CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

Levantine Kingdoms of the Late Bronze Age

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1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the historical and archaeological data available for the dense cluster of regional states in western Syria, Lebanon, and northernmost Palestine during the Late Bronze Age (LBA). This period began c.1550 and ended c.1200 BC when the regional systems were rather abruptly changed, both politically and culturally, by what is generally termed the invasion of the “Sea peoples.” Most of the political entities in the Levant during the LBA were already formed during the preceding Middle Bronze Age (MBA, 2000–1550 BC), in the period of the Amorite state formation. Many of these kingdoms continued to exist throughout the 2nd millennium into the LBA, while gradually – and often only slightly – changing their political, cultural, and partly even ethnic structures. The major force behind the modifications of the Levantine kingdoms from the MBA to the LBA was the growing impact of external political powers such as the Egyptian, Mitanni, and Hittite empires. Nevertheless, the transition from the MBA to LBA in the region was principally characterized by continuity of material culture, settlement, and society. The LBA was a period when interregional contacts and exchange between the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East reached its apex, with the Levant a hub of this communication system. Thus, the LBA can justifiably be termed the “international age” of the Levantine kingdoms.
2 Historical Outline

The first phase of the historical development in LBA Syria has been called the “period of Mitannian and Egyptian domination” (Klengel 1992: 84–99). This period lasted from 1550 to 1350 BC, its final phase corresponding to the so-called “Amarna-period” in Egypt. These dates are based on the Mesopotamian Middle Chronology. If the High Chronology were applied, the beginning of this phase would have to be dated to c.1600 BC (for a discussion of the Mesopotamian Middle, Low, and High Chronologies, see Hrouda 1971: 23; Schwartz 2008). The two external powers – Mitanni with its center in the Khabur headwaters region of northeastern Syria, and Egypt in the Nile Valley – sought constantly to extend their power in the Levant by dominating those kingdoms within their geographical reach. Mitanni exercised overlordship over Halab (mod. Aleppo); Mukish, with its center Alalakh (mod. Tell Atchana); and Kizzuwatna (mod. Cilicia) (Wilhelm 1982: 28–37; 1991: 95ff), all of which are west of the Euphrates, where Mitanni proper ended. Egypt, on the other hand, tried to repel Mitannian influence through military campaigns into Syria. Thutmose III (1479–1425 BC) was initially victorious over a coalition of Syrian and Palestinian kings, led by the king of Qadesh, in the dramatic battle of Megiddo (1457 BC) and, later on (in 1447 BC), reached and crossed the Euphrates at the border of Mitanni, where he erected a stele on the banks of the river as a symbol of Egyptian dominance in the region (Redford 1992, 2003). However, in most cases, Egypt did not establish direct rule over the Syrian kingdoms. Instead, peaceful relations were established, always under Egyptian supremacy. One such case is provided by Qatna, where Thutmose III attended an archery contest together with its king (Redford 2003: 222–6), a conspicuous sign of political understanding. Thanks to a treaty between Artatama I of Mitanni and Thutmose IV (1400–1390 BC) and an interdynastic marriage (Wilhelm 1991: 96–9; Klengel 1989: 271–6), Egypt and Mitanni were on peaceful terms throughout the first half of the 14th century, and particularly during the Amarna Age. This also insured a period of peace (apart from minor local conflicts) and prosperity for the Levantine kingdoms.

A second phase (c.1350–1200 BC), known as the “time of Egyptian and Hittite overlordship” (Klengel 1992: 100–80; 2002; Wilhelm 1991), began with the Hittite conquest of northern Syria under Shuppiluliuma I (c.1350–1320 BC). After the defeat of Mitanni the Hittites conquered the Syrian kingdoms from Alalakh and Ugarit in the north to Qatna in the south. While several of these, such as Ugarit, survived and even prospered under Hittite control (Klengel 1969: 358; 1992: 130–51), others, such as Qatna (Klengel 1992: 156–7; 2000: 249), were destroyed and abandoned. Egyptian influence was thus pushed back to a line south of the kingdom of Qadesh in central-western Syria. The direct conflict of interests between Egypt and the Hittites culminated in the famous battle of Qadesh (1275 BC) where Ramesses II and Muwatalli II clashed – but there was
no clear winner. As a result, a peace treaty was concluded between the two superpowers in 1259 BC, one of the first far-reaching international agreements in world history. It concertedly determined Egyptian and Hittite interests in Syria, to the disadvantage of the autonomy and self-determination of the Syrian kingdoms. The period of a pax in the Levant enforced by the Hittites and Egyptians lasted for only half a century, until more major disruptions occurred.

The third phase in the LBA history of the Levant is marked by the invasion of the “Sea Peoples” (c.1200–1160 BC) (Klengel 1992: 181–7). This is mainly known from Egyptian sources, particularly from the reign of Ramesses III (1188–1156 BC), according to which the Sea Peoples conquered and destroyed Amurru, a state in western Syria between the Mediterranean and the Orontes Valley and one of the most powerful Levantine kingdoms of the LBA, in order to establish a base from which to launch an attack on Egypt (Bartl 1995: 195ff; Cline and O’Connor 2003: 108–11, 136). The origins, organization, and ethnicity of the Sea Peoples, however, are hotly debated, and it is doubtful that they arrived as a large group of plundering invaders (Ward and Joukowsky 1992; Sherratt 1998; Oren 2000; Cline and O’Connor 2003). Some scholars suggest that they were small, ununified groups of migrants who had been driven – in a cascade effect – out of their home regions because of economic or social crises, eventually forming ad hoc alliances (Cline and O’Connor 2003: 111). Alternatively, it has been suggested that groups of Sea People settled down peacefully and gradually in the southern Levant, particularly in the Jordan Valley, as early as the late 13th century BC (Tubb 1998: 95–106). Destruction layers at settlements are taken as the clearest indicators of these foreign incursions, the most prominent example being at Ugarit (mod. Ras Shamra, Syria), where the destruction, dated to c.1192 BC (Dietrich and Loretz 2003), affected the whole city. Other sites, such as Emar, Alalakh, Ras Ibn Hani, and Ras el-Bassit in the northern Levant and Hazor, Megiddo, Ta’anach, Gezer, Lachish, Ashdod, Beit Mirsim, and Beth Shean in the southern Levant, reveal clear signs of destruction and abandonment as well (Bartl 1995: 197–200; Caubet 1992: 123–31). The Bronze Age Levantine, urban-based political system collapsed, marking the end of a long-lived network of competing kingdoms in the western half of the ancient Near East.

3 Written Sources

Our main source for the political history of the Levantine kingdoms during the LBA is the Amarna archive. Found within the Egyptian royal residence at Achet-Aten (mod. Tell el-Amarna), it consists of correspondence between the pharaohs Amenhotep III and IV (Akhenaten) and various foreign rulers. The letters date to c.1360–1330 BC and shed light on political relations both between the Levantine rulers and Egypt and among the Levantine rulers themselves. One of the best-documented cases concerns the kingdom of Gubla/Byblos on the Lebanese
coast, whose ruler Rib-Addu was the author of 62 letters to the pharaoh (Figure 41.1). The rulers of Ugarit, Qatna, Nukhashe, Barga, Tunip, Amurru, Qadesh, and Damascus in Syria; the kings of Beruta (Beirut), Sidon, Tyre, and Kumidi (Kamid el-Loz) in Lebanon; and rulers or officials from Hazor, Akko, Megiddo, Gezer, Jerusalem, Ashkelon, and Lachish in Palestine: all these also corresponded with the pharaohs (Moran 1992). These letters provide us with information on the political topography of the Levantine kingdoms in the 14th century, their political leaders, political structures, and internal problems, as well as on international diplomacy expressed through the exchange of gifts between courts.
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External sources for the history of Syria in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC also include the Hittite archives from Hattusha (Kühne 1982).

In addition, there are internal sources from the Levant which complement the external data. The most abundant corpus of texts comes from Ugarit, and illustrates the international, cosmopolitan character of this trading hub and the economic, political, and cultic activities and structures of this prosperous kingdom (Klengel 1969: 340–407; 1992: 130–51). Texts from Alalakh Level IV shed light on the complex organization of the palace economy of a LBA kingdom (Von Dassow 2008). The archive of Idadda, from the royal palace of Qatna, consists of only 55 tablets, but these include letters to the king of Qatna from other regions in Syria as well as palace inventory texts, administrative documents, and juridical texts, and, as such, they offer a broad insight into the life of the palace at Qatna in the mid-14th century, shortly before its destruction by the Hittites (Richter 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Richter and Lange in press). The texts from Emar reveal the private, social, and commercial activities of LBA households in an urban center belonging to the kingdom of Ashtata on the west bank of the Euphrates (Arnaud 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987).

4 Historical and Archaeological Topography of the Northern Levantine Kingdoms

The Amarna archive presents the most detailed picture of the LBA political topography of the entire Levant. The location and distribution of kingdoms in the southern Levant (Palestine) in contact with Egypt has been discussed extensively, though some questions regarding lesser known cities and political entities remain (Finkelstein 1996; Na’aman 1997). The present chapter focuses on the northern Levant (western Syria and Lebanon). On the basis of our knowledge of historical geography, we are able to identify a number of the capitals of the Levantine kingdoms and to roughly locate the territories of others (Figure 41.2).

Surri, Siduna, Beruta, and Gubla

There were four major kingdoms on the coast of Lebanon. From south to north these were Tyre/Surri (mod. Sur), Sidon/Siduna (mod. Saida), Beruta (mod. Beirut), and Byblos/Gubla (mod. Jbeil). Important Phoenician harbor cities during the Iron Age, they shared a regional, pre-Phoenician culture during the LBA, generally labeled Canaanite (Klengel 1970: 15–22). Most of these sites were built over so extensively by later occupations that hardly any traces of their LBA levels can be detected. Byblos, despite being the only one of these sites that is not covered by a modern city and being comparatively large (5 hectares),
yielded, apart from some grave material, no LBA remains (Salles 1980; Merrillees 1983). Rescue excavations in central Beirut brought to light a LBA city wall revetment and glacis, demonstrating that Beruta at that time was a strongly fortified, moderate sized (2 hectares) city (Badre and Thalmann 1996: 91–3, Fig. 3; Badre 1998). At Sidon new excavations at the “College site” proved that LBA monumental religious architecture existed in the city. Aegean and Egyptian imports and objects showing influences from those regions testify to close contact, and probably also gift exchange, with neighboring regions (Doumet-Serhal 2010: 125–8). Sarepta (mod. Sarafand), 13 kilometer south of Sidon (Pritchard 1978), has extensive LBA remains including one of the rare Near Eastern examples of an extensive pottery production area with 24 kilns (Anderson 1987). This important city probably belonged to the kingdom of Sidon (Klengel 1970: 18–19). As the pottery production area was active from LBA II (1450/1400 BC) until the Iron Age (Anderson 1987: 42), Sarepta provides a good example of social and economic continuity from a LBA urban center to a Phoenician settlement of the Iron Age (Anderson 1988: 433).
On the Syrian coast, the major LBA trading and cultural center was indisputably Ugarit, a large site (c.26 hectares) with a strongly differentiated urban layout containing political, religious, and domestic areas (Van Soldt 1995; Yon 1997, 2006). It was the capital of a densely populated kingdom that extended along the fertile coastal plain from the holy Mount Saphon (mod. Jebel el-Aqra) in the north to the region of Jable in the south (Saadé 1990; Van Soldt 1997, 1998, 2005; Calvet and Jamous 2004: 19). There were also sub-centers in this region such as Siyanu (mod. Tell Sianu), Gibala (mod. Tell Tweini) and Souksi (mod. Tell Sukas).

Siyanu, 40 kilometers south of Ugarit, was a semi-independent kingdom under Ugaritic hegemony until it gained its independence during the period of Hittite control c.1300 BC in the reign of Murshili II (Van Soldt 1997: 696–701; Bretschneider et al 2005: 219). There is some doubt about the identification of Tell Sianu with Bronze Age Siyanu, as no LBA archaeological remains were discovered during excavations there (Al-Maqdissi 2006). At the same time the neighboring site of Tell Iris, less than 1 kilometer away and only 2 hectares in size, has a substantial layer of Bronze Age occupation. This was destroyed by fire at the end of the 13th century BC, a destruction attributed by some scholars to the Sea Peoples (Al-Maqdissi and Souleiman 2004). Bearing this in mind, it is possible that Tell Iris, rather than Tell Sianu, is LBA Siyanu.

The large site of Tell Tweini (12 hectares), possibly ancient Gibala, has evidence of LBA occupation and an impressive Middle to Late Bronze Age stone fortification system (Bretschneider et al. 2005; Bretschneider and Van Lerberghe 2008). Like Ugarit, Gibala lies 2 kilometers inland from its harbor. The site shows traces of destruction by fire c.1200 BC or shortly after, an event which the excavators have linked to the invasion of the Sea Peoples (Bretschneider and Van Lerberghe 2008: 32–3).

Nearby Tell Sukas, 6 kilometers south of Tell Tweini, was intensively inhabited during the LBA and controlled two harbors. As a minor center, Souksi/Shuksu (Tell Sukas) seems to have belonged to Siyanu (Lund 2004: 63). In addition, there must have been villages and hamlets in the coastal plain and foothills of the coastal mountains. With a pattern of centers, sub-centers, minor centers and villages, a complex, four-tiered political hierarchy of settlement becomes evident in the wider Ugarit region. Tell Sukas was destroyed after 1200 BC, supposedly by the Sea Peoples according to some scholars (Lund 2004; Riis et al. 2004).

The Ugaritic palatial dependencies at Ras Ibn Hani (probably ancient Birutu), only 5 kilometers from Ugarit, were part of the district controlled by it. Thus, Ugarit presents the clearest picture of the geographical outline of a Levantine kingdom and it is the part of Syria with the largest number of excavated sites belonging to one and the same kingdom.
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Amurru

The territory of the Kingdom of Amurru must have been located south of Ugarit and the kingdom of Siyanu. Its capital is unknown, so its location remains difficult to pinpoint. It is generally assumed that Amurru extended from the Mediterranean coast around the Akkar plain far into the coastal hinterland up to the Middle Orontes valley in central Syria (Klengel 1969: 178–325; 1992:160–74; Goren et al. 2003). The important route from inner Syria to the Mediterranean through the Homs Gap, a wide passage between the Lebanon Mountains in the south and the Syrian coastal mountain (Jebel Ansariyeh) to the north, seems to have been controlled by Amurru. The control of traffic between coastal and inland Syria was thus key to its prominence in the LBA. Two sites are known to have belonged to the kingdom of Amurru: Tell Kazel and Tell Arqa. Tell Kazel is situated in the northern part of the Akkar plain and has been tentatively identified with Sumur (the later Phoenician Simyra) (Klengel 1984). From the reign of Thutmose III (mid–15th century BC) onward, Sumur was an Egyptian garrison and administrative seat. Later it became one of the most prominent places in the kingdom of Amurru. Excavations have revealed an important and extensive LBA settlement, including a LB II (14/13th century BC) temple complex (Badre 2006; Badre and Gubel 1999–2000). Tell Arqa is located in the southern part of the Akkar plain (in modern Lebanon). It has been tentatively identified with the city of Iirqata (Hawkins 1976–80a), known from the Amarna letters, and has signs of an important MBA occupation. However, during the LBA, Tell Arqa fell into gradual decline and was reduced to a minor village, especially in comparison to Tell Kazel, which was the major center on the Akkar plain (Thalmann 2006, 2010).

Tunip and Niya

In the middle Orontes valley of inland western Syria were two urban centers: Tunip and Niya. Tunip can be regarded as a kingdom (Dietrich and Lorentz 1997) but it seems to have been organized differently from the other kingdoms, perhaps a sort of oligarchic political system. A letter from the Amarna archive (Amarna letter EA 59) shows that its inhabitants had the right to petition the Pharaoh directly (Moran 1992: 130ff). In the reign of king Aziru of Amurru (13th century BC) Tunip was incorporated into the domain of Amurru (Alt 1944–5; Klengel 1969: 75–95; 1992: 165). It has been tentatively identified with Tell Asharneh, one of the largest mounds in the southern part of the Ghab plain, the wide rift valley drained by the Orontes, west of Hama (Courtois 1973; Helck 1973; Klengel 1995). However, excavations there have not yielded any traces of LBA occupation, casting doubt on this identification (Fortin 2006: 101ff, 117, 136; Cooper 2006b).
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Niya is famous because of the episode of the elephant hunt of Thutmose III near the lake of Niya, during which he killed 120 animals (Redford 2003). Niya also figures prominently in the Hittite sources on the Syrian campaigns of Shuppiluliuma I (Klengel 1969: 58–74; 1992: 151–6). This small kingdom maintained connections with Qatna during the 14th century BC, as demonstrated by three letters found in the Idadda archive from King Takuwa of Niya to the king of Qatna, whom he calls “brother” – hinting at a position of political equality (Richter 2003b: 178–80). Richter has argued for the development of a special dialect in the region of the two cities, “Niya/Qatna-Hurrian,” a hybrid based on Akkadian with a large dose of Hurrian components (Richter 2003b: 171–7; Richter and Lange in press). Besides political and cultural relations, there is another plausible motive for close cooperation between Niya and Qatna: the damp rift valley of the Ghab near Niya was a preferred habitat of the Syrian elephant, which was hunted not only by the Egyptians but also by the kings of Qatna, as demonstrated by the discovery of huge elephant bones carefully deposited in the Royal Palace there (Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2008: 35–42; Pfälzner 2009c; Pfälzner and Dohmann-Pfälzner 2010: 77). Niya is generally identified with Qalat Mudiq in the central Ghab plain, the site of Hellenistic Apamea (Klengel 1969: 58f; 1970: 54; Röllig 1999: 314a; Otto 2006a), but the presence of a medieval castle on the tell has to date precluded archaeological excavations there.

Qatna

Qatna is located in a fertile agricultural zone with abundant springs in western Syria, to the east of and within the Orontes drainage system. It stands at the crossroads of important trade routes leading east–west from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean and north–south from Anatolia toward Palestine. Surrounded by 20 meter high ramparts, the nearly square site covers 100 hectares and is the largest LBA site in the Levant (Du Mesnil du Buisson 1935; Novák and Pfälzner 2000; Morandi Bonacossi 2007a; Pfälzner 2006; Al-Maqdissi et al. 2009). With its advantageous geographical and ecological setting, Qatna became, along with Halab (Aleppo), the most powerful Syrian kingdom of the MBA (Klengel 2000). However, its political and commercial importance declined rapidly during the LBA because of the growing influence of Egypt and Mitanni, of which Qatna and other Syrian regions became dependencies. This enabled the growth of numerous other competing political units in western Syria, purposely supported by the foreign powers with the aim of dividing and weakening the local Syrian polities.

The large Royal Palace of Qatna (Figure 41.3) was built in MB IIA (Novák and Pfälzner 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2005; Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010; Pfälzner 2006, 2007b, 2008a, 2009a) and was used as a royal residence continuously for c.400 years until its final destruc-
tion in the LBA by the Hittite king Shuppiluliuma I in c.1340 BC. Throughout this long period, only minor changes were made to the layout of the palace, a clear indication of continuity in the Syrian kingdoms from the MBA to the LBA, both in political and cultural terms. As shown by the rich inventory of objects from the destruction phase of the palace (Level G 7b), particularly the Royal Hypogeum, and the cuneiform tablets listing the inventory of treasures belonging to the goddess of the palace, Belet-ekallim, and the “gods of the kings” (Bottéro 1949; Fales 2004b; Rossberger in press), the kingdom was, despite its political decline, still very prosperous during the final phase of its existence in the 14th century BC. Excavations in other parts of the large, heavily fortified city have exposed minor palaces and private houses, demonstrating that Qatna was a flourishing metropolis during the LBA (Morandi Bonacossi 2007b: 76–82; 2009a; Pfälzner 2006: 164–9).

**Nukhashe**

North of Qatna was the large kingdom of Nukhashe (Klengel 1999–2001), with which Qatna maintained close ties. During the reign of Adad-nirari of Nukhashe
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(14th century BC) it even seems to have been united with Qatna (Richter 2003a: 608–10; 2005: 123ff.). A juridical text of Adad-nirari’s was found in the Idadda archive at Qatna (Richter and Lange in press) and his name also appears in the Qatna inventory tablets. As joint king of Qatna and Nukhashe, Adad-nirari may have resided in the Royal Palace of Qatna, one of the largest and most luxurious palaces of its time in the Levant. Dated to c.1340 BC, a later letter in the Qatna archive from king Sharrupshe of Nukhashe to king Idadda of Qatna, in which Sharrupshe calls Idadda his lord and father, is proof of close, ongoing political relations between the two neighbors.

Located north of Qatna and east of Niya, Nukhashe must have extended into the wide, fertile to semi-fertile plateau to the east of the Orontes valley, between the modern cities of Hama and Ma’aret en-Numan. The major archaeological site here is Tell Khan Sheykhun, where Du Mesnil du Buisson carried out excavations in 1930 and found traces of a monumental Bronze Age building (Du Mesnil du Buisson 1930; 1932: 175–7) with exactly the same unusual foundation technique as the Royal Palace of Qatna. This consists of deep, mudbrick foundation walls with stone couloirs (a long, narrow passage between separate rooms or spaces), thus clearly linking the two palaces, which are 70 kilometers apart, from an architectural design point of view (Döpper 2010). It is likely that Tell Khan Sheykhun was the capital or central residence of Nukhashe. Alternatively, it may have been Ugulzat, where king Sharrupshe resided.

Qadesh/Kinza

The southern neighbor of Qatna was the kingdom of Qadesh or Kinza. Qadesh’s key role stemmed from its geographical position. Situated at the northern entrance to the Beqaa valley, which separates the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains, Qadesh controlled access to this important corridor of communication between Syria and Palestine, and between the Hittite Empire and Egypt. While the identification of Qadesh with Tell Nebi Mend, south of Homs (Klengel 1969: 139–77; 1970: 56; Ahrens 2005), is accepted, excavations at this huge tell (10 hectares) have not yet produced clear architectural or material evidence of the outstanding importance of Qadesh during the LBA (Pézard 1931; Parr 1983, 1991). LBA levels (Phases B–F) have only been exposed on a limited scale and no complete buildings or contexts have been recorded (Bourke 1993: 158–64). Nevertheless, five cuneiform tablets from Tell Nebi Mend, dating to the last quarter of the 14th century BC, include a letter from the king of Aleppo to Nqammadu, king of Qadesh, the son of the powerful king Aitakama (Millard 2010), confirming the site’s identification with Qadesh. Previously, Qadesh had been a buffer state between Egypt and the Hittite territory in Syria with shifting loyalties. The fact that the king of Qadesh led the Syrian coalition against Egypt in the battle of Megiddo (1457 BC) demonstrates its strategic importance.
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Kumidi

Further south, in the Beqaa valley, Kumidi (mod. Kamid el-Loz) was the major LBA center. Here, Egypt installed another military and administrative hub in the 15th century BC, the purpose of which was to control the conquered territories in the area without dismantling the local polities. This hints at a more stable Egyptian presence at Kumidi compared to its less reliable vassal Qadesh further north. Kamid el-Loz has extensive LBA remains, including a temple area (Metzger 1991, 1993) and part of a palace (Hachmann 1982, 1983) with a royal tomb containing luxury goods and imported objects (Miron 1990; Adler 1994; Hachmann 1996). Amongst nine cuneiform tablets discovered at the site is a letter from the Egyptian Pharaoh to Zalaja, a ruler of Damascus. The fact that this tablet was archived at Kumidi hints at the central role of the city in the administration of Egyptian territories in the central Levant (Edzard 1970: 55–8; 1982) and clearly underlines the site’s political importance at the time.

Alalakh

Close to the Orontes River, Alalakh (mod. Tell Atchana, Turkey) was the northern neighbor of Ugarit and the center of the kingdom of Mukish, a vassal polity of Halab (Aleppo) from which it became independent in the second quarter of the 15th century BC when king Idrimi, after seven years of exile, restored his royal dynasty – formerly located at Halab – at Alalakh. Thus, Alalakh became an independent kingdom, albeit under Mitanni suzerainty (Klengel 1965: 203–57; Kühne 1982: 210ff; Wilhelm 1991: 95ff). The central area of Mukish was the wide and fertile Amuq plain, east of the Amanus mountains (Casana 2009). At Alalakh, C.L. Woolley excavated a palace and a temple of the 15th century BC in Level IV, one of five main levels (Alalakh V–I) dating to the LBA (Woolley 1955b).

Yamkhad/Halab

The kingdom of Yamkhad/Halab (Aleppo), a major power in Syria during the MBA, was of minor political importance during the LBA (Klengel 1965: 175–202). It seems to have been particularly reduced in significance by its mighty neighbor Mitanni, who dislodged Alalakh from Yamhad’s control (Kühne 1982: 210 n68). Later, under Hittite hegemony (probably mid-14th century BC), Halab was further reduced by being forced to hand over territories to its southern neighbor Nukhashe and to its eastern neighbor Ashtata (Na’aman 1980).

Archaeological excavations on the citadel of Aleppo have brought to light a Temple of the Storm God, the only structure yet known from ancient Halab (Kohlmeyer 2000; Gonnella, Khayyata and Kohlmeyer 2005). Built sometime in
Ashtata and Karkamish

In the LBA, the area around the bend of the Syrian Middle Euphrates was dominated by two important kingdoms: Karkamish and Ashtata. Karkamish controlled the northern strip of the valley and its importance increased under Hittite hegemony, beginning in the reign of Shuppiyuliuma I (c.1350–1320 BC) when the Hittite crown prince was installed as its ruler. His task was to control the Syrian territories in collaboration with another son of the Hittite king installed at Halab (Klengel 1965: 15–101; 1992: 120–8; Wilhelm 1991: 104ff). Because of the important Iron Age architecture which covered the older levels, Woolley’s excavations at Karkamish did not yield many remains of the LBA (Hogarth 1914; Woolley 1921; Woolley and Barnett 1952; Hawkins 1976–80b: 435). Elaborate gold and lapis lazuli jewelry dating to the LBA, but discovered in the so-called “gold tomb” of Iron Age date, indirectly illustrates the wealth of the city during the LBA (Woolley and Barnett 1952: 250–7, Pls. 63–64).

A number of cities, such as Murmuriga and Shatuppu, are said in Egyptian and Hittite texts to have been south of Karkamish. In the LBA these must have belonged to the kingdom of Karkamish. Murmuriga has been tentatively identified with Tell Shiyukh Fawqani and Shatuppu with Tell Shuyukh Tahtani (Boese 2009). Both sites are situated only a few kilometers south of Karkamish and excavations at each have revealed LBA occupation (Bachelot 1999: 146–8; Falsone 1998: 35–7; 1999: 139).

The southern part of the big bend of the Syrian Euphrates was the location of Ashtata, which emerged as a regional power in the 15th century BC, especially as a buffer between Mitanni and the Hittites (Klengel 1970: 89ff; Na’aman 1980: 37–40; Adamthwaite 2001: 219–23). It is not known to have been a kingdom, but rather seems to have consisted of several large towns, each with a town council or a council of elders (Sallaberger et al. 2006: 92–3; Otto 2008). Emar was the most prominent center in Ashtata and was politically decentralized, with a powerful council of elders and an institution of limited kingship (Fleming 1992; Adamthwaite 2001: xx–xxi). Excavations at Meskene (ancient Emar) revealed extensive LBA remains, including two temples, a large residence, and so-called “Emar type” houses (Beyer 1982; Margueron 1995; Finkbeiner 2001, 2002; Finkbeiner and Sakal 2003).
To the north, Tell Munbaqa, ancient Ekalte, was another major LBA center in the land of Ashtata. The urban layout of this large city has been traced extensively, with streets, living quarters, and four temples exposed (Machule et al. 1996; Werner and Busch 1998; Mayer 2001; Blocher et al. 2009). A similar insight into urban structure is provided by Tell Bazi, ancient Basiru, further north along the Euphrates, where LBA houses were exposed on a large scale in the lower city and an LBA temple was revealed on the citadel hill (Einwag and Otto 2001–3; Otto 2006b; Otto and Einwag 2007). Two royal Mitanni tablets found at Tell Bazi clearly show that Basiru was under Mitanni rule in the late 15th/early 14th century (Sallaberger et al. 2006). Whether Basiru belonged to the northern territory of Karkamish or the southern country of Ashtata is unclear.

5 Courts and Palaces

LBA palaces were loci of intense political activity and cultural development. They were, furthermore, the focal points of the accumulation of wealth and prestige objects. The economic organization of the LBA kingdoms was based on the palace economy. This consisted of a combination of central redistributive mechanisms, entrepreneurial commercial activities, and reciprocal gift exchange between courts (Pfälzner 2009b). The importance of the palace’s redistributive functions should not be overestimated, however. It was not an all-encompassing system, but seems to have been rather limited in extent, with the palace extracting a certain amount of surplus, village-based, agricultural production (Liverani 1974, 1975, 1989; Klengel 1974, 1979b; Heltzer 1979; Schloen 2001; Von Dassow 2008). The restricted nature of the palace economy is demonstrated by the parallel existence of palace-owned and independent villages within these kingdoms and by the fact that the palace could purchase or exchange individual villages (Klengel 1974: 278–80; Liverani 1975: 146–7). Palaces could commission private traders or private craftsmen with an order for production, purchase, or sales. Courts also owned and managed workshops, as demonstrated by the inventory of a palace textile workshop in the Idadda archive at Qatna (Richter in press). These workshops were not necessarily located within the palace compound, but might be located in the city or its environs. The internal organization of the courts seems to have been complex, as illustrated by the Idadda archive, which contains two lists enumerating the considerable possessions of individual members of the court (Richter in press), indicating individual property rights. Thus, a LBA palace can be understood – to use a modern analogy – as a kind of large, differentiated, internationally active enterprise.

The Royal Palace of Qatna is one of the most impressive archaeological examples of a LBA palatial complex (Pfälzner 2007a, 2008a, 2009a). With a total size of 16,000 square meters, it is the largest palace of this period in the Levant. In addition, the building is a clear illustration of strong continuity between the MBA
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and LBA. Constructed during the MBA IIA period, it remained in continuous use into the LBA IIA period, when it was destroyed c.1340 BC during the Hittite wars in Syria. There were no major changes in the layout of the building over this long time and its plan is typically MBA, with the main, tripartite representative unit consisting of a large courtyard, throne room, and ceremonial hall (Festsaal) (Novák and Pfälzner 2000: 260–4; Pfälzner 2007b: 43–51). The courtyard took the form of a square, covered hall (Hall C), with four huge, internal, wooden columns supporting the roof. In its center was a large, circular hearth. This architectural model is the oldest known example of its kind and, thus, probably the Syrian prototype of the four-columned representative hall which became widely diffused over the eastern Mediterranean, especially in the Aegean world (Driessen 1989–90, 1999; Preziosi and Hitchcock 1999: 155–65) in the mid-/late 2nd millennium BC. Measuring 1,300 square meters, it is the largest known roofed space in the Near East of Bronze Age date. The two adjoining rooms are impressive as well, and in size exceed all other contemporary palaces. Although built in the MBA, the palace of Qatna was the most monumental LBA palace in the Levant. Furthermore, it was decorated with wall paintings at the beginning of the LBA (Pfälzner 2008b; Pfälzner and von Rüden 2008a, 2008b; von Rüden 2009, 2011). While only one room contained enough remains to allow the reconstruction of ornamental patterns and landscape scenes with plants and water animals (see below), the other rooms yielded small, individual fragments indicating that most rooms in the palace were colorfully painted.

Also of particular importance is the huge palace well, with a rectangular shaft measuring 9 x 9 meters that was equipped with a winding, monumental staircase of basalt steps (Pfälzner 2007b: 51–5; 2009d). This well is unique in Bronze Age Syria. Moreover, due to the wet soil conditions, large quantities of wooden beams and planks were found in a perfect state of preservation at the bottom of the well. This wood must have belonged to the roof of the well-house and probably to a construction for drawing water (Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2007: 157–63; 2008: 65–71). Most of it was cedar. Cedar beams once probably covered most of the palace rooms and were available in the nearby Lebanon and Syrian coastal mountains in sufficient quantities to abundantly furnish the palace. This precious, high-value timber was also traded to foreign regions (Pfälzner 2009e).

The Royal Palace was surrounded by smaller, official buildings and was not the only palatial structure in LBA Qatna. The so-called Lower City Palace, in use between the 16th and 14th centuries BC, was located in the northern lower city (Luciani 2003; Morandi Bonacossi 2009b). It contains a small representative suite, as well as service, storage, and other rooms in which an administrative cuneiform archive and ivory inlays were found, both hinting at the elite, governmental function of the building. South of the Royal Palace was a smaller, well-constructed residential building comparable in many ways to the larger, official structures (al-Maqdissi 2003: 235–8). Clearly, this cluster of palaces and elite residences formed the political and administrative core of Qatna. The large
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Eastern Palace, located in the area immediately to the east of the Royal Palace, was, like the Royal Palace, built during the MBA but already abandoned by the LBA (Morandi Bonacossi et al. 2009). This suggests that the administrative core of Qatna had already started to disintegrate in the LBA.

The huge (6,500 square meter) Royal Palace at Ugarit (Figure 41.4; Schaeffer 1962; Yon 2006: 36–45) differs in its architectural layout from that of Qatna. It was not built as a cohesive unit, but consists of several independent parts. This could be explained by the fact that the palace was erected, step-by-step, in an additive process (Schaeffer 1962: 9–15; Yon 2006: 36) or by the fact that parts of it were reconstructed or remodeled at different times (Margueron 2004: 145). The palace consists of six units, four with a central courtyard and two with a central, covered hall. The square throne room is completely unlike the one at Qatna, not only because of its smaller, more intimate size, but also because of its accessibility from a courtyard via a vestibule with two columns in front. The main entrance to the palace took the form of a wide, double-columned vestibule, typical of LBA architecture. Another principal difference between the palaces of Ugarit and Qatna is their relative location: the palace of Ugarit was located close to the western city gate, on one side of the site, whereas the palace at Qatna was...
in the center of the city. When the palace of Ugarit was destroyed by fire at the beginning of the 12th century, it contained a very rich inventory, including several archives with thousands of cuneiform tablets. As at Qatna, the palace at Ugarit was surrounded by a series of public buildings, probably used as residences for palace dependents and officials (Margueron 2004). Two palaces with similar structural elements have also been excavated at the coastal site of Ras Ibn Hani, a satellite of Ugarit’s (Bounni et al. 1998).

Like the palace at Ugarit, the Level IV palace at Alalakh (Figure 41.5; Woolley 1955b: 110–31) is also located in the periphery of the city, near the northern city gate. Another point of similarity to Ugarit is the double-columned entrance

Figure 41.5  Plan of the royal palace of Alalakh, Level IV.
halls of the so-called palace of Niqmepa which was flanked by two smaller rooms giving access to the interior of the building, an arrangement clearly reminiscent of the later Iron-Age hilani-type of architecture, for which the Alalakh IV palace is often considered a prototype. The official rooms are arranged around a central court or hall, much like a so-called Mittelsaal-house (“central hall house”). A second unit, including typically LBA single-columned, double rooms, is attached to the east side of the building, again reminiscent of Ugarit.

The LBA palace at Kamid el-Loz has only been partly exposed (Hachmann 1982; Adler and Penner 2001). It has a long entrance corridor with multiple buttresses giving access to the interior rooms of the building, which surround an irregular courtyard. Regrettably, the central rooms of the palace could not be excavated.

A palace showing Syrian architectural traditions was found as far south as Hazor in northern Palestine. The LBA “Ceremonial Palace” in the center of the Acropolis of Hazor consists of a large throne room wing labeled the “Black Building.” This is situated to the west of a spacious central courtyard, and a long-room unit, the “White Building,” to the north of the courtyard (Bonfil and Zarzecki-Peleg 2007). The “Black Building” resembles the throne-room unit of the Royal Palace of Ugarit, lending support to the interpretation of this structure as a palace. The function of the “White Building,” whether sacral or palatial, is unclear. The layout of the building has no direct parallels in Syrian palatial architecture, but rather resembles the Levantine long-room temple type. Therefore, from a northern Levantine point of view, its identification as a sanctuary seems more likely than as a palace. As such, the Hazor “Ceremonial Palace” may have combined both palatial and religious functions, thus representing an architectural type unknown in the north.

6 Dying in the LBA Kingdoms

The most abundant set of data on mortuary practices in the Levantine Bronze Age comes from the Royal Hypogeum of Qatna discovered in 2002 (Al-Maqdissi et al. 2003; Pfälzner 2002/3, 2005, 2009i, 2011b). This is an impressive architectural complex consisting of a 40 meter long corridor, a 5 meter deep ante-chamber, and four spacious, rock-hewn grave chambers. The inventory of this tomb complex (Figure 41.6) was perfectly preserved in the state of its last use, shortly before the destruction of the palace c.1340 BC when access to the tomb was blocked suddenly and definitively, so that no looting could take place. The rich inventory of over 2000 individual items is instructive for two reasons. First, it contains an array of luxury objects from jewellery to stone vessels, made of imported materials and executed in various hybrid styles, which offers a vivid picture of the international exchange of art, objects and ideas in the LBA. Second, it enables us to reconstruct in detail the funerary rites practiced in LBA royal

The primary burial consisted of the anointment, followed by an intentional heating of the corpse to desiccate it. The body was placed on numerous layers of valuable textiles within a wooden burial container inside the tomb. In addition, there is ample evidence of secondary burial inside the tomb chambers. These were accompanied by repetitive kispu-rituals intended to feed and tend the dead over time. Decomposed skeletons were re-deposited during these rituals. After this a tertiary burial took place, in which the bones were transferred to a special chamber within the tomb, the ossuary, for final deposition. Eventually, there might even be a quaternary burial, when the bones were taken out of the royal tomb – for space reasons or other concerns – for reburial in a secondary tomb (Pfälzner in press a).

In 2009 a second, unlooted tomb was found below the Royal Palace of Qatna. It contained possibly up to 100 skeletons, deposited in a number of wooden coffins accompanied by a wide range of grave goods (Pfälzner and Dohmann-Pfälzner 2010). This, most probably, can be understood as a subsidiary tomb,
into which royal burials were transferred in order to create space for new burials in the main tomb.

Ancestor worship was important in the LBA Levantine kingdoms. This is amply attested in the Qatna Royal Hypogeum (Pfälzner 2005, 2009g) where the antechamber was specifically used as a place for ancestor veneration. There, two identical basalt ancestor statues (Figure 41.7) stood. These represent sitting kings holding a bowl in one hand (Novák and Pfälzner 2003: 155–62; Pfälzner 2009h). As shown by the discovery of offering bowls at their feet, offerings to the ancestors were made in front of them. The Qatna statues were sculpted in the MBA and still venerated in the LBA. This type of ancestor statue was common from the 2nd to the 1st millennium in the Levant, forming part of a continuous tradition that can be traced from the MBA statues at Ebla (Matthiae 2006) to the Iron Age statues at Tell Halaf (Bonatz 2000a). The most well-known ancestor statue of LBA date is that of Idrimi of Alalakh, dating to the 15th century BC (Smith 1949; Fink 2007). It is not only characterized by the conventional sitting position and the typical style of Middle Syrian sculpture, but also by the
accompanying inscription that demanded the veneration of the image of Idrimi as part of the royal ancestor cult at Alalakh.

Many tombs have been discovered at Ugarit, both in the Royal Palace and in private houses (Salles 1995; Marchegay 2008), presenting ample evidence of the treatment of the dead there. Despite the fact that the royal tombs of Ugarit, which were situated in a special funerary unit of the Royal Palace, were completely looted in antiquity, some interesting hints regarding royal burial can be gleaned from architectural observations (Niehr 2006b). The royal ancestor cult of Ugarit was probably located in the funerary unit of the palace. Funerary rituals and royal ancestor veneration at Ugarit can be reconstructed from tombs, texts (Cornelius and Niehr 2004: 79–86; Niehr 2006a, 2006b), and stelae relating to funerary banquets held close to the temples (Lange in press).

At Kamid el-Loz, the remains of a royal burial were found in a semi-subterranean room complex of the LBA palace (Miron 1990; Adler 1994; Hachmann 1996) that contained a rich inventory of imported calcite-alabaster vessels, jewelry, ivory, and metal objects, much like those found in the Royal Hypogeum at Qatna and also dating to the 14th century BC. This suggests that funerary rituals at both sites were similar.

7 The Topography of Cult in LBA Levantine Kingdoms

One of the most important sanctuaries in Syria was the Temple of the Storm God on the citadel of Aleppo (Durand 2002). When this temple was found in 1996 and subsequently excavated, it was possible to demonstrate archaeologically that it was built during the MBA, above an Early Bronze Age predecessor, and remained in use throughout the LBA and into the Iron Age. The huge (c.27 × 17 meter) MBA temple building is a “broad-room-type” cela which was accessed via an entrance chamber with two side rooms. After its destruction by fire, the temple was restored during the Hittite period when the ground plan was principally left unchanged, but orthostat reliefs, featuring false windows, bull-men, and composite animals, were added. These included a large relief of the storm god erected on the side wall. This probably indicates a change to a bent-axis type of cela, reflecting a typically Hittite religious principle. The entrance was formed by a portal guarded by basalt statues of a sphinx and a lion and the relief of a fish-man in Babylonian tradition. The temple decoration clearly shows a blend of local Syrian, Hittite, and Mesopotamian styles and cultural concepts (Kohlmeyer 2009: 194–6).

The main decorations of the temple of Ain Dara, in the Afrin valley to the northwest of Aleppo, date to the Early Iron Age, but some of the sculptures seem to go back to the LBA as well (Abu Assaf 1990). Thus, the sphinxes at the entrance clearly resemble those at Aleppo and can be attributed to the Hittite period of the 13th century BC (Kohlmeyer 2008).
A sequence of LBA temples was excavated at Alalakh in Levels V–I. These are located in close proximity to the palace with which they seem to have been functionally connected. Perpetuating the royal ancestor cult, attested by the statue of Idrimi (see above) that stood in a side chamber of the temple of Level I (Fink 2007), was at least one function of these temples. The ground plan is similar to that of the temple of Aleppo which, given its religious importance, must have been an influential archetype for Syrian sacral architecture. The Level IV temple consisted of a “broad-room” cella with a similarly shaped antechamber. The Level I temple is even closer to the Aleppo archetype. It contains a “broad-room” cella in front of which were an entrance chamber and two smaller, lateral rooms. The extremely wide rear wall of the cella is also comparable to the Alalakh Level I and Aleppo temples.

A different type of temple, said to have been devoted to Baal and Astarte (Margueron 1982; Faist and Finkbeiner 2002; Finkbeiner 2001: 46–51; 2002: 110–15; Finkbeiner and Sakal 2003: 12–17), is attested at Emar. Situated next to each other and, as with most temples in the Levant, at the highest point of the city, is a pair of temples in antis (a temple longer than it was broad, with a front, columned porch), which contains a “long-room” cella. These were accessible via a long flight of stairs. In the lower town of Emar was a third antis-type temple (Temple M2) (Margueron 1982).

The temples of Munbaqa differ from those at Emar, both in their larger dimensions and their massive stone substructures, for which they have been called “Steinbauten” (literally, stone-buildings). Four stone-buildings (I–IV) can be distinguished (Werner 1994: 102–6; Werner and Busch 1998), all of which belong to the antis-type. Three were built in a row on the highest point of the city. The fourth (Steinbau IV), discovered more recently (Blocher et al. 2007, 2009), is situated in the lower part of the inner city. The combination of temples that were exposed (I–III) and embedded (IV) in the city is similar to Emar.

A peculiar type of religious building is represented by Temple 1 on the citadel of Tell Bazi, located further north in the Syrian Euphrates valley. This is a monumental, two-room temple with a square, stone-paved, antechamber (Room A) and a larger, rectangular cella of the long-room type (Room B). The temple was entered through a door in the long wall giving access to Room A and from there, at right angles, to the larger Room B. The plan differs in layout from both the antis-type of the Middle Euphrates region and the broad-room-type of northwestern Syria. This might be explained by its possible additional use as a meeting place for the “council of elders” of Basiru, as suggested by two cuneiform texts found in Room A (Otto and Einwag 2005; Otto 2008: 722–4).

The temples of Baal and Dagan (or more probably El; see Cornelius and Niehr 2004: 63ff) at Ugarit are located on the highest point of the Acropolis. They are oriented parallel to each other and overlook the city, as is typical in the Levant. Both have a peculiar plan, consisting of a square antechamber in the front of a broad-room cella (Yon 1997; 2006: 106–15). As the antechamber is narrower
than the cella, the temples appear T-shaped. The main parts to have survived are the massive foundations, suggesting that the buildings might have been very tall or even tower-like.

Another LBA temple on the Syrian coast was excavated at Tell Kazel. Located in the western half of the flat tell, it was embedded in a dense cluster of domestic buildings. The temple is a single-room building with a long-room cella and two internal columns (Level 6). It was later (Level 5) replaced by a larger, long-room-cella temple with an adyton (an inaccessible area restricted to the priests) in the rear (Badre 2006). The LBA temple area of Kamid el-Loz consists of two adjacent sanctuaries. These differ in layout from other known, northern Levantine temples, as they center on an open courtyard with cultic installations and a series of rooms surrounding it (Metzger 1991, 1993). The reconstruction of an open courtyard in the two sanctuaries, however, is not entirely convincing and it is possible that these large areas were roofed.

At Qatna, the only sanctuary identified to date is the shrine of the palace goddess Belet-Ekallim in the Royal Palace. Adjoining the audience Hall C is a tiny (c.4 × 1 meter) chamber (Room P). It has a larger rectangular area in front of it, which lies within the huge Hall C and is offset from the rest of Hall C by a wooden threshold in the floor (Novák and Pfälzner 2001: 168ff; 2002a: 214–17; Pfälzner 2007b: 45). Here, most probably, the cult image and the treasury of the palace goddess were kept, as indicated by the Belet-Ekallim inventory tablets found in this room (Fales 2004b).

At Hazor, in northern Palestine, is a LBA temple of the long-room type, very similar to contemporary northern Levantine temples such as those at Tell Kazel and on the Syrian Euphrates. The temple is situated immediately to the north of the so-called “Ceremonial palace” on top of the Acropolis of Hazor (Bonfil and Zarzecki-Peleg 2007). Located only a short distance to the south is the so-called “White Building,” which is part of the “Ceremonial palace complex.” It has a similar ground plan as the aforementioned temple, and therefore could possibly also be interpreted as a temple structure. This contradicts existing assumptions that the “White Building” might have had palatial functions (see above).

8 Exchange and Interregional Contacts in the LBA Levant

The LBA was a time of intensive trade and international exchange. Economic exchange was accompanied by cultural exchange and communication. Hence, the LBA has often been described as an “International Age.” The harbors along the Levantine coast, real “ports of trade” in Karl Polanyi’s (1971a) sense, were the nodal points of international exchange. Minet el-Beidha, ancient Mahadu, the harbor of Ugarit, is one of the most prominent examples (Yon 2006: 8–10). This is a rounded, perfectly protected natural bay, which served as the import-export hub of Ugarit, connecting the eastern Mediterranean with the Levantine
hinterland. Very limited excavations around the harbor have yielded parts of a storage structure filled with “Canaanite jars,” typical LBA storage and transport vessels (Killebrew 2007). Further excavations at Minet el-Beidha would have the potential to add invaluable information to our knowledge of international exchange. However, because of a modern military presence, the site is currently inaccessible. Favorable harbors also existed at Byblos and on the island of Arwad, but, because of modern housing, excavations are practically impossible at these sites too.

There has been a long-standing debate concerning the organizational nature of LBA trade. Polanyi (1957, 1975) was convinced that trade—e.g., at Ugarit and other Near Eastern trade centers—was conducted exclusively by palace agents and was not profit-oriented but followed fixed rules and agreements between elites. Our knowledge base has improved since his day and this thesis needs to be modified. LBA exchange was a complex system of various interrelated economic principles, comprising reciprocity, redistribution, and the free market system (Polanyi 1971b, 1971c, 1971d). Reciprocity was an essential principle of LBA exchange, as demonstrated by the intensive practice of gift exchange between courts and elites which not only sustained and strengthened sociopolitical relations, but was also a significant factor of economic exchange (Liverani 1990; Zaccagnini 1987; Cochavi-Rainey 1999; Pfälzner 2007a). Market principles were another important aspect of LBA trade. This is shown by the often independent position of individual merchants, their concern for profit, and their tendency to combine private and official business ventures (Heltzer 1978; Silver 1983). In addition, the redistributive principle functioned at the level of internal exchange within the Levantine kingdoms, when a surplus of agricultural products was obtained, stored, and administered by the palace (Schloen 2001: 221–54). This, however, did not encompass the totality of the economy of Levantine kingdoms, but left room for independent economic activities by villages, farmers, and landlords (Klengel 1974, 1979b; Liverani 1974, 1975, 1989). Thus, the three major principles of economic exchange did not operate independently of each other in different historical periods, as assumed by Polanyi, but coexisted within the complex economic systems of the Levantine kingdoms.

An important element of the LBA economy was long-distance trade by specialized merchants (Renfrew 1972: 455–71; Sherratt and Sherratt 1991). The best illustration of this is afforded by the Uluburun shipwreck. This vessel sank in the late 14th century BC off the coast of southwestern Turkey. It must have come from the Levantine coast, possibly even Ugarit, laden with goods destined for the Aegean regions or even the Mycenaean heartland (Yalçın et al. 2005). These include ox-hide-shaped copper ingots, tin ingots, glass ingots, pieces of ebony, an elephant tusk and hippopotamus tusks, Cypriote, Mycenaean and other pottery, faience beads, amber beads, a bronze weight, and individual luxury items, such as gold vessels, gold and silver jewelry, an ivory box, a bronze and gold figurine, seals, and amulets (Pulak 2005). This extraordinary discovery presents a kaleidoscopic collection of LBA international trade goods.
Long-distance exchange is typified by the variety of raw materials involved. One very precious import was lapis lazuli from the northeastern Afghan mountains of Badakhshan. It was mainly used for jewelry, often in combination with carnelian, as illustrated by a large gold rosette from the Royal Tomb of Qatna which was richly inlaid with both stones (Pfälzner 2008c; Rossberger 2009). It was also used to make cylinder seals (Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2009; Pfälzner and Dohmann-Pfälzner 2011).

Another material that traveled huge distances in the LBA was amber. Originating in the Baltic region, it arrived in Mycenaean Greece and from there was traded to the Levant. The largest and most spectacular amber object discovered in the Near East is the lion head vessel (Figure 41.8) from the Royal Hypogeum of Qatna (Mukherjee et al. 2008). Made of a large piece of Baltic amber, it was carved by skilled Levantine craftsmen into a fine and detailed lion head somewhere in LBA Syria, probably at Qatna itself (Al-Maqdissi et al. 2003: 211–13; Pfälzner and Rossberger 2009).

Close contacts with Cyprus are evident in the quantities of Cypriote pottery in the Levant, such as white ware I and II, white shaved and base ring wares (Yon 2001; Bergoffen 2003). Exchange with the Aegean world is also attested.

Figure 41.8  Amber lion’s head from the Royal Hypogeum of Qatna.
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by imported Minoan and Mycenaean pottery, found in large quantities at Byblos, Ugarit, and Tell Kazel (Yon et al. 2000; Van Wijngaarden 2002; Badre 2006), and even as far inland as Qatna (Du Mesnil du Buisson 1928: 13, 21, Pls. XVII.3, XVIII). In addition, Aegean influence is clear in palace wall paintings, such as those found at Alalakh Level VII during the late MBA and at Tell Kabri and Qatna during the LBA (Niemeier 1991; Niemeier and Niemeier 1998, 2000; Bietak 2007; Feldman 2007). The wall paintings of the Royal Palace of Qatna display typical Minoan motifs, such as palm trees, river landscapes, spiral bands, and a dolphin. In addition, typical Aegean colors and techniques, such as fresco, were used (Pfälzner 2008b; Pfälzner and von Rüden 2008a, 2008b; von Rüden 2009, 2011) and it is possible that, in collaboration with local Syrian craftsmen, Aegean artists were involved in the execution of the wall paintings at Qatna. A “craftsmanship interaction model” has been proposed to explain the hybrid Aegean-Syrian style and technique of the Qatna wall paintings (Pfälzner 2008: 106–9). The exchange of artists between different parts of the Levant, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia is well known, especially during the LBA (Zaccagnini 1983; Bonatz 2002), and can be understood as another dimension of the “reciprocal” exchange of goods, persons, and ideas between courts.

Exchange between the Levant and Egypt is attested by imported Egyptian calcite alabaster, granite, and serpentine vessels – e.g. at Ugarit, Kamid el-Loz, and Qatna (Caubet 1991; Miron 1990: 91–7; Ahrens 2009, 2011). Some of these bear Egyptian inscriptions, clearly indicating their place of origin. One such example is the fine calcite alabaster vessel with an inscription of the queen mother Ahmes Nefertari of the early 18th dynasty (c.1550 BC) found in the Qatna Royal Tomb (Ahrens 2007). Other calcite vessels might have been produced in the Levant in Egyptian style, a reflection of the high esteem in which exotic stone vessels were held throughout the Levant. They were particularly popular as grave goods in the Levant, and no fewer than 56 Egyptian and Egyptianizing stone vessels were found in the Qatna Royal Hypogeum.

The main vehicle for the exchange of such luxurious objects might have been gift exchange between male and female court members in different kingdoms and regions, as clearly shown in the Amarna letters. The constant reciprocal flow of goods resulted in the evolution of an international art style, in which motifs and styles from different cultural spheres were combined (Caubet 1998; Feldman 2006). Feldman (2006) has argued that this international style was intentionally created in order to craft luxury items for interregional gift exchange which could not be traced to a specific region, but were recognizable as belonging to an artistic koiné encompassing the entire eastern Mediterranean and the western Near East. In contrast to this view, however, it must be said that of all known objects of international exchange found in Egypt, the Mediterranean, the Levant, or Mesopotamia, there is hardly a single piece which does not bear the stylistic traits that are characteristic of a specific region or cultural sphere. Rather, one can isolate “hybrid regional styles” in the Levant and beyond, into which “international
motifs” were adopted, but rendered in a specific stylistic manner characteristic of their region of origin (Pfälzner in press b). They would thus have gained even more value within the international exchange of gifts and goods.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For an introduction to the political history of the LBA kingdoms, see Klengel (1965, 1969, 1970, 1992). International politics and interregional exchange of art in the Late Bronze Age are well described in Liverani (1990) and Feldman (2006). For the economic system of LBA kingdoms, the reader is referred to Schloen (2001) and Von Dassow (2008). For the recent excavations at Qatna, see Pfälzner (2008a) and Al-Maqdissi et al. (2009).

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Abbreviations

AA    American Anthropologist
AAA    Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology
AAAS   Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes
AAE    Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy
AAL    Acta Archaeologica Lovaniensia
AAAnz   Archäologischer Anzeiger
AAS    Anatolian Archaeological Studies
ACSS   Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia
ADAJ   Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
AfO    Archiv für Orientforschung
AIUON   Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli
AJA    American Journal of Archaeology
AJPA   American Journal of Physical Anthropology
ÄL    Ägypten und Levante
AmAnt  American Antiquity
AMI    Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran
AMIT   Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan
ANES   Ancient Near Eastern Studies
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>AnSt</td>
<td>Anatolian Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Ars Orientalis</td>
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<td>AoF</td>
<td>Altorientalische Forschungen</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARA</td>
<td>Annual Review of Anthropology</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWE</td>
<td>Ancient West &amp; East</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Biblical Archaeologist</td>
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<td>BAAL</td>
<td>Bulletin d’archéologie et d’architecture Libanaises</td>
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<td>BAI</td>
<td>Bulletin of the Asia Institute</td>
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<td>BaM</td>
<td>Baghdader Mitteilungen</td>
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<td>BASOR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIFAO</td>
<td>Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale</td>
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<td>BiOr</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Orientalis</td>
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<td>BSA</td>
<td>Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture</td>
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<td>BSOAS</td>
<td>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</td>
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<td>CA</td>
<td>Current Anthropology</td>
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<td>CAH</td>
<td>Cambridge Ancient History</td>
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<td>CAJ</td>
<td>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</td>
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<td>CHI</td>
<td>Cambridge History of Iran</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRAIBL</td>
<td>Comptes-rendus de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres</td>
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<td>CT</td>
<td>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum</td>
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<td>CQ</td>
<td>Classical Quarterly</td>
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<td>CY</td>
<td>Chroniques Yéméenites</td>
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<td>DA</td>
<td>Dossiers d’archéologie</td>
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<td>DAFI</td>
<td>Cahiers de la Délégation archéologique française en Iran</td>
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<td>DaM</td>
<td>Damaszener Mitteilungen</td>
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<td>DOP</td>
<td>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</td>
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<td>EnIr</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia Iranica</td>
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<td>EVO</td>
<td>Egitto e Vicino Oriente</td>
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<td>EW</td>
<td>East and West</td>
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<td>GJ</td>
<td>The Geographical Journal</td>
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<td>IEJ</td>
<td>Israel Exploration Journal</td>
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<td>IJAH</td>
<td>Iranian Journal of Archaeology and History</td>
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<td>IJNA</td>
<td>The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology</td>
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<td>ILN</td>
<td>Illustrated London News</td>
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<td>IM</td>
<td>Iraq Museum</td>
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<td>IrAnt</td>
<td>Iranica Antiqua</td>
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<td>IstMitt</td>
<td>Istanbuler Mitteilungen</td>
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<td>JA</td>
<td>Journal Asiatique</td>
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<td>JAA</td>
<td>Journal of Anthropological Archaeology</td>
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<td>JAE</td>
<td>Journal of Arid Environments</td>
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<td>JAOS</td>
<td>Journal of the American Oriental Society</td>
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<td>JAMT</td>
<td>Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory</td>
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<td>JAR</td>
<td>Journal of Archaeological Research</td>
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<td>Abbreviations</td>
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<td>JARCE</td>
<td>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</td>
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<td>JAS</td>
<td>Journal of Archaeological Science</td>
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<td>JCS</td>
<td>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</td>
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<td>JEA</td>
<td>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</td>
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<td>JEOL</td>
<td>Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux</td>
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<td>JESHO</td>
<td>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</td>
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<td>JFA</td>
<td>Journal of Field Archaeology</td>
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<td>JGS</td>
<td>Journal of Glass Studies</td>
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<td>JIAAA</td>
<td>Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology</td>
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<td>JIES</td>
<td>Journal of Indo-European Studies</td>
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<td>JIPS</td>
<td>Journal of the Israel Prehistoric Society</td>
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<td>JMA</td>
<td>Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology</td>
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<td>JNES</td>
<td>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</td>
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<td>JOS</td>
<td>Journal of Oman Studies</td>
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<td>JQA</td>
<td>Journal of Quaternary Science</td>
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<td>JRA</td>
<td>Journal of Roman Archaeology</td>
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<td>JRAAS</td>
<td>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland</td>
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<td>JRGS</td>
<td>Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London</td>
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<td>JRGZM</td>
<td>Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz</td>
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<td>JRS</td>
<td>Journal of Roman Studies</td>
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<td>JSSTG</td>
<td>Journal of the Society of Glass Technology</td>
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<td>JSS</td>
<td>Journal of Semitic Studies</td>
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<td>JWP</td>
<td>Journal of World Prehistory</td>
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<td>LA</td>
<td>Liber Annuus</td>
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<td>MDOG</td>
<td>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</td>
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<td>MDP</td>
<td>Mémoires de la délégation en Perse, Mémoires de la mission</td>
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<td>archéologique de Susiane, Mémoires de la mission archéologique de</td>
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<td>MeditArch</td>
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<td>MUSJ</td>
<td>Mélanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph</td>
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<td>N.A.B.U.</td>
<td>Nouvelles Assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires</td>
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<td>NAPR</td>
<td>Northern Akkad Project Reports</td>
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<td>NEA</td>
<td>Near Eastern Archaeology</td>
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<td>OCP</td>
<td>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</td>
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<td>OGIS</td>
<td>Dittenberger, W., cd. (1903–5), Orientis Graecae Inscriptiones</td>
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<td>Selectae. Leipzig.</td>
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<td>OJA</td>
<td>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</td>
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<td>Or</td>
<td>Orientalia</td>
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<td>PBA</td>
<td>Proceedings of the British Academy</td>
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<td>PEQ</td>
<td>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</td>
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<td>PG</td>
<td>private grave, designation used in the Royal Cemetery at Ur</td>
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<td>PNAS</td>
<td>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</td>
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<td>PPS</td>
<td>Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society</td>
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Abbreviations

PSAS  Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies
PSI   Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la ricerca del papiri greci e latini
QI    Quaternary International
QR    Quaternary Research
QSR   Quaternary Science Reviews
RA    Revue d’Assyriologie
RB    Revue biblique
RDAC  Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus
RIA   Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie
SB    Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten
SCCNH Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians
SDB   Supplément au dictionnaire de la Bible
SEL   Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente Antico
SMEA  Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici
SRAA  Silk Road Art and Archaeology
StIr  Studia Iranica
SWJA  Southwestern Journal of Anthropology
TCL   Textes cuneiforms du Louvre
TÜBA-AR Turkish Academy of Sciences Journal of Archaeology
UF    Ugarit-Forschungen
UVB   Vorläufige Bericht über die von dem Deutschen Archäologischen Institut aus Mitteln der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft unternommenen Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka
VHA   Vegetation History and Archaeobotany
WA    World Archaeology
WO    Die Welt des Orients
WZKM  Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
YOS   Yale Oriental Series
ZA    Zeitschrift für Asyriologie
ZDMG  Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ZDPV  Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
ZOA  Zeitschrift für Orient-Archäologie