PALESTINE
AT THE TIME OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM
IN EGYPT

BY

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The newly discovered Egyptian and cuneiform material together with the progress made in exploring the civilization of the Middle Bronze Age has, in many respects, reshaped our conception of the history of Palestine and Syria in the first quarter of the second millennium B. C. It appears more and more clearly that the western part of the 'fertile crescent' occupied an almost dominating position in the civilization of the Near East in this period, not only as a meeting-place of peoples and cultures and the bridge between Egypt and Mesopotamia, but also as an influential factor in the evolution of Mesopotamian history since the breakdown of the kingdom of Sumer and Akkad (IIIrd Dynasty of Ur) in the xxth century, and the Egyptian history of the Hyksos period from the middle of the xviiith century B. C.

Of basic importance for our study is above all the clearly apparent fact that, in the third millennium and the beginning of the second millennium B. C., the Semitic population was dominant and even predominant in Syria and Palestine. This can be said with some certainty in respect to those regions which stood in closest contact with Egypt, first and foremost Palestine and Phoenicia. Not only the numerous *Syrian* proper names, but also the many place-names mentioned in the sources of the Middle Kingdom and the few names mentioned in the sources of the Old Kingdom, can almost without exception be shown to derive from