

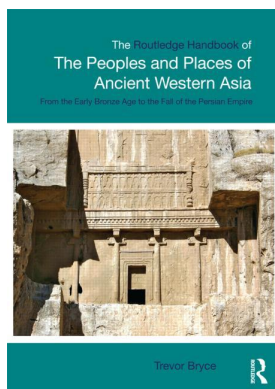
This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 02 Dec 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

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The Routledge Handbook of the Peoples and Places of Ancient Western Asia

The Near East from the Early Bronze Age to the Fall of the Persian Empire

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Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203875506-25>

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Published online on: 14 Jul 2009

How to cite :- Trevor Bryce, Heather D. Baker, Daniel T. Potts, Jonathan N. Tubb, Jennifer M. Webb, Paul Zimansky. 14 Jul 2009, *Y from: The Routledge Handbook of the Peoples and Places of Ancient Western Asia, The Near East from the Early Bronze Age to the Fall of the Persian Empire* Routledge

Accessed on: 02 Dec 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203875506-25>

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Yabliya ([map 10](#)) Middle Bronze Age city in the middle Euphrates region called Suhum which lay south of the kingdom of Mari. Yabliya was the capital of Lower Suhum. Hammurabi, king of Babylon (1792–1750), and Zimri-Lim, king of Mari (1774–1762), apparently both claimed possession of the city, along with the cities of Hit and Harbe (**ARM XXVI/2*: 336–7, no. 449), all of which lay in the frontier region between Babylonia and Mari. The governor of Lower Suhum, who was based at Yabliya, was a man called Hammanum. He had occupied the governorship from the time Suhum was subject to Yasmah-Addu, the Assyrian viceroy at Mari (1782–1775). Military operations conducted in Suhum by forces from Eshnunna early in Zimri-Lim's reign resulted in the capture of the city of Harbe by the Eshnunnite commander Shallurum, who dispatched a force of 5,000 troops from there to occupy Yabliya (**LKM* 383–4, nos 26.479 and 26.480). These operations were intended to pave the way for Eshnunna's seizure of the entire land of Suhum. Reinforcements sent to Yabliya to fortify it failed to prevent the city from eventually falling to the Eshnunnites, along with the nearby cities of Ayabu and Mulhan. With the support of Hammurabi, king of Babylon, Zimri-Lim regained possession of the occupied territories. His control of them was confirmed in a peace accord concluded with the Eshnunnite king Ibal-pi-El II in 1770. Possession of the cities of Yabliya, Harbe, and Hit was eventually conceded by Hammurabi to Zimri-Lim when the Babylonian and Mariote kings shared out the territories of Suhum following the retreat of the Eshnunnite forces from the region.

LKM 627 (refs), *Mesop.* 161–2, 196–7.

Yadnana The name commonly used for Cyprus in Assyrian royal inscriptions (e.g. **CS* II: 297).

Yahan(u) see *Bit-Agusi*.

Yahya, Tepe ([map 12](#)) Settlement-mound in southeastern Iran, covering c. 3 ha at its base and almost 20 m high, located 220 km south of mod. Kerman, perhaps within the region of the country called Marhashi (in Sumerian) or Parahshum (in Akkadian) in late M3 Mesopotamian texts. Its history of occupation extends, with intervals of abandonment, through ten major phases, from M7 (late Neolithic period) to the first half of M1 CE (Parthian and Sasanian periods). The site was discovered in 1967, and excavated from 1967 to 1971, and in 1973 and 1975, by a joint expedition of the Peabody Museum (Harvard University) and the Archaeological Service of Iran, under the direction of C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky.

In its prehistoric phases, Tepe Yahya was occupied by a series of Neolithic villages (levels VII–VI; c. 5500–4500), from which the remains of many domestic dwellings have been unearthed, followed by further occupation in the Chalcolithic period (levels VI–VA; c. 4500–3200). The distinguishing feature of its subsequent 'Proto-Elamite'

phase (level IVC; c. 3100–2800) was a building complex of over 500 sq. m, from which twenty-five tablets inscribed in the so-called Proto-Elamite script came to light (but see *Elam*), along with many cylinder sealings, and ceramic ware of a type also found at Susa and Tal-e Malyan (Anshan). At the end of this phase, the settlement was apparently abandoned until c. 2400, when a new level of occupation becomes evident, extending through the final centuries of the Early Bronze Age into the early centuries of the Middle Bronze Age (level IVB; c. 2400–2000). In this period, Tepe Yahya may have been the centre, or at least a part, of the kingdom of Marhashi, attested in texts of the C21 Ur III dynasty. Large numbers of bowls and other artefacts made from locally mined chlorite (and engraved with a range of animal and geometric motifs) were one of the distinguishing features of this period, though they are found in other periods as well. Tepe Yahya was very probably a centre for trade in goods made of this material. Architectural and ceramic features of the subsequent occupation level (IVA), extending from the Middle Bronze Age into the first centuries of the Late Bronze Age (c. 1800–1400), suggest a cultural break with the preceding period.

The site then appears to have been abandoned until at least early M1. Two phases of occupation during M1, from 800 to 500 and 500 to 275 (levels III and II respectively), are represented by complexes of large houses, and in the latter case by ceramic ware with parallels to Persian Achaemenid pottery. Level I, represented by some poorly preserved architectural remains and pottery of Parthian-Sasanian type, is datable to the period 200 to 300 CE.

Lamberg-Karlovsky (*OEANE* 5: 187–8), D. T. Potts (2004).

Ya'ilānum Tribal group, probably of Amorite origin, living in the Zagros foothills of northeastern Mesopotamia, near Qabra. It is attested in the Middle Bronze Age Mari archives from the reign of the Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad I (1796–1775). After unsuccessful attempts to establish an alliance with the tribe, Shamshi-Adad ordered his son, Yasmah-Addu, viceroy at Mari, to execute the Ya'ilānum hostages who were in his custody (**LAP* 17: 414–16, no. 679). Ya'ilānum's ruler in this period was a certain Bina- (or Mar-)Addu, who was defeated and killed by Ishme-Dagan, brother of Yasmah-Addu and Assyrian viceroy at Ekallatum, in a battle at Tutarrum (Tutarwe) (**LAP* 17: 122–3, no. 527), one of the cities of the Ya'ilānum. This occurred during an Assyrian campaign launched against the northern Mesopotamian country Qabra,



Figure 136 Tepe Yahya IVC sealing.

with the assistance of Dadusha, king of Eshnunna. Himara and Dur-Ya'ılānim were among other cities belonging to the territory of the Ya'ılānum. The first of these was conquered by Shamshi-Adad five days after his victory over the king of Qabra, at the beginning of the autumn of 1779.

Eidem and Laessoe (2001: 23), *Mesop.* 167–8.

Yalburt (map 2) Late Bronze Age site near the village of Ilgin in the district of Konya in south-central Anatolia. Excavation of the site, accidentally discovered in 1970 during a bulldozing operation, began in 1971 under the direction of T. Özgüç for the Turkish General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums. On the location of a spring, a Late Bronze Age rectangular stone basin lined with stone walls was unearthed. Three of the water basin's sides bear a Luwian hieroglyphic inscription carved in high relief on twenty large limestone blocks. The inscription, which is the longest known hieroglyphic text of the Hittite empire, records a military campaign conducted by the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV (1237–1209) against the Lukka Lands in southwestern Anatolia. It provides an important source of information on the history of the Hittite world during the kingdom's final decades.

T. Özgüç (1988), *Poetto (1993), *Hawkins (1995: 66–85).

Yalihum Middle Bronze Age town in the middle Euphrates region near Saggaratum. A letter from the Mari archives indicates that Saggaratum's governor considered it a suitable place in his neighbourhood for stationing a garrison of troops (**LAP0* 17: 437–9, no. 694).

Yamhad (map 10) Middle and (early) Late Bronze Age Amorite kingdom in northern Syria. Its royal seat was located at Aleppo. By the beginning of C18, Yamhad had replaced Ebla as the dominant power in the region, exercising sovereignty over a number of cities and petty kingdoms between the Euphrates and Orontes rivers. Nine kings of Yamhad are known, whose collective reigns spanned a period of two centuries (c. 1800–1600). Its first known ruler was Sumu-epuh, a contemporary of Yahdun-Lim (1810–1794), king of Mari, who had married a princess of Aleppo. Despite the marriage alliance, relations between the two kingdoms became hostile, as evidenced by military support provided by Sumu-epuh to the Yaminite tribes (q.v.) in their conflicts with Mari during Yahdun-Lim's reign. Yamhad subsequently became embroiled in hostilities with Shamshi-Adad I (1796–1775), ruler of the Old Assyrian kingdom, who formed an alliance with Qatna against it. In the course of these hostilities, Sumu-epuh was killed in action against Shamshi-Adad, and his throne passed to his son, Yarim-Lim I.

The disintegration of the Old Assyrian kingdom and the seizure of the throne of Mari, hitherto a viceregal seat of the kingdom, by Zimri-Lim (1774–1762), paved the way for a period of sustained peace and cooperation between Yamhad and Mari. Zimri-Lim married a daughter of Yarim-Lim, and gifts were exchanged between the royal courts. Yamhad's relations also improved with Qatna in this period, and Yarim-Lim concluded an alliance with Babylon. His successor, Hammurabi, sent troops to the Babylonian king, also called Hammurabi, to assist in the latter's capture of the kingdom of Larsa. Yamhad became one of the great political and military powers of the Middle Bronze Age, holding sway over some twenty subject rulers (*Charpin, 1995: 816).

YAMINITES

It continued to exercise dominance over northern Syria for another century, until the reign of Yarim-Lim III in the second half of C17. In this period (for which we have information about the kingdom from the archives of Alalah and the Hittite capital Hattusa), the Hittite king Hattusili I (1650–1620) conducted a series of campaigns against the northern Syrian city-states which were subject to or allied with Yamhad. He succeeded in capturing and destroying a number of these states, and seriously weakened the kingdom in the process. But he failed to take its capital, Aleppo. It was left to his successor, Mursili I, to deliver the *coup de grâce* by conquering and destroying the city c. 1595 (see under **Aleppo**). Aleppo itself was to rise again, for a time as the capital of an independent kingdom. But after Mursili's conquest there are no further references to the kingdom of Yamhad.

Klengel (1992: 44–83), Lion (*DCM* 30–3), *Mesop.* 211–12.

Yaminites ('Sons of the Right', i.e. the south when facing the rising sun? The name was formerly translated as 'Benjaminites' on the assumption of a close link with the Benjaminites of *OT* tradition) Confederation of Amorite nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, attested in the Middle Bronze Age archives of Mari. The tribes were spread over large areas of Mesopotamia and northern Syria, especially in the region between Suhum and the borders of Yamhad. There were five known major tribal sub-groups: the Amnanu/Awnan, the Rabbu, the Upapru, the Yahruru, and the Yarihu. The Simalites (Bensamilites; 'Sons of the Left', i.e. the north) appear to have been a related tribal group, made up of about a dozen sub-groups. To judge from their names, the basic distinction between Yaminites and Simalites appears to have been geographical rather than ethnic. The designation of the Yaminites as 'southerners' and 'northerners' probably reflects their original homelands, more so than their geographical distribution at the time of the Mari archives. At this time, Yaminites were widely distributed through both northern and southern Mesopotamia and are also attested as inhabiting regions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean coast. The Simalites are attested in the Lower Habur region and along the Euphrates downstream to the Delta. But they may also have had considerable penetration into regions inhabited by Yaminites. Yaminites and Simalites are in some contexts represented as branches of an ancestral tribal entity called the Hana. Together they probably made up a large part of the population of the kingdom of Mari. The Mariote king Zimri-Lim (1774–1762) was of Simalite origin.

The Yaminites' encampments were located principally along the Euphrates r., with urban centres at Terqa and Tuttul. But their constant need to find suitable grazing lands for their livestock meant that they moved regularly through the steppe-lands lying both east and west of the river. Each of their tribes was led by a sheikh, and sometimes, in addition, a war leader. Their movements inevitably brought them into conflict with settled populations in the regions where they grazed their livestock. They attacked cities in these regions and made travel between them unsafe. Hostilities with the kingdom of Mari in particular are recorded in texts dating to the reigns of the Mariote kings Yahdun-Lim (1810–1794) and Zimri-Lim (1774–1762). Yahdun-Lim reports a decisive victory over the Yaminites at the city of Samanum on the Euphrates (**Chav.*97). He later appears to have established an accord with them, which in effect gave him control over their transit territories between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean coast. But they continued to threaten cities in or near the lands through

which they moved, both during the reign of the Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad I, when the king's son Yasmah-Addu was viceroy in Mari (1782–1775), and especially in the period when the Mariote throne was occupied by Zimri-Lim. Alliances with Eshnunna and other local kings undoubtedly enhanced the dangers they posed to the security of Zimri-Lim's kingdom. None the less, Zimri-Lim had his successes against them, including a resounding victory which he won over their forces in a battle near the city of Saggartum on the middle Euphrates. An accord which he established with the Yaminite leaders c. 1770 probably led to at least a temporary cessation of hostilities between the kingdom and the tribal groups, if not to a lasting peace.

Dossin (1939), Durand and Charpin (1986), Whiting (1995: 1238), *LKM* 15–17, 603–4 (refs), *Mesop.* 140–2, 195–6, 204–6.

Yamutbal(um) (Emutbal(um)) (maps 10, 11) Amorite tribal groups attested in the Middle Bronze Age archives from Mari in the reign of Zimri-Lim (1774–1762). They apparently had two main areas of settlement: one in northern Mesopotamia centring upon the city of Andarig (map 10), and one in southern Mesopotamia along the Tigris r. with the city of Mashkan-Shapir as its focus (map 11). Sovereignty over northern Yamutbal seems to have fluctuated between Atamrum, king of Andarig, and Zimri-Lim, who was Atamrum's father-in-law (**LKM* 492). In early M2, southern Yamutbalum was part of, or was incorporated into, the kingdom of Larsa, its territories including the cities of Mashkan-Shapir and Razama (1). Charpin (*Mesop.* 32) observes that the name Yamutbalum/Emutbalum seems sometimes to designate the region around Mashkan-Shapir, and sometimes the entire territory of the former kingdom of Larsa after its conquest by the Babylonian king Hammurabi in 1763. He cites Steinkeller's proposed rationalization of this apparent anomaly: (Yamutbalum)/Emutbalum was the name of an Amorite tribe originally installed around Mashkan-Shapir, but the name came to be used in a progressively broader sense to encompass Larsa, reflecting the fact that the kings of this city had an Emutbalean tribal origin.

Following the outbreak of hostilities between Hammurabi and Rim-Sin, Larsa's king, Babylonian troops invaded Larsa and seized the city of Mashkan-Shapir. The welcome they allegedly received from the whole land of Yamutbal (**LKM* 331) may simply have been a calculated diplomatic gesture towards the region's potential new overlord, rather than an expression of disaffection with Rim-Sin's rule.

Mesop. 70, 116–17, 318–19, *LKM* 18, Steinkeller (2004).

Yaraşlı Late Bronze Age fortified city in central Anatolia, north of the Salt Lake. Discovered by W. M. Calder and subsequently by M. Ballance and A. Hall in 1957, the site covering approx. 500 m × 200 m is enclosed by a rubble wall. There are remains of an entrance gate, a possible postern tunnel, a citadel, and a lower town. J. Mellaart proposed identifying the site with the Hittite city of Sallapa (q.v.).

Macqueen (1968), Burney (2004: 317–18).

Yarmut, Tel (map 8) 16 ha site consisting of a small acropolis and large lower city (both fortified in the Early Bronze Age), located in the Shephelah in western Palestine, 25 km southwest of Jerusalem. Its history of occupation extends from Early Bronze I (second half of M4) to the early Byzantine period, with a long period of abandonment after its Early Bronze phase. From 1980 onwards, excavations were conducted on the

site by P. de Miroschedji for the Centre du Recherche Français de Jérusalem and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

During the Early Bronze Age, the city reached the peak of its development. Its fortifications protected a relatively large settlement of as many as 3,000 inhabitants, who produced a wide range of crops, vegetables, fruit, and olives, and grazed sheep, goats, and cattle. The city was dominated by several monumental public buildings. These included what was probably a sanctuary, whose main feature was a plastered and columned broadroom hall, and a 6,000 sq. m palace complex, the largest of all such Levantine complexes dating to the Early Bronze Age. Interconnected rooms, small courtyards, numerous corridors, and storerooms made up the complex. A large array of small finds, including a comprehensive assemblage of ceramic ware, many human and animal figurines, and a wide variety of other objects made of stone, bone, and terracotta, has given Tel Yarmut the status of a type-site for the material culture of southern Palestine in this period. Not long after mid M3, at the height of its prosperity, the city was unaccountably abandoned. There is no evidence that this was due to violent destruction of the site. It was reoccupied 1,000 years later, in Late Bronze II, though settlement was now limited to the small acropolis. Occupation was thenceforth fairly continuous, through the succeeding Iron Age and later phases until the Byzantine age, when a small village was built on the northeast side of the acropolis.

An identification has been proposed between Tel Yarmut and the biblical city of Yarmut attested in several *OT* sources. Joshua 10:3–5 reports that Yarmut's ruler, Piram, joined in a coalition of four kings in response to an appeal from Adoni-Zedek, the Amorite king of Jerusalem, for an attack on Gibeon, because it had formed an alliance with Joshua and the Israelites. Another possible reference to the city, under the name Yaramu, may occur in a letter of mid C14 date discovered at Tell el-Hesi (see under *Hesi, Tell el-*) near the border of the Shephelah and the Negev desert.

Miroschedji (*OEANE* 5: 369–72; reports in *IEJ* from vol. 31, 1981, onwards).

Yaruwatta Late Bronze Age city in northern Syria in the frontier-zone between the kingdoms of Barga and the Nuhashshi lands, and probably to be located on the east bank of the middle Orontes. Control over the city was contested by the above kingdoms, and resolved by the Hittite king Mursili II (c. 1315) in favour of Nuhashshi. See also **Barga**.

* Klengel (1963), Lipiński (2000: 259–60), Bryce (2005: 199–200).

Yasbuq M1 northern Arabian tribe, located in the lower Orontes r. valley. In 858 it participated under its chief, Burannati, in the coalition of northern Syrian and south-eastern Anatolian kingdoms (together with the northwestern Mesopotamian kingdom of Bit-Adini) which opposed, but was defeated by, the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (**RIMA* 3: 10, 17). The name has been related to *OT* Ishbak, one of Abraham's five sons by Keturah (Genesis 25:2).

Lipiński (2000: 192).

Yasubigalli M1 tribal group in the Zagros mountains, attacked by the Assyrian king Sennacherib during his campaign in the region in 702 (*Sennachb.* 26–7, 58, 67, 86). The tribe apparently had a long history of resistance to Assyrian rule.

Yavneh-Yam (map 8) M2 BCE–M1 CE coastal city located in mod. Israel on the northwestern border of Judaea, 16 km south of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Its history of occupation extends from the Middle Bronze Age to the Byzantine period, with a long period of abandonment in between. The site was excavated from 1967 to 1969 by J. Kaplan on behalf of the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipal Museum. Subsequent rescue operations were conducted in 1980–7 to save one of the city's building complexes from sea erosion. In its Middle and Late Bronze Age phases, Yavneh-Yam consisted primarily of a square enclosure, 800 sq. m in extent, bounded by a rampart. The site was abandoned during the first part of the Late Bronze Age, after periods of intermittent occupation, and not resettled until the Persian period (C6–4), when it was attached to Idumaea (q.v.), an administrative district of the Persian empire. The city expanded considerably during its Persian and Hellenistic phases, and in the subsequent Roman and Byzantine periods it was one of the Palestinian coastal region's major ports.

Dessel (*OEANE* 5: 374–5).

Yazılıkaya (Turkish for 'inscribed rock'; anc. name unknown) Late Bronze Age rock-sanctuary in north-central Anatolia, 1 km northeast of the Hittite capital Hattusa. Its principal natural features are two open-air rock-chambers, designated as A and B, and a number of niches, crevices, and small caves. Although in use since M4 or earlier, the rock outcrop appears to have been left largely in its natural state until c. 1500, when a wall was built, shutting off the main chamber (A) from the outside world. From at least mid M2, Yazılıkaya appears to have been used for cultic purposes, though it may in fact have served this purpose since the Chalcolithic period. Its first building phase continued through C14 into early C13. During the reign of the Hittite king Hattusili III (1267–1237), a gatehouse and temple complex with interior court and inner sanctuary were constructed across the front of the site, replacing the earlier wall and shutting off direct access into the sanctuary's two natural chambers. The excavator of the complex, K. Bittel, observed that the buildings were erected in a strikingly careless manner, with their foundations hardly anywhere going down to bedrock. This suggested to him that use of the sanctuary was limited to a few special occasions in the year.

The walls of the rock-chambers behind the building complex were embellished, during the reign of Hattusili's son and successor Tudhaliya IV, with a number of relief sculptures. The most impressive group of reliefs consists of two files of deities, male on the left and female on the right (with one exception in each case), apparently approaching each other. The deities are identified by names inscribed next to them in the Luwian hieroglyphic script (though many of the inscriptions are now badly weathered to the point of obscurity, or entirely lost). It is clear both from the arrangement of the figures and from the names associated with them that the Hurrian pantheon of deities is represented here. The depiction of these deities reflects the strong influence of Hurrian culture, especially Hurrian religion, on Hittite civilization, particularly during C13. The deities leading the two files are, on the left, the Hurrian god Teshub, and facing him his consort Hepat. On the opposite wall, a 3 m high relief of King Tudhaliya is carved, dressed and equipped as a Hittite priest.

Behind chamber A is a narrow passage, guarded by a pair of winged and lion-headed demons with human bodies, which leads into the 3 m wide chamber B, with a subsidiary chamber opening off its northeast corner. On the right of the chamber as one

YAZILIKAYA

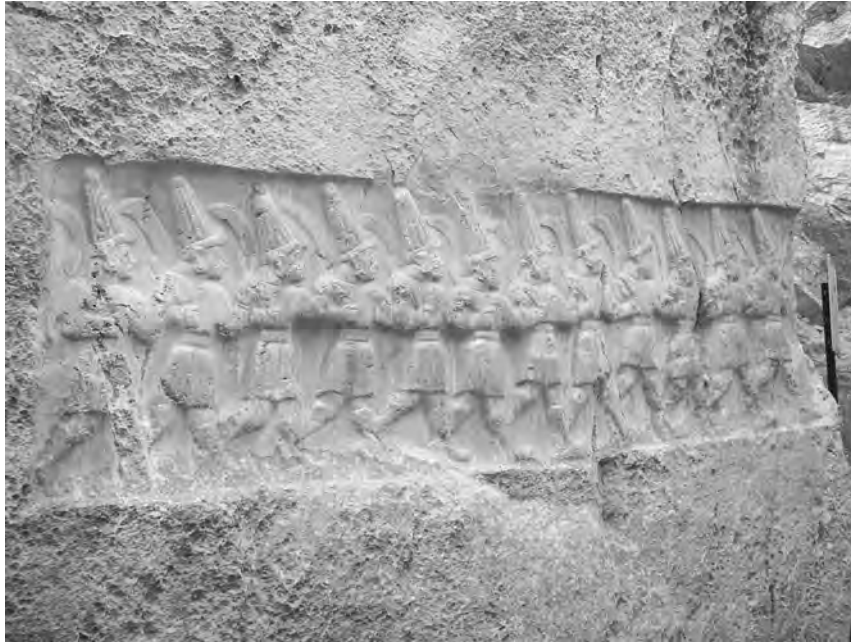


Figure 137 Yazılıkaya, 'running gods'.

enters, twelve identical gods are depicted. They appear to be running, or marching, and are carrying sickle-shaped swords. On the opposite wall are two closely linked figures. The larger figure is Tudhaliya's patron god Sharrumma, son of Teshub and Hepat. Sharrumma extends his arm around the smaller figure, his protégé Tudhaliya. The so-called 'dagger-god' is also carved on this wall. The top part of the relief consists of a human head (evidently that of a god, since it wears a conical cap), underneath which are the foreparts of two lions, and beneath them two lion-skins hanging head down. All this forms the 'hilt' of the dagger. The lower part of the relief is in the form of a double-edged blade with a distinct midrib. The bottom half of the blade is not visible, and almost certainly the relief as a whole is intended to represent a dagger plunged into the ground. A number of scholars believe that the dagger-god and the twelve running/marching gods have underworld associations.

The precise purpose and function of the sanctuary remains unclear. But it has long been suggested that Yazılıkaya was the principal place where the Hittite New Year festival was celebrated, in the presence of all the chief deities of the land. The site's apparent netherworld associations would not be inconsistent with this. Death and new life were commonly juxtaposed in the anc. world, for in the cyclic pattern of things, decay and death are followed by new beginnings, new growth, new life. In the Hittite kingdom's last decades, Yazılıkaya may also have served as a mortuary chapel, a place of ancestor worship where the royal family paid homage to its dead. The prominence of the reliefs of Tudhaliya IV, the only human figure depicted at Yazılıkaya, suggests that chamber B may have been his tomb.

Bittel *et al.* (1975), Macqueen (1986: 123–32).



Figure 138 Yazılıkaya, Sharrumma and Tudhaliya.

Yin'am, Tell (map 8) Site located in the Yavne'el valley in the eastern Lower Galilee region, with a history of occupation extending from the Neolithic to the late Roman period. The site was excavated by H. A. Liebowitz for the University of Texas, from 1976 to 1981 and from 1983 to 1989. A circular platform structure identified as a *bamah* (a high place where Jews worshipped) was the main architectural feature surviving from the Early Bronze Age level. During the Middle Bronze Age, a fortress was built on the site. From this period too an electrum figurine of a standing goddess came to light. (Electrum is a mixture of gold and silver.) After a period of abandonment, Tell Yin'am was reoccupied during the latter half of the Late Bronze Age, when the settlement was dominated by a large, ten-room building complex identified as the residence of the local ruler. Small finds from the complex included cylinder seals, a stamp seal, and a range of jewellery. Other buildings dating to C13 adjoined this complex. The Late Bronze Age city ended in violent destruction, but was followed shortly after by the first Iron Age level (Iron Age I). Well-built houses and high quality ceramic ware were features of this level. Occupation continued into Iron Age IIA (C10), from which we have the remains of two houses, in one of which was an olive oil press, an olive-cracking device, and stone weights, suggestive of cottage industry.



Figure 139 Yazılıkaya, 'dagger god'.

In another room, forty-five loom-weights were discovered. The settlement's Iron Age IIC phase produced a range of cooking pots, jugs, and storage jars. Evidence of occupation during the Persian period (C6–4) included assemblages of both local and imported ceramic ware, and some architectural remains, including a building (probably a house) with ovens and grain silos. There is no evidence of occupation during the Hellenistic period, but the site was certainly resettled in Roman times.

Liebowitz (*OEANE* 5: 379–81).

Yocantepe Eastern Anatolian early Iron Age fortress settlement and necropolis, located 9 km southeast of mod. Van on a conical hill, 2051 m above sea level. Identified during a survey in 1995 in the course of a search for Urartian dam and irrigation systems, it is to date the highest excavated site in Turkey. The excavations, conducted jointly by Istanbul University and the Van Museum, under the direction of O. Belli

since 1997, cover three areas: the acropolis, lower settlement, and necropolis. The fortress occupies an area of 600 sq. m on the highest part of the site. Its walls are carefully constructed with an admixture of earth and slab-stones. It was part of an architectural complex which spread through the entire excavated area. The necropolis contains numerous grave-chambers, all oriented in a north–south direction, and some with a front dromos (see glossary). The tops of the graves were covered with huge slab-stones. Each grave contained numerous human remains, thirty-five skeletons in one case. Burial practices follow those of other Early Iron Age necropoleis, in which bones were heaped together on the grave floors, and sometimes crushed, when the chambers were full, to make way for fresh interments. But the skulls were carefully placed in bowls. Grave goods included pottery typical of early Iron Age ceramic ware (e.g. carinated, flat-based, wheel-made bowls), and large numbers of iron ornaments and ceremonial weapons. A few pieces of jewellery, such as a pair of gold pendulum earrings, were also found among the graves' contents. The site is considered important for a study of cultural transfer from M2 to the early Iron Age and then to the Urartian period.

Belli and Konyar (2001).

Yokneam (*Tel Yokneam/Joqueam; Tel Qeimum*) (map 8) Canaanite city in Palestine located on a 4 ha mound in the western Jezreel valley above the junction between the Via Maris (q.v.) and the route which passed across the Carmel range. Its history of occupation, covering twenty-seven archaeological strata, extends from the Early Bronze Age to the Ottoman period. The site was excavated by A. Ben-Tor on behalf of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem between 1977 and 1988, as part of the Yokneam Regional Project. Yokneam first appears in written records among the Syro-Palestinian conquests of the pharaoh Tuthmosis III in C15. There are frequent references to it in *OT* sources: e.g. its ruler was one of thirty-one kings defeated by Joshua (Joshua 12:22), and it was subsequently one of the cities assigned to the Levites (Joshua 21:34). The city was first fortified during the Middle Bronze Age, but left unfortified in subsequent phases of its Bronze Age history, up to its destruction at the end of the Late Bronze Age. It was reoccupied and refortified in the early Iron Age. However, its defence system was apparently abandoned at the end of C8, perhaps in the context of the Assyrian conquests in the region. During the Persian period (C6–4) an unwalled settlement occupied the site. Hellenistic remains dating to C2 and C1 include a small square watchtower.

Ben-Tor (*NEAEHL* 3: 805–11).

Yorgan Tepe see Nuzi.

Yurza Late Bronze Age Canaanite city-state subject to Egypt, attested in the mid C14 Amarna archive (see glossary) and in Egyptian New Kingdom topographical lists. The pharaoh Tuthmosis III refers to it as the southernmost city to have rebelled against Egypt during his reign (1479–1425). Scholars now generally accept B. Mazar's identification of it with the site of Tell Jemmeh (q.v.), 10 km south of Gaza. Two of the Amarna letters are written to the pharaoh Akhenaten by Yurza's ruler Pu-Ba'lu, who assures the pharaoh that he is faithfully fulfilling his role as guardian of the city on his overlord's behalf (*EA 314 and 315). Yurza-Tell Jemmeh has also been equated with

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the city called 'Arsa (Arza) near the brook of Egypt' in the texts of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680–669). The city (if it is Tell Jemmeh) was refortified and refurbished by Esarhaddon, doubtless to provide his troops with a military base.

Van Beek (*OEANE* 3: 213–14, s.v. *Jemmeh, Tell*).