, because the ‘soporific’ drink became, in effect, the ‘drug of an exhaustion which had overcome the adrenalin of fear’ (Halpern 1988:83). Being no strangers to conflict and war, both women knew about the exhaustion of warfare! As was typical of that period Deborah, as judge, appears, acts accordingly, and then leaves. We do not hear from either her or Yael again.

The Assyrian queen Sammuramat (Semiramis) was the daughter-in-law of Shalmaneser III and therefore the wife of Samsi-Adad V, and the mother of Adad-Ninari III. She is mentioned on a stele as having gone on campaign with the king. This is quite unparalleled in Assyrian history and thus indicates that she must have had some authority. Her name is also included in the royal dedication texts of Bel-tarsi-ilumma, and she had her own stele at Assur (RIMA 3, AO 104.2002 & 104.2001, in Grayson 1990-1991:29). Going on campaign does not automatically include hand to hand fighting, and we can postulate that Sammuramat must have been a person of outstanding character but, one who participated from a protected position. Conversely, the aggression and ferocity of Assyrian warfare was as a result of the policies of the Assyrian kings. Sammuramat, as wife, mother and daughter-in-law to three conquerors of cruel repute, could not have been unaware or oblivious of the ethos of cruelty so liberally employed by those around her.

Having introduced some female presence on ancient battlefields, we need to seek the role of women as participants in other aspects of war, that is, the way they could act as messengers and couriers, in order to aid the war effort of their people.

11.1.5.2 Scribes, messengers and manipulators. The successful organization of any Mesopotamian city depended on written records and thus the employment of scribes. After extensive training of many years, the scribe would be able to supply the necessary and elaborate texts, hymns and prayers towards rituals for a coronation, death of a king or the installation of a new divine statue, since the scribe had ‘... sat in the *é.dub,ba* (tablet house - Sumerian) from the days of your youth until your maturity ...’ (quoted by Saggs 1995:149). In addition to above categories there was ‘record keeping’ of diverse commodities such as animals, offerings, officials and trade goods, as well as texts relating

to magic and spells (incantations), literary works (epics) and, exchange of letters between kings, queens, officials, governors and so forth. In essence, therefore, various messages were kept, sent, adapted, relayed and transferred, and in the process channels of communication were effected.

Traditionally these creative exercises were seen as the realm of only men. Meier (1991b:542) however, highlights that it was definitely not just a male prerogative, because women too were involved, such as a long list of female scribes, noted at Sippar (cf Harris 1962:1-12), the female scribes named in an oil ration list from the Mari palace(1991:543) and, the wise women of Israel, who are associated with specific (education?) locales (cf 2 Sm 14:2; 20:16; Meier 1991b:543). Men though were the usual ones employed by kings, dignitaries, commanders and governors, people who, despite their high status, often were non-literate (Tadmor 1986:206). Consequently the means of relaying information would have been achieved by a trained scribe, acting also as a messenger. The correspondent, by employing messenger and letter, thus got a double benefit of precision of the written text and explication thereof by means of the messenger! (cf Crown 1974:257; Meier 1991b:540). These couriers were often privy to the inner workings of the state and military affairs. The Mari, Ugarit and Amarna documents, as well as the Biblical texts, portray them acting as royal and intelligence agents, postmen and even as agent provocateurs (Crown 1974:256).

Messengers charged with ambassadorial functions, or sent on missions of a military nature, or sent as an assistant to an envoy, had to be experienced, knowledgeable on political policies, be able to interpret and translate and, most importantly, be fully aware of the system of rules which governed the states of Mesopotamia (cf Munn-Rankin 1956:99-101,104). These multiplicity of skills and the special nature of their ventures, brought forth men who acquired (certain) reputations for their abilities (cf Crown 1974:257). Which brings us to the presence of women. Could these same skills and abilities have been inside the province of women too? Could they, as 'messengers of all sorts' take part in ventures, especially those of a military background? Did they have the training for it?

In the Mari and Amarna letters we read that some couriers were trusted above all others. One of Zimri-Lim's commanders of troops, Ibâl-pî-El, became very close to and was trusted by Hammurabi

of Babylon (Crown 1974:257; cf Munn-Rankin 1956:99,100). In the correspondence (53 letters) of Sibtu, queen of Mari and spouse of Zimri-Lim, we find the same implementation of reciprocal trust. At least thirteen of the letters sent to Sibtu are from officers, such as Meptum, governor of the southern border districts, who passes on intelligence, to Sibtu, of an enemy army on the march (from Esnunna?). Another officer, Halihadum, was Mari's governor of the Upper Balih area, and was commissioned by Zimri-Lim to establish peace between the regional tribes and one Qarnilim of Ašnakkum. Halihadum is successful in this mission '... peace and good relations between, Qarnilim ... (tribes) ... I have established ...' (quoted by Artzi & Malamat 1971:81). He reports the good news to Sibtu who relays the message to Zimri-Lim (busy campaigning). The complete confidence Zimri-Lim has in his wife's abilities to manage affairs of state (which concludes her being literate), bears close witness to a partnership based on a 'reliance and trust' ethos, since *all these admirable qualities* of Sibtus' would not mean anything unless Zimri-Lim was prepared to acknowledge them.

The Ugarit texts contain letters between members of the royal family, incoming and outgoing letters from other courts and correspondence between royal and non-royal personages. These letters reflect participation of women in the handling of state affairs and matters pertaining to the military sphere. A letter, tentatively dated to the end of the kingdom of Ugarit, ca 1180 BCE, concerns a request for 2000 horses to be sent to the king, who is either planning or busy campaigning against enemies in Mukis, north of Ugarit. This request is done by the queen, for the king, to a wealthy officer of high status named Iriritaruma. The situation is one of war, and this is exactly Iriritaruma's concern, since the request for 2000 horses and 'peril before the enemy' (everybody is fleeing), becomes too much for this panicking officer, and he procrastinates by asking the queen to request the king to send 'an intermediary' (cf RS 16.402 in COS 3.45 X). Here we have a female at the helm of things and, in a position to assess, determine and implement, via correspondence, the king's requests.

The position of the queen mother seems to have been of great importance because she had the authority to appoint guards to be sent to the king when he was on campaigns. In a letter of complaint to his mother, Ammurapi of Ugarit (ca 1150 BCE) wants to know why only one *huptu* (soldier) was

sent? Why not the royal guard? But, if they were deployed elsewhere, she must ‘inform’ him (cf COS 3.45 D). This letter contains more than only a request from a son to a mother. This letter portrays the king’s confidence in his mother’s judgement and knowledge on matters relating to a time of war and conflict, and on a realisation of the urgency of the situation.

A characteristic of a successful ‘secret’ messenger was often the ability to ‘pass themselves off’ and so travel and move about unnoticed through enemy country. “Ishtar-babilia is a man of cunning speech. I have sent him to Tikrish ... “(to obtain intelligence), thus an Assyrian source on the ability of this man to get information (quoted by Crown 1974:257). To be able to move about freely was definitely a plus for the transmission of messages, since an envoy could not leave the court without the permission of the king of that court. The reasons could vary for such a delay, since the king might wait for confirmation of the contents of the letter from another source, or he might refuse to give a permit for a safe passage, or he has departed to go elsewhere and now the envoy has to await his return (cf Munn-Rankin 1956:100,101). It therefore becomes obvious that people of lesser status could have the edge on those who were known and could be recognised, and that they thus would be in a position to move about more freely.

In the biblical context we find several instances where deception, or scheming, became missions of deliverance. The Gibeonites, by deciding on a scheme of deception, employed a disguise, as ‘weary travellers’, in order to escape war and possible annihilation by the Israelites (Jos 9:1-4; cf Efron 1980:185,186). Their dilapidated clothing, decaying food and their fabricated story that their country was far away and they want to make a covenant with Israel, was eventually believed by Joshua, son of Nun, and the Gibeonites escaped destruction. Although no female is present in this story, we can compare the action of Yael to these men, since she knew of the destiny awaiting her if the Canaanites should win the battle. Therefore she too employed the art of deception when she convinced Sisera, by means of invitation and ‘fluid’ food that he would be safe inside her tent.

When Joshua, son of Nun, prepared to enter and conquer Canaan, he sent two spies to ‘check out’ the country, which they did, and in the process came to Jericho (Jos 2:1). The king of that city heard

about their presence, but fortunately Rahab, the prostitute, hid and sheltered them from the wrath of the angry king and his men. As a reciprocal gesture Rahab was promised that she and her family would not be killed when the Israelites besieged Jericho (Jos 2:2-14). This message was taken to Joshua who could act accordingly on both aspects of the situation, namely, information about the city and implementation of the ‘treaty’ that was made with Rahab (Jos 6:1-2; 22-25).

David too received a message to flee Jerusalem, since his son Absalom and his army were on their way to kill him (2 Sm 15:10-14). It was Hushai, the Achite, who sent to David the message of warning, by means of an unnamed servant girl. This unknown girl, bravely, took the message to Jonathan and Ahimaaz who were waiting at En-rogel, since they could not risk being seen at Jerusalem. Her task is described no differently from the task of the two men, who will now, in turn, take the received message to David. These activities, of both abovementioned examples and the one on David, reflect not only the danger of relaying messages, but also the role which women, due to their non-military ‘appearance’, played in the contextual reality of a volatile Ancient Near East (cf Meier 1991b:545).

One final text, from Mari, needs to be mentioned, since I feel that communication, by means of the correspondence found in that archive, throws additional light on the role a queen could play in the well being of her people. Letters nos 129-130 deal with a woman who seems to be afflicted with a contagious disease. Queen Sibtu must have notified Zimri-Lim about this matter, since he replies as follows: ‘I have heard that the woman Nanname is sick with the *simmu* ? disease ... with the palace (personnel) she speaks ... many woman she afflicts ... give strict orders from the cup she drinks, no one else should drink ... the chair she sits, no one ... should sit ...’ (quoted by Artzi & Malamat 1971:85). The preventative measures the king advises his wife, Sibtu, to take, is meant to curtail the spreading of the disease. The realistic approach about the danger this infected woman could mean for the community, and especially those within the palace, is somewhat astonishing, considering our perception on the medical knowledge, or rather lack thereof, we think those people had. The royal pair presents themselves as an exemplary couple!

11.1.5.3 Siege and famine. The siege of a city was a grim affair, as so vividly described in the Uruk Lament: 'Let us watch the city (suffer) war and battle ... how the sacred precinct is destroyed ... the walls battered down ... the city's peace disrupted ... screams reverberating ... captured (people) ... Uruk the good place was ... with dust.'(quoted by Green 1984:270, 273, 274; cf COS 1.166). Similarly the laments over the destruction of Sumer and Ur (cf COS 1.166) describe the attackers, ferocious and determined in their attempt to breach the walls, and the defenders, terrified and determined to halt a process which led to death or enslavement. Usually those men captured on the battlefield were either immediately slain, sacrificed in the temples, or assigned to work themselves to death under severe and inhumane conditions, as did the biblical Samson when he slaved at the treading mill (Jdg 16:21; cf Feigin 1933:222; Mendelsohn 1942:14). They could however, be deployed by settling them on land, utilizing them as the king's bodyguards, or employ them as mercenaries (Gelb 1973:90,91). The men within the city walls did not escape these fates either. Women and children were offered to the temple in fulfilment of a vow (*ex voto*) or, as was usual, captive women became concubines or domestic workers (Feigin 1933:219).

All of abovementioned certainties (unless timely relieved by allies) were, of course, preceded by certainties due to a long siege, namely famine, starvation and pestilence. What was it like to be confined within the walls of a besieged city and not have any food available? One solution is that of cannibalism, as happened when a king of Aram besieged Samaria. A woman, X, approached the king and asked his assistance in a matter where another woman, Y, had asked her, X, to give up her child for them to eat and, in return, can eat the child of Y the next day. They ate the first child but now the other woman, Y, did not want to give her child to be eaten (2 Ki 6:25-29).

The other solution was just as drastic, namely women selling their children in order to survive. This practice of selling off members of a family, was not a novelty within the Mesopotamian context. Debt-ridden peasant families would pledge or sell their children to alleviate the burden of taxation or the consequences of climatic conditions such as drought and crop failures (Zaccagnini 1995:93). Nine tablets, discovered at Nippur, record a siege and the severe famine it experienced, and the selling of children to alleviate the pangs of hunger. We read of various fathers and/or mothers

selling their daughters (and one son). One tablet states: 'Take my child ... give me 6 shekels of silver ... so that I may eat' (2NT 293:3-6, quoted by Zaccagnini 1995:94; cf Oppenheim 1955:69-89).

Wars and famines were no strangers to the Ancient Near East. The constant to and fro switching of alliances, power hungry kings and marauding nomads, were the bane of cities who had to endure the effects of prolonged sieges. The Emar tablets (unearthed 1972-1976) give ample evidence of the miseries the Emar population endured as a result of wars and parallels the Nippur tablets in their detail on the sale, not only of children but, of the parents themselves during a siege. 'In the year in which the TAR-Pi troops besieged the city I was indebted to PN ... because of starvation and PN enabled me to survive' (quoted by Zaccagnini 1995:97).

Three of these Emar tablets present a type of dossier, unique in that they do not only record the names of the three children which the mother, Ku'e, sells, but also record an imprint of each child's foot on the clay tablet, thus supplying the buyer with an identification of each child he had bought (Zaccagnini 1994:2). One wonders why such a procedure? The city is in danger of being taken! The answer probably lies in the fact that these children were seen as slaves, who could be bought and sold (cf Saggs 1984:136) and hence a 'safety' hedge against bargaining with the enemy?

The position of women, in the grip of war or a siege situation was therefore one which entailed grim decisions. The death (starvation) of the woman meant that the child was defenceless; the death of her child meant the woman could survive (no need to feed the child). The selling of her child meant the survival of the woman, as well as the survival of the child but, to what sort of a survival? Which brings us to the point where no grim decisions were needed, since breached walls leave very little scope for options. Depending on the duration and outcome of the siege we find the following:

1. 'Lenient' treatment promised if the defenders capitulated early and so did not prolong a siege.
2. Harsh treatment if the defenders refused to capitulate and so prolonged a siege.
3. Death and annihilation, no matter the circumstances or length of the siege (*Herem*).

Besides those who were killed when the city was taken, the surviving women were taken into captivity, and led away to serve as house servants or as concubines.

11.1.5.4 Enslavement and concubinage. In a comparative article on slavery and prisoners of war (POW), Gelb (1973:70-98) makes the following three observances, namely,

1. In a primitive subsistence economy POW are usually killed, since a low economy has no way to utilize them effectively. Those not slain are taken to the temple and sacrificed to the gods. Women too could be sacrificed, but were usually taken away into captivity and enslavement (:71). The rulers of Lagash Eannatum and Entenena (ca 2500 BCE), wrote of not taking prisoners but of piling their bodies in heaps (Gelb 1973:73; cf Postgate 1992a:254; Fig 1a).

2. In the Mediterranean world, abovementioned 'economic' use progressed to a stage where state organization (together with agricultural growth) took males as prisoners but, controlled them by immediate branding and marking, and then hindered their escape by means of tightly roped arms and neck-stocks, as graphically illustrated on the Stele of Sargon (cf Fig 14b ; cf Feigin 1933:227; Gelb 1973:84, 85, 87). Blinding was also used as preventative measures. Shu-Sin of the Ur III dynasty authorised his commissioner, Sharrum-ban, to execute 'the fighting men' (enemies) and to the blinding of the people (Michalowski 2006:79,80). In some stone texts of the period of Rîm-Anum, ca 1760 BCE we read about a *bît a-si-ri* (house of captives) under an *akil asîrî* (officer of the captives). From here the prisoners were appointed to different posts, such as weavers, part of the king's guard or mercenaries, whilst others were given to the temple, as an offering to the god, Ramanum (cf Feigin 1933:222). Those who were never discharged from this 'house of the captives' became, like Samson, blinded and put to grinding flour (Jdg 16:21). Women were taken as booty, to serve as wives and concubines (Feigin 1933:72).

3. In a developed surplus economy, with its vast agricultural farms and large administrative complexes, its temples and mines, all needing human workforces, such as was the case in Greece and the Roman empire, a POW, whether male, female or child, generally became no more than chattel slaves (Feigin 1933:72).

These guidelines indicate the general lot of prisoners taken in the aftermath of the battle. Gelb (1973:71) further postulates that POW were mostly of foreign and not native origin, since prisoners taken among native populations, were rarely fully enslaved. The wars between Judah and Israel illustrates this, because after the war ended, prisoners taken were sent home (2 Chr 28:8-15). The

perception, that slavery was not fully part of the Israelite war context may carry some justification, if compared with her neighbours. On the other hand though, both Israel and Mesopotamia never experienced the onslaught of enormous gangs of unruly slaves which Greece, and Rome, regularly had to quell by means of force and extreme cruelty (De Vaux 1961:80; cf Gelb 1973:96). However, judging by the interstate wars of Mesopotamia, the reality of slavery was a state of affairs which touched all, foreign or native. Thus, as indicated by number two (2) of the guidelines above, the fate of prisoners was death, sacrifice or reprieve until an early death.

The fate of women differed in many aspects from those of the men, but in some areas there were distinct similarities. Firstly, women were also killed. It is quite impossible for all the women to have been taken into bondage as concubines or workers (domestic slaves) In the heat of the battle or when a city was taken, the slaughter would have been indiscriminate. Those women who resisted, those who defended their children, who sought to hide themselves but were found, or who were just too young, old or sickly would not have been treated leniently.

1. In the biblical texts, such as Joshua 6:21, Jericho was destroyed and Joshua gave the order ‘ ... both man and woman ... young and old ... (slaughter) with the edge of the sword ...’
2. In an Assyrian text Tiglath Pileser I boasts about his victory in battle and that ‘He slits the wombs of pregnant women, he blinds the infants ...’ (VAT 13833, quoted by Cogan 1983:756).
3. Hosea (13:16) passes judgment on Ephraim because they have rebelled against God, and so Assyria shall make Samaria desolate ‘... her babes will fall by the sword and be dashed to the ground, her women with child shall be ripped up.’ This horrific action finds echo in 2 Kings 15:18 where Menahem, king of Israel ravaged Tappuah, an Israelite town, because ‘... it had not opened its gates to him, and he ripped open all the pregnant women’ (cf Cogan 1983:757). Although a repulsive act, and one not frequently mentioned in extra-biblical sources, this type of deed reflects world views difficult to comprehend, but understandable in the context of warfare, where the ‘enemy’ is always the target. Suicide bombers of today do not ‘rip’ people, but tear them apart with hand grenades.

Those females who did survive the gulf of violence would now be allotted their future roles. The most beautiful, young and healthy ones would be sorted from the rest and, as some texts attest, be

ordained for kings, whilst generals and other elite officers also take their pick. The remaining warriors and soldiers then share their part of the booty. The Amarna texts highlight the period of Egyptian control of Palestine, a situation where confrontations and wars were the order of the day. Abdi-hiba, the military governor of Jerusalem writes to the Pharaoh '... 21 girls ... I have given in the hand of Shûta, the commissioner, as a present to the king' (No 288:19-22, quoted by Feigin 1933:226). This same governor also sends the king '...46 female slaves, 5 *a-sî-ru-ma* (male captives) and 5 children ...' (No 268:15-20, quoted by Feigin 1933:226; cf Mendelsohn 1942:85). The first lot of girls probably landed up in the king's harem, whilst the second lot of slaves were sent to serve as domestic or other help. The allotments indicated here designate these people as unfree, and as belonging to a local prince or king, who could dispose of them as he pleases.

When captured women eventually reached their destination, they would be put to work in several categories. That is, of course, those who survived the transportation. Three texts, dated to Bûr-Sim (ca 2050 BCE) deal with rations given to women whilst en-route (cf Gelb 1973:83). The first text, which issues barley, names 167 women of which 121 are still alive, but 24 are sick. There are 28 children of whom 5 are still alive, plus two old women of whom one is sick. Five months later text two relates the issue of flour and beer to the same list but, only 39 women and 10 children, none sick, are mentioned. In text three, dated 3 months after text one, the number of surviving women and children stay the same. Thus within 5 months a total figure of 197 individuals were reduced to 49 (Gelb 1973:74,75).

What had happened? Probably the good rations, offered during certain months, were not available for other months, and so contributed to hunger and starvation. The survivors were employed as wet nurses to children or as attendants to the mistress of the house, or, as house workers such as weavers, cooks, millers, brewing and so forth. In the Ebla archives food rations show these 'labourers' (slaves) as receiving far less rations than the 'women of the king'. These slaves received only one third to one half of that given to male workers (Milano 1987:544,546). An Ur III administrative text lists females as being utilized in helping to build the palace of the same Bûr-Sin mentioned above. These female captives hewed, heaved, carried and produced bricks, a situation where they probably

worked themselves to an early death (cf Gelb 1973:83).

The females who became concubines, or worse (prostitutes), depended for their survival on the hope that the master had a combined sense of justice and humanity. The lot of the concubine in the Israelite context seems to have been more conducive to mercy than those her sisters received in the rest of the Fertile Crescent. The master could, if he so wished, marry the concubine, an action which the law of Deuteronomy 21:10-14 authorised. She however then ceased to be a slave (concubine). He may divorce her, but never sell her (cf DeVaux 1961:87). Hence a concubine stayed a slave if the master did not marry or free her (cf Lv 19:20). This freedom though, was not long in coming, since it had to happen after six years of service. Many freed females though would have found it more secure to stay in the household due to the fear of poverty or prostitution.

In the Assyrian context an *esirtu* (concubine) had to be veiled, the same as her mistress, when she appeared on the street. This was not the case in Israel. The *esirtu* was not seen as being a prostitute (those ladies were forced to appear unveiled on the street), because she was excluded from the use of any other man, since she belonged to one man only (Feigin 1933:229). Her master could marry her, but the children of that marriage were illegitimate, unless the legitimate wife of the man had no children. As per the Israelite concubine, the *esirtu* then ceased to be a slave.

In the Nuzi documents the *esirtu* appears as one of a group of women. Only some of them were allotted barley, wheat, wool and a type of beer. They appear as privileged women and are also mentioned together with the queen and important officials (cf Feigin 1933:235-237). Here we have the concubine attaining a high position at court and enjoying the benefits thereof. But the concubine who could reach such heights was also seen as a danger and threat to the queen, since the king can free such a concubine, and even declare her queen. There was therefore always the possibility that a concubine could forfeit her life. When Hagar became too close to Abram, she felt the wrath of Sarai, and almost lost her life in the process (cf Gn 16:1-8).

Thus concubinage was no pleasant experience for most women, since they were ‘objects to be used’ and sold. But the clever ones could rise above, and evade, a situation where soldiers, such as those of Sisera, could have ‘... a wench to each man, two wenches ...’ (Jdg 5:30).

11.2 Recreation and peaceful interludes.

A necessary backdrop to the strenuous activities of warfare, administration of state affairs and the defence of city and surroundings, is the more soothing one of a relaxed way of living: one without stress, strain and unpleasantness. The Standard of Ur (cf Figures 12a, 12b) provides a very graphic contrast of war and peace. As can be noticed, the war side of the standard depicts urgency, preparation, movement: nobody is sitting down, all are standing. The other side presents the bustling activities of a society going about its business, without the fear of the heavy hand of war on their shoulders. The business of peace was, of course, as much a part of a king’s ruling role as that of war. With disruption and instability out of the way, the monarch and his officers, generals and the populace could resume its “habits, its manner of doing things, its bureaucratic idiosyncrasies” (Postgate 1992a:300). Hence we notice, in the peace side of the standard, the officials, important in their positions of seating, writing and tallying. The workers are there too, necessary in their positions of heaving, carrying and bringing. The lucrative result of plenty, as opposed to the deficiencies of devastated landscapes, smooths the way for relaxation and the enjoyments of life. The populace would have their simple pleasures whilst the high status of the king and his barons will allow for more demanding, expensive and luxurious recreations, such as a sumptuous banquet, touring the realm and partaking in sporting activities of various types.

11.2.1 The banquet. Considering that a banquet, in our view, sends alarming messages of expense, overindulgence and freewheeling guests, either very welcome or else just tolerated, it would be rather safe to assume that such an occasion, in ancient times, must have had its negative and positive aspects too. However, the social climate whereby such banquets accommodated friends, vassals and court attendants, cannot be adequately compared to our perception of such feasts. We seem to have

lost the awareness of the political significance (and its ramifications) of those long past banquets (cf Bottéro 2001:75), as the following excerpts ago, might illustrate.

In the famous Epic of creation the gods have to deal with dire threats by Tiamat (their monstrous ancestress) and thus at the summons of their chief, the gods convened at the banquet table. An Early Dynastic period cylinder seal depicts such a banquet scene (cf Fig 43). Here all the gods sat down, and ‘... on produce of the field they fed, imbibed the vine ... made gullets run ... they felt good, most carefree ...’ (cf COS 1.111 § 75-138). During this meal all the gods chose Marduk to be their defending champion against the monster, Tiamat. Marduk duly went, did battle against Tiamat, and won. In celebration of this victory, he then arranged a great banquet ‘... they set out cups ... at the feast (made) orders and designs permanent ... made Marduk’s destiny highest ... granted him exercise of kingship ...’ (cf COS 1.111 § 75-100).

Within these excerpts we find that the banquet served the following purposes, namely: it became an occasion for eating and drinking, but also one of addressing and resolving issues, whether they were of a social, political or military nature. In essence, therefore, the ethos here was one of a dedicated willingness and togetherness to act, and to accept the authority of that decision (Bottéro 2001:75,76). The election of Marduk to the highest position within the heavenly assembly, was due to his brave, heroic action, thus an acclamation of the triumphant warrior!

When the military and feast scenes, as portrayed on the fourteenth and thirteenth century BCE Palestinian ivories are scrutinized, we witness the themes of victory and celebration. One of the ivories, found in the treasury room of the palace at Megiddo, is an object consisting of four bars or plaques which might have served as decorations fixed to a wooden chair or box (cf Liebowitz 1980:162). The four bars are designated as Megiddo, No’s 159 to 162 (cf Figures 45a-45d).

Looking at bar No 159 (cf Fig 45a) we see a battle scene with rearing horses, charging chariots and fallen men. Bar No 160 (cf Fig 45 b) portrays the aftermath of the battle. The victorious troops and their leader are going home. Bar No 161 (cf Fig 45 c) depicts servants bringing provisions to the

banquet table. To the left we see the king surrounded by court attendants. The bent figure may be a lyre player? The last bar, No 162 (cf Fig 45d) depicts the banquet in full swing, the focus point being the king (prince), the warrior who had won the battle.

A sovereign, prince, general, governor or anyone of high rank, who assembles his military men after a victorious defeat of the enemy, symbolizes the ethos of him sharing his own meal, and hence the strengthening and cohesion of all into a single body (Bottéro 2001:75). Another of these Megiddo ivories, No 2, is the well known ivory plaque which depicts two scenes (cf Liebowitz 1980:163). The first shows the prince in his chariot, driving naked prisoners in front of him. The second scene features the prince on an elaborate throne (chair), cup in hand and listening to a musician playing a lyre (cf Fig 44). Here the banquet is not only a victorious celebration, but also a celebration of the denigration of that enemy. A political statement is made on the status and power of the winner, and the degraded status of the loser. Such types and occasions of banquets must have been regular occurrences, considering the ever-changing political context within the Fertile Crescent and the frequent military confrontations (ca 2000-1000 BCE).

An unusual feature of banquets is found in a tablet which dates to Ammi-Saduqa of Babylon (ca 1646-1626 BCE), in which, surprisingly, all the faceless, fallen men and warriors of countless wars are commemorated. Thus Ammi-Saduqa invokes: ‘Oh Amorite dynasty ... Gutian dynasty ... who fell in terrible wars ... take part in this feast, and bless Ammi-Saduqa’(quoted by Bottéro 2001:81). At a *kispu* (repast) it was the sacred duty of the living to celebrate these ‘phantoms’ with solemnity. Whether sovereign, noble or lesser mortals, this type of banquet was according to the individuals’ means or income. Thus kings, nobles and wealthy elite members of the court and society, would ‘invite’ their ancestors and their fallen troops to a great banquet, whilst the ordinary family banquet would be just as solemn but modest in its preparation and conduct (cf Bottéro 2001:80,81).

Amongst the fascinating objects which Leonard Woolley excavated from the royal graves of Ur in 1927 were several lyres and harps, the most well known the ‘bull headed’ lyre (cf Fig 46a).. This type of lyre is displayed on the ‘peace’ side of the Standard of Ur (cf Fig 12a) where a man is shown

playing such an instrument whilst a woman is standing behind him, quite possibly singing. The king is shown taller than the musicians (cf Barnett 1969:96; Kuhrt 1997:135). This is similar to the Megiddo plaque, as mentioned above, and illustrates the employment of such entertainers. The king, Shamsi-Adad writes to his son Yasmah-Addu, ‘ ... Kulbi-atal ... the Nergal singer ... (is) in Mari villeinage ... set the man free now so he can perform his singing here ...’ (quoted by Læssøe 1963:56). Much later in time we find Saul, the first king of Israel (ca 1000 BCE) seeking the soothing music which David, his shield bearer, can supply (1 Chr 16:14-23).

Abovementioned selection of the use of harps and lyres present a delightful picture of appreciation of music as part of celebration, feasting, entertainment and so forth. Whether we consider the lavish and often noisy banquets of medieval times, or our more formal and somewhat stilted ones, the presence of soothing background music is as much a part of the occasion now as it was then. Hence we can postulate that after rites and rituals were observed, diplomats addressed, envoys placated, problems resolved and appropriate gifts exchanged, everyone at the banquet would have been satisfied and duly impressed, a suitable response to the ethos of magnanimous display.

Included too, perhaps as a snobbish satisfaction of possessing and distributing that which few can match? An inscribed plaque of Ur-Nanshe of Lagash shows a functionary entitled ‘head snake charmer’, a titular court entertainer who appears in lists of musicians (cf Kuhrt 1997:36). Apparently the ‘musical snake’ of our modern circus amused then as now! Another boast comes from Zimri-Lim, who states himself as ‘ ... builder of an i[ce] house, (something) which formerly n[o] k[ing] had built on the bank of the Euphrat[es], had ice of ... brought over’ (cf COS 2.112). The guests must have been appreciative of the cool wine they imbibed. Maybe too there were exotic plants (cf Fig 35, Thutmoses’ botanic garden), acquired whilst on campaigns or, jars of wonderful Mediterranean honey, a coveted commodity, of which thirty jars were still in store two years after Zimri-Lim’s ‘tour’, zealously guarded by his private secretary (ARMT XXXIII 217, in Sasson 1984:249).

Last but not least, at the end of a banquet, when the guests have left and only a select few remained behind, game boards would appear (cf Figures 47a, 47b). These game boards show copious use of ebony, gold, silver and ivory, and were most certainly only within the means of the upper classes, and would have radiated a supreme sense of possession. And so, within the lingering, communicative warmth of the feast, this is where the pitting of friendly wits would be the grand finale. No concentration on any problems, just an ethos of camaraderie and togetherness.

11.2.2 The grand tour. This event was very popular in the 18th and 19th century of our times. To ‘go on a tour’ symbolized a certain class, because time, money and noble contacts along the route were of the utmost importance in order to give an ‘aristocratic’ account of one’s experiences when returning home from such a journey. To some extent such an undertaking would have had the traveller doing more than just enjoying him/herself, since contact with other cultures, experiences of events and observation of the ‘way they do things’, might all lead to information which could be of value to the country of the said traveller. This being especially the case in military affairs or (secret) matters of state, since a person of the upper classes would move in the circles where such issues would be discussed.

Touring is an endeavour which implicates mileages or distances to cover, be it by means of foot, wagon, horse or, in modern times, a car or aeroplane. In ancient times though it was the horse or wild ass (onager) which did most of the trotting. Liverani (2000:18) makes the observation that people in the Ancient Near East probably had an unrealistic concept of the vast distances between towns, cities, countries and so forth, since their views were shaped on the level of close, face-to-face communities, ie family, village or neighbourhood. He quotes the case of Burna-Buriash of Babylon (ca 1375-1347 BCE) who refuses to send his daughter to Amenhotep IV of Egypt without a large escort of many chariots because, as Burna-Buriash emphasizes, the neighbouring kings would judge and think the king of Babylon of a lesser status and one with limited resources (EA II:21-22, cf Liverani 2000:19).

Did this king really envision the journey as a short one which passes through numerous cities with nosy kings and citizens lining the streets to watch the procession? This narrow view of distance must rather be applied to the periods before the expansion of territories took place. Empire building rests on conquests and these, in turn, cannot be accomplished without 'going the route'. Invasion of territories also means the experience of those lands, and hence the time it takes to traverse such landscapes. Military campaigns are mobile exercises, which concern not only in fighting the enemy, but in observing and experiencing a wider context than that of village and its surround. The more the campaign successfully conquers and gains territory, the more the compulsion (and curiosity) to continue still further on. Considering too that interrelationships rested on factors such as marriage alliances, treaties signed between king and vassal, merchants travelling back and forth, diplomats, messengers and so on, it becomes fairly obvious that travel was a part of communication between the powers of the day and between high officials, administrators and governors of provinces.

Shamsi-Adad, after his victory at Mari, undertook a ceremonial march to the Mediterranean coast to mark this victory. On this tour he contracted a marriage alliance with the king of Qatna and gave many gifts, an act of ethical obligation. This same king of Qatna had sent two horses as a gift to Ishme-Dagan, the son of Shamsi-Adad, who apparently had not appreciated the expensive gesture, since he failed in the required act of equal reciprocation by giving only a paltry 10 kilos of silver (cf Kuhrt 1997:100,101; Munn-Rankin 1956:96,97). Could the father have gone to smooth matters? The mentioning of horses here contradicts previous statements that they came onto the scene in the Ancient Near East only through the Indo-conquests after 1600 BCE (cf Dalley 1984:159; Moorey 1986:198). Horses were deemed a very special gift and was much sought after by kings, nobles and warriors, whether as chariot-horses or for the use of riding (Dalley 1984:161; cf Kuhrt 1997:104; Saggs 1984:169). The crux of the matter is that a journey, whether in the guise of a war campaign, diplomatic mission or raiding expedition was, in effect, a tour of various places, of meeting people and of gathering information.

A case of probable touring can be made for Zimri-Lim who, with a large contingent of his court officials, his wife and various other 'must go with' tourists, left to go on a journey which took him to the city of Ugarit. Sasson (1984:247-249) determined the group's departure at the end of December, ca 1760 BCE, the wet season in the Levant but, also the far less busy period, since harvesting and threshing were done in the spring. Zimri-Lim went to visit his father-in-law, Yarim-Lim of Yamkhad and in the process may have travelled still further to Ugarit, a possibility which can be deduced by a message sent to him by his governor at Mari, and which reads, '... previously when my lord went to Ugarit ...'(Jean 1939a:67, quoted by Sasson 1984:251).

The whole journey must have been planned in great detail and attention given to large quantities of commodities ranging from textiles, jewels, weapons, food and personal gifts. The caravan must have reached immense proportions with everybody who was anybody accompanying the king. A group which certainly was part of the entourage was his personal warriors as protectors of the caravan. As attendants to the king these military officers were probably knowledgeable about certain aspects of the route of the tour. Escorts were necessary because political conditions in some areas could lead to confrontation and, just like his messengers and envoys, the king needed protection on journeys between countries and foreign territories (Munn-Rankin 1956:105,106).

If one looks more closely at the phenomenon of 'touring' (campaigning) it appears that being curious is not the only factor, because there must have been a mission, on the part of the kings of the interior to get to the sea in order to acquire ports, outlets for markets and control of the trade route from east to west. We can postulate that not only the king had such ambitions, but also the members of his court and his high ranking officials, since great wealth could be attained through such trade ventures. Besides the very lucrative side of such a tour there would also be another side to it namely, the psychological effect such a procession would have had on the population. The presence of king, noble and warriors was a great show of power and propaganda, and maybe the only time the people might ever see their king and his important key-men in the flesh.

11.2.3 Sporting activities. This field of activity involved the warrior not only as an individual, but as part of the group. The target was a four footed animal, or bird, and the prowess of the hunter was based on familiarity with specific weapons and knowledge of the target being hunted. The eventual satisfaction lay in the killing of the prey and the triumph of the skilled hunter, this exultation especially applicable during a lion-hunt. I shall therefore concentrate on the weapons which were used during the hunt, and also the most prevalent prey which was hunted.

11.2.3.1 Archery and shooting. Taught and trained in weaponry, the warrior would be adept at the art of archery. Originally, before archery became a sport of killing for pleasure, shooting at game with a bow and arrow was a mechanism aimed at the procurement of food. An archery scene on a Halaf pot from Arpachiyah, ca 4900 BCE, depicts a man shooting at bucrania (cf Fig 48). As also observed on the hunter's palette (cf Fig 3b) man's early endeavour, by means of bow and arrow, was not only to put food on the table but to defend themselves against predators, such as lion. The bow thus remained the most effective hand- held weapon, from its first appearance as a simple weapon until the introduction of fire arms (Gonen 1975:43).

In ancient times the bow was seen as a prestige weapon (cf Collon 1983:55; Wilkinson 1991:83), and the combination of weapon and warrior soon became a practice not only for war, but also a peacetime sport enjoyed by the king and his elite entourage (nobles). The Egyptian portrayals of hunting scenes (cf Fig 49a; cf Wilkinson 1991:83) are numerous. Comparative material, of chariot hunting, as well as the use of dogs, comes from scenes on a golden bowl from Ugarit, ca 1350 BCE (cf Fig 49b; cf Wilkinson 1991:95) whilst a stag hunt comes from Malatia (cf Fig 49c), and a lion hunt is from Assyrian palace reliefs (cf Fig 6a).

The use of the bow in the hands of the king was an action which would have filtered down to the court attendants who accompanied the ruler on such hunting occasions. Being of the warrior class themselves, these 'king's men' would be as highly trained, and adept, in the art of shooting with a bow and arrow. The bow, thus, was seen as the provider and protector of man, and so took on an almost godly importance and significance and, in the hands of the king, symbolized his

monarchical power (cf Wilkinson 1991:83). The close connection between the bow, the institution of kingship and the men who shared these experiences of anticipation, action and accomplished kill, cannot be disconnected from each other. This can be observed in the way the bow is presented on sculptures and reliefs. In a war situation, where the authority of monarch and his warrior corps are prominent, the bow is seen as stretched to its limit, with the crossbar turned away from the figure of the archer, in order to release its deadly cargo of arrows (cf Fig 50a). In a peace situation, such as at the signing of treaties (alliances, tributes, covenants) or thanksgiving ceremonies after a successful hunt, the crossbar is turned towards the figure of the archer, signifying that no volley of arrows will be released, and hence no killing will take place (cf Figures 50b, 50c).

Releasing volleys of arrows successfully, entails continuous training and considerable skill in order to pull the bow and to fire arrows in rapid succession, since the eventual speed of the arrow depended on the driving force behind the bow (Vermaak 1994:76). A great need was required to be self disciplined, dedicated and physically fit. Archery was a royal pastime in Israel, but definitely also a real-life necessity (Vermaak 1994:75). Hence the Benjaminites became famous for their ability to use the right and left hand in archery. Both Saul and David made use of these archers as warriors, since 'They ranked among the warriors valiant in battle. They carried bows ...' (1 Chr 12:1-2). Expertise in archery was, of course, conducive to the triumph in bagging not only small targets but the bigger and more dangerous ones.

11.2.3.2 Hunting big game. These expeditions must have projected clear class distinctions. On the one hand the royals, warrior generals and other privileged personages owned the superior weapons needed in hunting and, they could allow themselves time to spend at their leisure. Hence hunting for the sheer pleasure of the hunt alone would not have been on the cards for the ordinary populace. Firstly, it was expensive, and only wealth could accommodate the 'extras' necessary for such trips, such as animals for transport, guides, trainers, accommodation and food supplies, all factors which generated expenses. Secondly, time was not a privilege the working classes had, since fields needed tilling, craftsman needed to apply their craft and slaves had little of anything.

Therefore the shared experience of the camaraderie, excitement, participation and expenses, of a hunting expedition in progress, created an elitist ethos which contrasted vividly with the serving attendants, those acting as guides and those who fetched and carried the score of the day. Using their expertise in bow and arrow, the nobles and warriors of the upper classes most certainly tried their luck at hunting big game, since these dangerous animals, by their size and ferociousness, must have constituted a great risk towards the life of the hunter. However, conquest was the divine mission of the king, an ethos which found its way into the king's conquest of threats to livestock and people, as posed by lions, stags and onagers. The hunting relief from Malatia (cf Fig 49c) vividly portrays a stag being hunted.

In a relief from the palace of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal II (cf Fig 51) we see the shooting of a lion at close range. Such close shooting must have been dangerous, not just for the hunter but also for those who accompanied him. The attendants, also armed with bows, would have acted as a backup or as 'noise-makers' in order to distract the lion if things become too intense! Such scenes must have been experienced by the Egyptian pharaoh Thutmose III whilst on his campaigns, since he boasts of many kills, both lion and elephant! (cf COS 2.2 B; COS 2.2 C).

Portrayed on the Black Obelisk (cf Fig 8a) is a panel depicting an elephant (cf Fig 52), as a part of the tribute presented to Shalmaneser III. Texts from the eleventh century indicate that kings from Tiglath Pileser I (1114-1076 BCE) onwards hunted these animals, probably for sports only, but later for the increasing demand for ivory. The ivories from Samaria, and those found in the Assyrian palaces, attest to the excessive (and expensive) demand for these luxury items. Obviously such demand meant that the Syrian species of elephant were killed in ever greater numbers until their eventual extinction (Shanks 1985:47,52). It becomes almost unimaginable that the killing of an elephant was accomplished by the king alone, especially if only bow and arrow was used, as averred by Ashurbanipal (Shanks 1985:52). The team effort needed must have consisted of the king and his contingent of men, those of accurate eye and swift draw of bow!

A letter within the Mari correspondence has one Yaqqim -Addu, a servant of Zimri-Lim, writing to him about a lion which was caught on a roof. It refused to come down or to eat the dead dog thrown onto the roof. In desperation this servant of Zimri-Lim managed to put (coach)? the lion into a wooden cage, onto a boat, and '... sent it to my lord'(quoted by Dalley 1984:165). We can infer that this servant must have gone to considerable (and dangerous) trouble, to get a live lion to the king. Was this as an addition to a menagerie the king owned? Or, a target for hunting?

Using vivid imagination and hunting portrayals on Assyrian reliefs, Dalley (1984:166,167) reconstructed the probable reaction of the king and his men, and the fate of the lion (cf Fig 53).

She postulates, as shown in the 'comic strip':

1. Captured lion(s) in the royal park
2. Put into cages for the hunt
3. Their release into the direction of the king
4. The king shoots (bow and arrow)
5. The *coup-de-grace* (dagger thrust into lion's chest)
6. Lion falls dying
7. The thanksgiving ceremony. The gods receive an offer of libation

The pathos of this scene is in the eye of the beholder.

However, the reality of a hungry, roaming lion, in proximity to the edible livestock of the people, necessitated action to be taken. The excitement and anticipation of a kill must have contributed to an ethos of the king's strength as being as great as that of the lion, and so the lion became a noble symbol of royalty (power, strength and courage), and is still found today on emblems of royalty. Now for a milder type of sport, namely falconry, a sport of kings still practised today.

11.2.3.3 Falconry. As a sporting activity falconry is defined as the use of specially trained falcons and hawks in order to capture small birds or small mammals. Falcons are the smallest of the hawks and nest in high places. When espying a prey, they swoop down at high speed towards the earth in order to kill their target. This ferocious ability of the bird, to home in at such velocity for the kill, soon drew the interest of man as a means towards the ever searching procurement of food. When

food supply increased, via agricultural expansion, this type of hunting declined as a means of edible resources, and thus became available as a sport. This sport was introduced, via the Ancient East, to continental Europe where the nobility too turned it into a recreational exercise.

The Chinese are credited with the invention of the sport but, it could also have originated in central Asia during the third to second centuries BCE (Canby 2002:162, 167). The Ugaritic 'Aqhatu' legend contains a simile which could have falconry as a basis '... I will put you like a hawk under my belt like a bird in my bag ... *above* the hawks will soar ...' (cf COS 1.103, CTA 18). An Akkadian seal shows a figure with a falcon on the right fist. This is typical of Eastern practice, whereas Western custom is to use the left fist. The Akkadian seal depicts the falconer holding the bird on his right fist whilst he holds lure in his left hand (cf Fig 54a; Collon 1983:51). A Neo-Assyrian relief from Sargon's capital at Khorsabad shows a falconer (depicted demeaningly small) accompanying the king (depicted overpoweringly large) on the hunt (cf Fig 54b). The prey is shown as falling down after being attacked by the falcon, whilst the king's expert ability, as an archer of trained format, makes sure that they die before they reach the ground. Canby (2002:162) contests this and sees the bird as having been used as a decoy rather than as an attacker of the prey. However, the bird is held in the right fist, the traditional position (cf Fig 54a).

A third millennium relief from Tel Chuéra depicts the falcon sitting on the right fist whilst the catch of the day dangles from the falconer's hands (cf Fig 54c). The animals are of a larger size than mere small mammals (mice, rats), and thus, even though the appearance of falconry cannot be accurately determined, it can be presumed that it developed in order to obtain fresh meat (Canby 2002:166). However, when kings and noblemen hunted with these falcons, the whole exercise was one of the thrill of the chase, the catching and killing of the prey. This practice, of using falconers to train birds to kill prey that cannot be eaten instead of game that humans want to eat, reflects a combination of wealth (which knows no hunger) and of a warrior ethos which searches for the thrill of the kill. Whether hunting large or small animals, the warrior pits his skill against them, and acquires a trophy as confirmation of success.

All good things come to an end. So, too, our warriors had walked the route and so they, too, eventually come to the end of the road. Death is very final but, one can, as did royalty, nobles, the aristocracy and acclaimed warriors, make that final end one which cannot be forgotten. Therefore a brief look at death and burial, as it pertained to the Mesopotamian and Early Israelite period.

11.3 Death, the final ethos

Each group of people have, within their culture, certain beliefs and rituals which are adhered to and implemented when a member of their community dies. The ethos of death is found in the way death is perceived, and then in the way that perception is implemented in order to understand, to accept, to greet the final time and to cherish the memory of that person. From time immemorial the finality of death has never been easy to accept. But man, within the Ancient Near East context, has had the comforting knowledge of the presence of the gods, not only in the world of the living, but also in the world of the dead, the netherworld. from whence nobody returned.

The divine beings, gods and demons, were portrayed as anthropomorphic, powerful, merciful, merciless and immortal, and as such they permeated man's whole existence and being. Nothing was done without consultation, whether by omens, sages or divination. The presence of the gods were acknowledged as being a part of each and every person. However, like humans, they needed food and nourishment, care and attention. They also needed appeasement and gifts, since they had the power to give and to take. Thus, when death and its accompanying rituals occurred, the gods of the netherworld wanted the same care and attention as that given to the gods of the upper world. Therefore ceremonial plates of victuals were expected, whilst offerings of libation oils, and gifts had to be placed before them (cf Bayliss 1973:123,124; Niehaus 1995:87; cf Postgate 1992a:119). On the Warka vase (cf Fig 55) one can see the lines of servants and the offerings they bring to the seated god. Thus, in order to syncretize this transfer of the deceased to the burial place and into the presence of the divine beings of the underworld, man implemented an inner and outer "religious institutions" of cultic worship, with rites and rituals, to accomplish the transformation from the world of the living to the world of the dead (cf DeVaux 1961:271).

11.3.1 The place of the dead. The Mesopotamian view on the world and the supernatural is an inextricable mixture of Sumerian and Akkadian origin. The conception of a three-tiered world with its different parts located in the firmament above the earth, the earth beneath the heaven and the netherworld below the earth, can be found in reliefs on Babylonian boundary stones (*kudurru*). One such stone is that erected by king Meli-Shipak of the twelfth century BCE (cf Fig 56a). At the top level are the gods of the heavens, Sin the moon god, Ishtar the queen of heaven (eight pointed star) and Shamash (sun disc). The second level is Anu (supreme deity), Enlil the storm god and Ea, the god of wisdom. Below these levels are three registers of various gods whose main sphere of influence is the earth, whilst in the bottom level the serpent symbolizes the gods of the netherworld (cf The Illustrated Family Encyclopedia 1967:37). Another *kudurru* stone (cf Fig 56b) depicts a land sale, all under the auspices of the gods (cf Saggs 1995:123).

The Israelite tradition also saw the universe as basically consisting of three tiers or layers; a heaven above, the earth in the middle (Gn 1:6-8) and below the earth, the abyss (Dt 33:13). Death was not seen as annihilation, and hence the dead lived in the shades of the netherworld in a condition of extreme weakness. Food was thus a requirement in order to sustain them. There was no return from that underworld to the one above, ever.

The gods and goddesses, though, could move between the living and dead worlds. An Ugarit liturgy, commemorating the accession of Ammurapi III, and the sacred celebration in honour of the patrons (his ancestors) contains an invitation to the 'Rephaim of the netherworld' to be present when sacrifices in honour of the new king is made (cf COS 1.105; cf Matthiae 1984:30,31).

In the world of the dead, the 'dead soul' was able to help and aid the living. This could be done by means of necromancy rituals. Apparitions of the dead, or contact deliberately sought, were both seen as omens for divinatory information (cf Bayliss 1973:118). A type of ritual, which used a skull as a medium can be found in Mesopotamian omen lists '... If a severed head laughs - conquest of the army' (cf COS 1.120). The many Mesopotamian myths and epics, such as those about Ishtar who descends to the underworld, '... to Kurnugi, land of [no return] ... Ishtar ... determined to go ... to

the dark house ... to the house which those who enter cannot leave ...' (cf COS 1.108), and Nergal who makes two trips to the netherworld and manages to escape by taking a special 'ghost chair' with him, for the ghosts to sit on (cf COS 1.109; cf Dalley in COS 1.109), demonstrate the close connection between the humans, the gods and their understanding of the certainty of the final descent. In their world this arrangement was implicitly covenantal, since humanity was created to serve the gods, as reflected in the Epic of Creation (cf Niehaus 1995:109-111).

The Israelite tradition, with their same concept of a three tiered universe, saw their underworld, Sheol, as a dark, dank place of no return but, as long as the bare bones remained, the soul existed, albeit as a shadow (Is 14:9-10; Ezk 32:17-32). The great difference, between the Israelite world and the Ancient Near East was that the Israelite God, Yahweh, is one God, not the chief of a pantheon and, Yahweh does not dwell in Sheol. He is absent from Sheol. He does not travel backwards and forwards between the realms of the dead and the living. The way rites and rituals were thus practised and applied, depended on the way these people viewed the netherworld.

11.3.2 Rites and rituals The death of Gilgamesh' forms one part of a Sumerian narration whilst his vision of the nether world that of another, all combined to form the great epic that bears his name (Hallo 1991b:155). The hero-king, Gilgamesh is informed by Enlil, the father of all the gods, that he is not destined for eternal life but, he will be granted kingship (ANET p50), fame and will fight many battles as a great warrior. As ordained, Gilgamesh dies, and descends to 'the place of darkness' as king of the nether world, accompanied by the gifts of those '... whoever lay with him in the place (underworld?). The text then mentions how Gilgamesh weighs '... these offerings to the deities' (ANET p51). Gilgamesh then '... poured out date wine (*libations*)... caused to be inhaled for him.' (p51, 52). However, just as the gods accepted worldly gifts and libations, so too did the 'ghost' of the deceased needed, and accepted, substance. This meant thus that both gods and ghosts must be taken care of. The wretched state of a ghost who is not cared for, is seen by Gilgamesh (since he is now in a position to observe the going-ons of the netherworld), and he exclaims: 'Have you seen him whose ghost has no *paqidu*? I have seen him. He has to eat the dregs of the pot and scraps of food ... thrown .. (at him)' (ANET, p70).

The information contained in this very old rendering of the death of a king, is useful in reconstructing aspects of the beliefs, rites and rituals which were an essential part of the manner in which death was made a part of daily life. The first being the notion of another world into which one descends and therefore, a concept of an afterlife. Due to the fact of a world beyond the present one, where gods roamed, the deceased had to be accompanied by victuals and goods (oils), in order for the gods to 'inhale' them. The magnificent royal graves of Ur give ample evidence of the type of luxurious offers which would accompany a person of high status (like a king). Offers were not just a once off provision of victuals, but the cult of the gods necessitated the provision of regular meals, and hence such offerings were placed in front of their images, 'at the gate of the grave' (Fleming 1995:146). Hence the gods *and* the *etemmu* (ghost) of the deceased needed food and water. Consequently when the warrior, or king, or any person died, they needed the service of a *pāqidu*, one who would take care of the deceased, make funerary offerings, 'pour water' and 'called the name' (Bayliss 1973:116).

Pitard (1996:123-131) investigated the Syrian-Palestinian context and found that a major stipulation in a will was that the principal heir must take care of the family's dead, as well as the gods of the testator, after the death of the testator (:123). That he reckons, sounds like deification of the dead, something not found among the kings of the early Hittite royalty. (:124). If indeed deified, then Pitard (1996:125) argues that reference is to gods and the dead in the wills. In another will the estate is divided between two sons but, they have to attend to the gods and the dead testator, whilst another says '... invoke my gods and dead'. Similarly a disinheritance prohibits a grandson from access to '...my fields, my houses ... my gods and my ghosts' (:126).

The actual theme here seems rather one which required the care of the deceased by a family member, hence the great importance of having a son to succeed to the family estates. This same insistence on a son was within the Israelite context just as important, since the son not only carried the name, but saw to it that the deceased was buried in a proper manner.

Therefore assurance, that their ghost would be looked after, was of the utmost importance to a person, because, if there was no such a caretaker, their ghost would wander for ever and haunt the living. From this it follows that a grave which is opened, and its contents removed, would be detrimental to the ghost, since there would be nobody to take care of him/her. When kings conquered other rulers, such a calamity ensued. Ashurbanipal removed the bones of Elamite kings and boasted: 'I inflicted restlessness on their ghosts. I deprived them of funerary offerings and the pouring of water'(CT 16, 10 V 14 quoted by Bayliss 1973:117). Potentially all ghosts were malevolent, and unless the family adhered to funerary rites, their negligence thereof brought misfortune. The Israelite context of a belief in life beyond the grave can be seen by the food offerings made but, though the dead were honoured in a religious spirit, there was no cult paid to them (cf De Vaux 1961:61).

11.3.3 Burials for eternity. The actual burial places, tombs and graves would reflect the status and wealth of the deceased. The kingly warrior's grave was the most elaborate of all, and was provided with inscriptions which identified him (Bayliss 1973:124). Buried with the king, as mentioned above, were the types of golden objects and treasures as found at Ur (cf Figures 11a-11d). Similarly the magnificent treasure found in the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh, Tuthankamun, reflect the enormous wealth and objects of rare and exquisite craftsmanship these kings needed in the afterlife, just as they were use to in the living one. Gifts received from other kings or princes would also find their way into the royal tomb. Part of a cache of treasures found in the tomb of a Byblos prince consists of an obsidian jar and a gold embellished box (cf Figures 57a, 57b). An Early Dynasty III grave at Abu Salabikh contained jewellery and other imported goods, and even conch shells from the Indian Ocean (cf Fig 57c), an indication of the extent of trade practices. The elaborate graves expressed not only the lifestyle of a monarch (or nobles), but immortalized their deeds by the inclusion also of their weaponry and chariots.

If we isolate one of the Ur graves, PG 1422 (cf Fig 57d), it is obvious that we have here the grave of a personage of high status. The copper dagger and silver axe-head, found by the waist of the man, was part of several other weapons. Found too were two cylinder seals, potentially signs of wealth

and social status, since they are made of lapis lazuli with gold caps. Further we note what seems to be the wheel of a chariot. There are oxen heads and there were also six gold headbands, the type worn by men (Moorey 1984:10). All in all this grave seems to indicate the burial of a high ranking administration officer (temple) or a 'cupbearer' (Moorey 1984:10).

Hence the tombs of lesser mortals, but still of high ranking status, reflect toned-down assembly of grave goods, yet, fine pottery, metal work, stone and ivory vessels, bronzes and jewellery, found in graves such as at Sa'idiyeh, indicate wealth and affluence (Tubb 1998:88). Some Middle Bronze Age tombs at Jericho contained furniture of sophistication, delicately crafted vessels and textiles, the ensemble of status and affluence (Tubb 1998:66).

In the Israelite context the normal tomb was a burial chamber dug out of soft rock, or, a cave. Some personal belongings were placed beside the corpse, but were of a lesser array than those mentioned above. Only the rich, worthy of rank, could afford and thus provide themselves with well tended tombs (cf De Vaux 1961:58). The practice of a monument over the tomb came only much later, as attested to for the Maccabees at Modin (1 M13:27,30; cf De Vaux 1961:58).

The cult of the dead thus was an attempt to preserve identity after death, an ethos especially applicable to kings and nobles since their position in society, their contribution to the well being of the people had been part of their role as administrator, governor, priest etcetera. Even more so the warrior who had fought and died as one of the king's men, and deserved to be remembered.



Fig 40 Assyrian high officials

These bearded men are not in a peace situation due to position of the cross-bar away from body. Note also the rosette, symbol of authority, on arm.



Fig 41a Portrayal of eunuch

Beardless official, also with bow held in a position denoting war. He too has the rosette of authority on his arm.



Fig 41b Portrayal of non-eunuch

The bearded king with a bearded genie behind him. Note the bow turned with its (peace) cross-bar towards body.



Fig 42a Procession of high officials

These officials, bearded as well as unbearded are attending the king in a procession.



Fig 42b Eunuch in a procession

This eunuch (beardless) was in a high position, and could also have functioned as a governor. Note the rich apparel of the horse.



Fig 43 Early Dynastic banquet scene

Cylinder seal depicting the feasting and cups raised at such banquets.

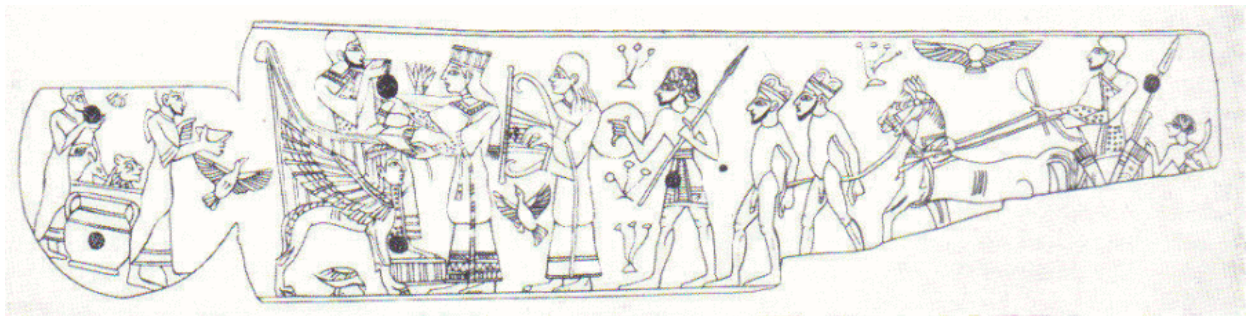


Fig 44 Banquet Scene: Megiddo Bar no 2
(ca 1300 BCE)

Victory in battle is being celebrated and so too
the denigration of the enemy.

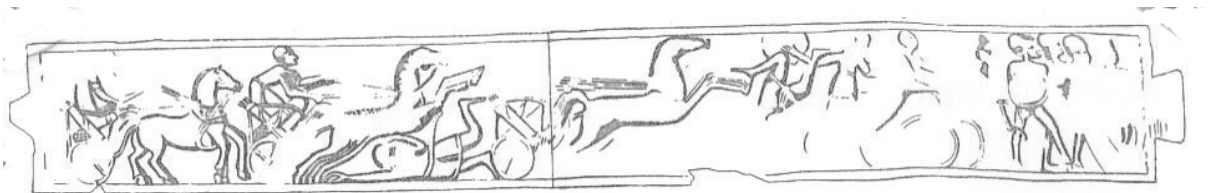


Fig 45a Banquet Scene: Megiddo Bar no 159
(ca 1300 BCE)

Battle scene, chariots and horses, fallen men.

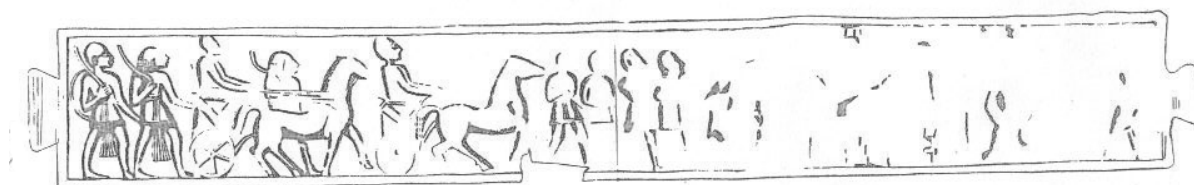


Fig 45b Banquet Scene: Megiddo Bar no 160
(ca 1300 BCE)

Aftermath of battle, troops and king going home.

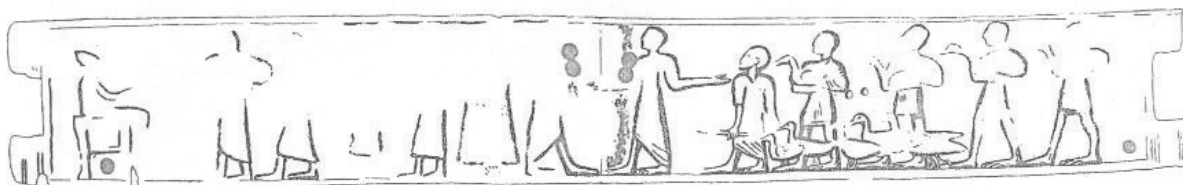


Fig 45c Banquet Scene: Megiddo Bar no 161
(ca 1300 BCE)

Servants bring provisions for the banquet.



Fig 45d Banquet Scene: Megiddo Bar no 162
(ca 1300 BCE)

The banquet in full swing. The bent figure may be a lyre player (musician).

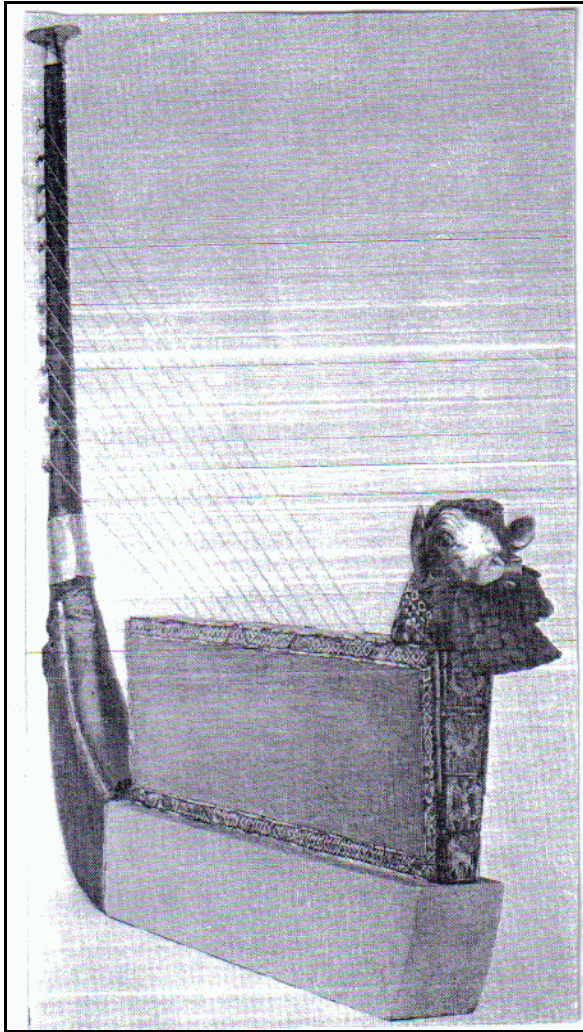


Fig 46a Bull headed lyre from Ur
(ca 2600 BCE)

One of a range of musical instruments that were played during feasting and ceremonies. This lyre was embellished with gold.

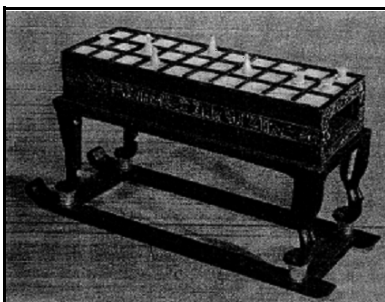


Fig 47b Game board: Egyptian
Beautiful craftsman ship. Egyptian origin.



Fig 46b Lyre player and Singer
(ca 2600 BCE)

Detail found on the bull headed harp from Ur which shows the presence of a harp player accompanied by a (female) singer.

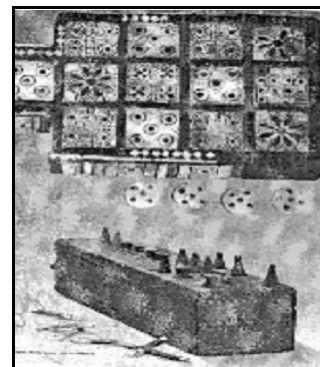


Fig 47a Game board: Early Sumerian
(ca 2600 BCE)

Recreational time was spent at game boards. These artifacts were often made from expensive materials.



Fig 48 Halaf pot: The art of archery

This pot from Arpachiya depicts the shooting of bucrania. The bow used is still of elementary style.



Fig 49a Egyptian hunting Scene
(ca 1325 BCE)

This scene depicts Tuthankamun hunting, accompanied by hunting dogs as well as his wife.

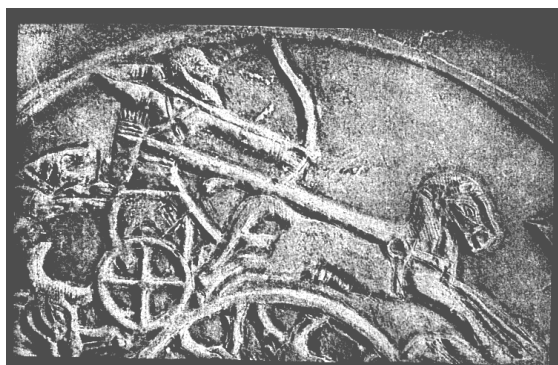


Fig 49b Hunting Scene from Ugarit

This hunting scene, depicted on a golden bowl, is accomplished by means of chariot, a method used for chasing fleet running game (onagers).



Fig 49c Hunting Scene from Malatia

Here too a chariot is used to hunt stag. Note too the hunting dog.



Fig 50a Bow and arrow - war situation

The bow is stretched to its limit in order to fire a volley of arrows. Thus the cross-bar is away from the body.

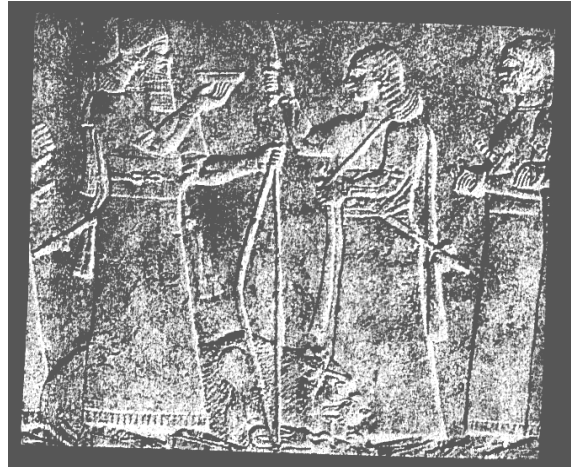


Fig 50b Bow and arrow - peace situation

The king and some of his eunuchs. The cross-bar is turned towards the king denoting this as a peaceful meeting.

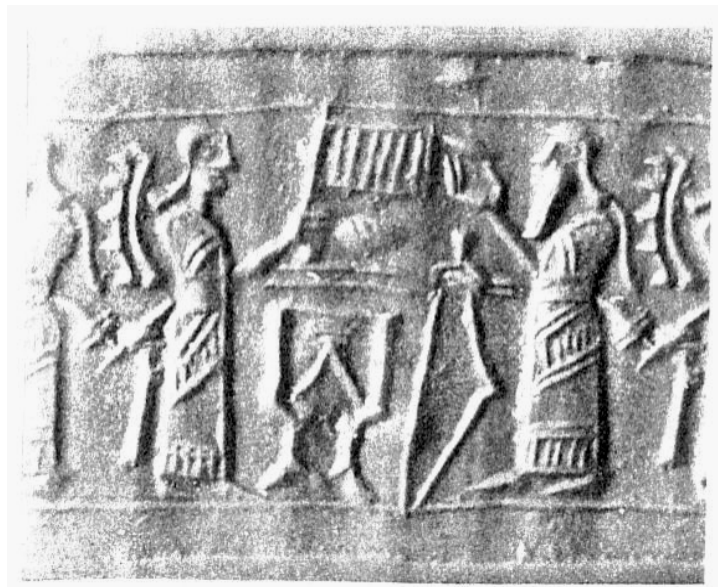


Fig 50c Bow and arrow - peace situation

A ritual in progress, hence the bow turned towards the king.



Fig 51 Shooting lion at close range

The king uses bow and arrow to wound the lion. Note the 'noise-maker' to the left and to the right, the warrior who participates in the hunt.



Fig 52 Elephants as hunting targets

These big animals would not have been hunted to extinction if it was not for the much sought after ivory its tusks provided.



Fig 53 An assembly of pictorial evidence of a lion hunt

These reliefs originated from the palace of Ashurbanipal, and were put together in order to postulate a "lion hunt".

Picture 1 Captured Lions

2 Put into cages

3 Released

4 King shoots at lion

5 Lion is stabbed by king

6 Lion falls dying

7 Ceremony of thanks to the gods



Fig 54a Akkadian Seal depicting a falconer

The falconer is shown with the falcon on his right hand whilst he holds lure in his left hand.

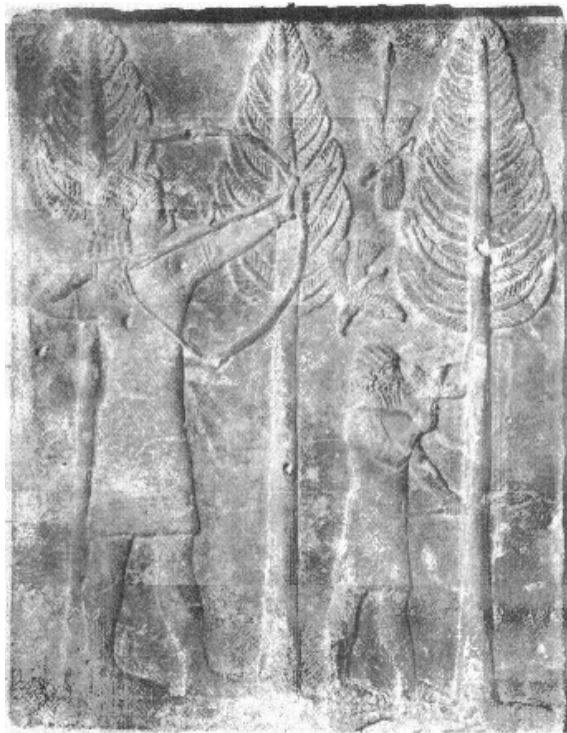


Fig 54b King and falconer

The king is shooting at prey which falls to the ground. The falconer hold a falcon on his right hand.



Fig 54c "Falcon" Relief from Tell Chuera

This scene depicts a falconer with the falcon on his right hand. He dangles the catch of the day from both days.



Fig 55 The Warka Vase
(Uruk. Early Dynasty)

Presentation of offerings and libations to the goddess in whose shrine the fruits of the fields are stored (see upper register).



Fig 56a Kudurru(Boundary Stone): King Meli-Shipak

On the surface of this Kudurru the religious view of the Ancient Near East is presented. The abodes of the gods are clearly seen in the tiers, namely, the heavens above, the earth in the middle and the under-world at the bottom.



Fig 56b Kudurru Boundary Stone: Grant of Land

The land grant, as inscribed on this Kudurru, was done under the auspices of the gods (as indicated by the tiers)



Fig 57a Obsidian jar from tomb of Byblos prince (ca 1800 BCE)

This object, of local style, could have contained oil and balm which the pharaohs of a later period sent to their Syrian allies.



Fig 57b Embellished box from tomb of Byblos prince (ca 1800 BCE)

The lid of this box is inlaid with the titles of Amenehet IV in silver hieroglyphs.

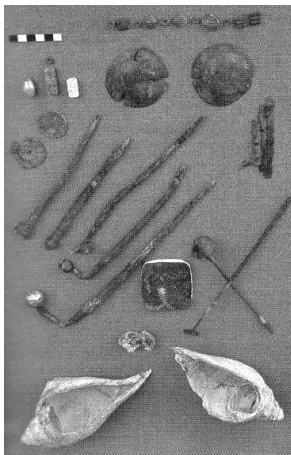


Fig 57c Jewellery and luxury goods found in graves

Found in a grave at Abu Salabikh, this collection includes lapis lazuli, copper and carnelian. The conch shells originate from the Indian Ocean, an indication of the extent of trade.

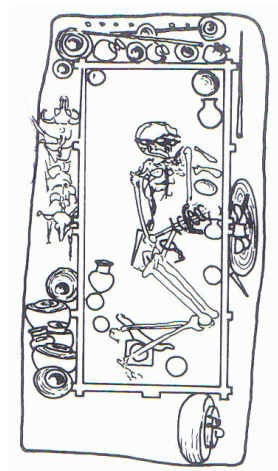


Fig 57d A warrior grave, PG 1422, at Ur (ca 2600 BCE)

The surrounding goods indicate the high status of the deceased.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONCLUSION

The scribes of the Ancient Near East have left us a wonderful, written legacy on the role the king and his men played in the patterns of history during the period of the second millennium BCE. By means of the dual approach of documents and archaeology it became possible to reconstruct a semblance of the extent these monarchs, and the peoples they ruled, were the results of their landscape, since the hemmed in geography of the Fertile Crescent determined the routes of economic trade, marches of campaigning kings and invasions by landless, hungry marauders on the perimeters of the limited fertile lands. These factors were never independent of each other, because a lack of one caused a lack in the others, whilst an abundance of one provided abundance to the others. Sadly though, both of these conditions, lack and abundance, led to intermittent confrontations and the ultimate solution, namely, warriors, weapons and warfare.

The king, as protector of his realm, waged his war campaigns on a command from the gods. These confrontations therefore operated on a worldly as well as heavenly plane, where military, and hence political success, meant divine favour and approval. The reason ‘for going to war’ was thus never an exercise which needed much prodding. The interrelationship between cities was bound by reciprocal treaties and oaths before the gods, whilst alliances were forged to facilitate mutual protection and economic well being (such as regulations of the waters from Mesopotamia’s life-giving rivers), whilst vassals were honour-bound to their liege, with their tribute being paid on time. However, the periods of peaceful co-existence, as set out in my list in 5.1, spanned less years, in total, than the periods of conflict. Was human nature the weak link in the chain, the one factor which cannot be tied and bound? To a great degree yes, and by taking into consideration the correspondence between (power-hungry) kings and their appointed (power-hungry) men, plus archaeological evidence, such as boastful inscriptions, I propose the following reasoning in order to deduce the ethos of a class of warriors and the ethos of war which they practised.

When Sargon I of Akkad, an usurper, began his campaigns, ca 2300 BCE, of the lands outside the narrow confines of Assyria, he began a process which facilitated conquests, namely, he

collected an *army of men, willing to follow him*. This same strategy was applied, more than one thousand years later by Saul the Israelite and his successor, David. Further, in order to keep a tight control on the conquered lands, he installed trusted family members in key positions. He then proceeded to construct a new capital, Agade (Akkad). A precedent was set for future monarchs to apply in their thirst for land, control of trade routes and the ever welcome bounty of war, whether slaves, ‘wenches’ or the gold of temples and palaces. The improvement of weaponry (such as chariots) increased the possibility of victory, and hence the spoils of war. Familiarity, due to campaigns, of the landscapes traversed, as well as new territories, aided and abetted the drive to conquer and to subject the conquered to the power of the victorious king and his demand of tribute.

The whole ethos of warfare, and conquest, had thus changed from one of city-state versus city-state to one of wide ranges of geographical areas. This was not the whole story though, since within the taken areas a diversity of peoples lived. Sooner or later the yoke of the conqueror chafed and, the ensuing rebellion would either be successfully squashed or, the new victors would resume where the newly defeated had left off. The strength of a king *lay in his army*, one he could employ and deploy to suit all situations. To this end too, he *needed the men* who, as his chosen, high ranking officers, would help run the empire. Here human nature was the one power a king could not subject to his demands. The treacheries and connivances, between allies and the holders of treaties, are abundantly portrayed in letters, where governors or commanders write to their kings about rebellions, alliances being switched and of preparations by vassals for war. The Fertile Crescent had become an area where these *switching powers of the day* had created volatile situations, which could only be solved by men trained to supply, or enforce, solutions.

In Chapter One of this thesis I introduced such trained, and good, warriors, the Jedi, who come to the aid of people in a distressful situation, which was being caused by a trained, but evil, warrior, Palpatine. The rescue mission of the Jedi is successful but, there are other missions looming on the horizon. This situation, of a pattern of war and peaceful interludes is exactly the situation as was found in the Ancient Near East during the second and first millennium BCE. Very similar too were the warriors, the king’s men, who saw to the business of waging ‘justified’

war or maintaining fragile peace. In my investigation on the authority which not the king exercised, but also that of his serving men, it became fairly clear that the Ancient East was the ideal place for such men, since the continuing confrontations, whether due to the seeking of land and territories, or the violation of treaties, created an ideal climate for men, who had to operate by means of an ethos which allowed them the freedom to do 'justice' or an act of 'injustice'.

Therefore it becomes very obvious, when a reading of the various tablets (Mari, Assur, Ebla, and so forth) are made, that these men had the necessary authority from the monarch, and that their ethos was driven to honour that authority. For these men to maintain their warrior status they had to serve their king loyally and, as became very clear in the correspondence between ruler and commanders or governors, obey his commands. On the other hand the king's power base turned on his relationship between himself and his warriors. Without this relationship, the power base of the king was threatened by anarchy, chaos and loss of kingship. This illustrates that there was a dependency between king and king, between king and warrior and that an ethos of trust and loyalty strengthened this bond.

I close with Pettinato's (1991:240) quote from a diplomatic letter from the Ebla chancellery to the ruler of kingdom of Hamazi, as a 'reminder of kinship'. This letter leaves a valuable message when it emphasizes that Syrian and Elamite kingdoms should live as a community. "You are my brother and I am your brother. To you, fellow man, whatever desire comes from your mouth, I will grant, just as you will grant the desire that comes from my mouth. Irkab- Damu, king of Ebla, is brother of Zizi, king of Hamazi; Zizi, king of Hamazi, is brother of Irkab-Damu, king of Ebla."

These words, of diplomatic courtesy, are full of meaning to the inhabitants of Syria, Lebanon and all other countries, as well as ourselves that all, rulers and citizens alike, must act and live for one another, and not allow dissidence and strife. A sentiment which seemed to have failed the plethora of kingdoms within the Ancient Near Eastern context.

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NEB 1972. New English Bible. Used throughout unless specified otherwise.

15 ABBREVIATIONS / JOURNALS

- AJA American Journal of Archaeology
- AJSLL American Journal of Semitic languages and literature
- ANET James B Pritchard (ed), The Ancient Near Eastern Text relating to the Old Testament
- An St Anatolian Studies
- ARMT Archives Royales de Mari: Transcrite et Traduite

ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AW	Ancient World
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAAS	Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
Bi Or	Bibliotheca Orientalis
CANE	J M Sasson (ed), Civilizations of the Ancient Near East (4 Volumes)
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CJ	Concordia Journal
COS	WW Hallo & K L Younger (eds), The Context Of Scripture (3 Volumes).
HAR	Hebrew Annual Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
INT	Interpretation
JANES	Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JBQ	Jewish Biblical Quarterly
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JESHO	Journal for the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JNSL	Journal of Northwest Semitic Language
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
MARI	Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OR	Oriente
SAAB	State Archives of Assyria Bulletin

- SIC 1 C D Evans, W W Hallo & J B White (eds), Scripture In Context 1: Essays on the Comparative Method.
- SIC 2 W W Hallo, J C Meyer & L G Perdue (eds), Scripture In Context 11: More Essays on the Comparative Method.
- SIC 3 W W Hallo, B W Jones & G L Mattingly (eds), The Bible in the light of Cuneiform Literature. Scripture In Context 111.
- SIC 4 KL Younger Jr, W W Hallo & B F Batto (eds), The Canon in Comparative Perspective: Scripture In Context 1V.
- VT Vetus Testamentum
- VTs Vetus Testamentum, Supplements
- ZA Zeitschrift für Assyriologie and vorderasiatische Archäologie

JOURNALS

Art History

Assur (Monographic Journals of the Near East)

ASSYRIA

Dor le Dor

Fax Theologia

IRAQ

Levant

Missiology

Rocznik Orientalistyczny

Semeia

Tel Aviv

Word and world

World Archaeology

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