West Semitic origins. A similar state of affairs appears in the cuneiform documents from Mesopotamia since the time of Sargon of Akkad, which concern the *Westland* (*Amurru*) and the Accadian texts from various sites of Syria dating from the first third of the second millennium, including the important Mari documents. It becomes more and more evident that the autochthonous and compact population of Syria-Palestine spoke *West Semitic,* though in the northern part of Syria other elements, *i.e.* the first waves of immigrants from Asia Minor, and the Hurrians, appeared at a comparatively early time. The flooding of Syria by non-Semitic peoples which profoundly changed the ethnographical and cultural picture began only in the XVIIth century.

The material at our disposal shows, no doubt, that, in the period under discussion, the political structure of Syria and Palestine was made up by state formations of different kinds, *i. e.* by a great number of independent and semi-independent city states or federal formations comprising smaller regions, the inhabitants of which were partly sedentary and partly semi-sedentary or nomad, including border lands of the desert.

Moreover, it becomes more and more obvious that, in the course of the Middle Kingdom, Egypt did not only claim sovereignty over Palestine and Phoenicia, but also practised it during the XIIth Dynasty [1].

Noteworthy, too, are the complicated conditions of colonization in the different regions, *i. e.* the dense settlement of the sea coast and the plains, in the main the valleys of the Orontes and the Jordan, as well as of northern Transjordan, and the progressive occupation of other regions of the Cisjordan hill country and the Transjordan plateau; while the wooded mountains of Western Palestine could be occupied only to a small part. Of decisive importance in the history of colonization were the flourishing cultivation of crops and orchards, the gradual development of cattle-breeding, and, first and foremost, trade by sea, along the coast, and on the highways which led from Egypt or the coast across Palestine and Syria to Mesoptamia and Asia Minor. The fact that in the course of the third and the beginning of the second millennium, the road leading

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[1] Albright, *J.P.O.S.*, 8 (1928), p. 224; *Sellin Festschrift*, p. 1 ff.; *J.P.O.S.*, 15 (1935), p. 221; Wilson, *A.J.S.L.L.*, 1941, p. 225 ff.