The Late Bronze Age

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The general sequence of events is thoroughly documented for the Late Bronze Age in Canaan, which corresponds to the New Kingdom in Egypt (the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and early Twentieth Dynasties). No other biblical era, the First Temple period excepted, is so brightly illuminated by historical sources, or provides so firm a historical basis for archaeological investigation.

The entire Late Bronze Age stands in the sign of Egyptian supremacy in Canaan, beginning with the renewal of Egyptian control, following the expulsion of the Hyksos dynasty and the centralization of Egypt under the Twelfth Dynasty, and ending with the gradual attenuation of Egyptian rule, leading to the re-emergence of Canaan as an independent state. For a few hundred years, Canaan was part of the Egyptian empire and under its direct administration. But notwithstanding its political and military subordination, Canaan maintained its independence in the realm of material and spiritual culture, including the status of Canaanite creativity in the fields of religion, literature, and art.

From the historical viewpoint, the events that terminated the Middle Bronze Age and inaugurated the Late Bronze Age were the overthrow of the Hyksos dynasty and the reemergence of Egypt under Ahmose, the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and the conquests of Canaan. The overthrow of Hyksos rule began when Ahmose (1570–1546 B.C.E.) conquered the Hyksos capital at Avaris in the eastern Nile Delta in about 1560 B.C.E., ending Hyksos rule in Egypt. Later, in an unknown year, Ahmose marched across the Sinai peninsula and besieged the city of Sharuhen for three years before finally conquering it. Sharuhen, long identified with Tell el-Fara, South, is now precisely identified with Tell el-Ajjul. Documents contemporaneous with the rule of Ahmose describe a military campaign to Daul (a broad Egyptian term for Syria and Canaan), the taking of Rameses-Isna, and the taking of Boas, from Periblah (an Egyptian term for the Lebanon coast). These citations indicate military campaigns as perhaps even conquests of parts of the country, laying the foundations of the Egyptian empire in Asia and marking the start of the Late Bronze Age.

Ahmose's successors established 1554–1524 B.C.E.) and Thutmose III (1524–1515 B.C.E.) extended the sphere of Egyptian interests beyond...
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