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***Early Urbanizations in the Levant: A Regional Narrative*, by Raphael Greenberg. New York: Leicester University Press, 2002. xii + 141 pp., 47 figures, 4 tables. Cloth. \$145.00.**

It has come to be expected that a successful Ph.D. thesis should be followed by a book either wholly or in part derived from the thesis. That these books often make very tedious reading and are rarely successful in bridging the transition from thesis to book seems to be of less concern than getting that first published volume on the curriculum vitae. For this reason I find I am usually reluctant to read these “published theses” in any depth and find them at best a useful synthesis of material or occasionally in some part a welcomed discussion of some original data. I was more than pleasantly surprised, however, in the case of this volume by Raphael Greenberg to find that it makes the transition from thesis to book rather successfully and provides both an interesting discussion and synthesis of current research and new and useful interpretations of his recent regional fieldwork. As Greenberg points out in his introduction, the volume is a revised and expanded translation of the author’s Ph.D. thesis completed at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. The topic of the volume, a discussion of the nature of early urbanizations (the author prefers the plural here) in the Levant, is approached through a systematic examination of the environmental, archaeological, and chronological foundations of these developments within a specific region of the southern Levant—the Hula Valley of northern Israel. The author’s familiarity with the region, having spent what he describes as some 15 years of intermittent fieldwork and study there, provides a well-

researched and solid foundation for his analysis of these urban developments from the late fourth through early second millennium (from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age through the MB I period) in the Hula Valley. The overall approach to this exploration of social processes in the Hula Valley betrays the underlying structure of the thesis, but happily the sheer quality of the organization of the discussion and the clarity of the writing carry the reader along and make a very interesting read.

Greenberg begins by reviewing both the history and some of the current approaches to understanding urbanization in the Levant and divides recent attempts into what he terms the “historicist” approach, which equates Levantine urbanization with political developments in Egypt, and the “neo-evolutionary” approach, which he suggests relies more on understanding “local trajectories” in demographic growth, economic intensification, as well as agricultural innovation and access to natural resources (i.e., copper). Greenberg, however, moves beyond a simple discussion of this “first urbanization” by his inclusion of the “collapse” at the end of the Early Bronze Age (EBA IV) and the “re-urbanization” of the Levant in the second millennium during the Middle Bronze Age in his analysis. This approach to the “urbanizations” in the Levant is, I think, a very useful one and helps to put the processes at work in the region in a broader temporal context. As Joffe (1993) so aptly pointed out in his earlier (and equally successful) “book of the thesis,” urbanization in the Levant tends toward the cyclical, and his metaphor of rising and falling levels of social organization and re-formation fits the data extremely well. Following Joffe to some degree, this work pushes our understanding of the processes further to incorporate the “collapse” of the Early Bronze Age and the “re-urbanization” of the Middle Bronze Age as part of the same process.

Greenberg correctly points out that one of the key problems in the analysis of the social processes that resulted in urbanization and collapse in the Levant is the application of data derived from regional scales of analysis to the broader canvas of the large-scale geographic unit of the southern Levant as a whole. This has certainly been a major flaw in previous research, since most studies of these processes have been less than successful in using the results of regional research to explain the broader factors at work. According to Greenberg, the regional scale of analysis—such as is offered in his analysis of the Hula Valley—provides a scale small enough to permit familiarity with the data and cultural sequences but large enough to afford a view of social and economic interactions. This regional analysis can then be used to “synthesize and to identify patterns in social and economic behaviour, and the ability to focus on specifics, and perhaps to identify the contingencies that make the differences between regions significant” (p. 4). Greenberg therefore suggests that these regional analyses should be seen not as offering overarching explanations for the Levant as a whole, but

should be used sympathetically to build a patchwork of “local histories” that can be used to understand the nature of social and systemic change in the southern Levant.

It is with this intent that Greenberg then builds a local “case-study” of the developments in the Hula Valley from the late fourth millennium through the early second millennium B.C. The majority of the volume is dedicated to this task, with chapters on “The Hula Valley Environment” (chapter 2); “The Stratigraphic-Chronological Framework of the Hula Valley from the EBA I–MBA I” (chapter 3); and “Hula Valley Settlement Patterns” (chapter 4). Each one of these chapters provides both a very useful synthesis of the regional data and the author’s interpretations of it. Greenberg carefully builds a complete picture of the natural environment, the archaeological sequences built from the survey and excavation data, and the nature of settlement patterns through time. This is followed by a summary chapter entitled “Patterns of Settlement and Social Change in the Hula Valley, EBI–MB I, and Their Implications for the Study of Urban Cultures in the Southern Levant” (chapter 5), which reviews the data of chapters 2 through 4 and provides an interpretative framework for the region—what Greenberg refers to as “an exercise in interpretation, an optimistic attempt to link the various bits of evidence in a coherent and consecutive narrative,” to form a “regional narrative” (p. 84). Not surprisingly, this chapter not only draws on the data of the preceding chapters, but also allows Greenberg free-range to explore some of the key issues in each of the periods and to provide his view of the nature of social change over time. I found this chapter to be a very well-reasoned and insightful discussion of the data, and there is little with which to take objection or to challenge. His “regional narrative” forms a vivid picture of the oscillations in social organization, institutions, and economic prosperity during the EBA–MBI.

Finally, in his concluding chapter entitled “The Ebb and Flow of Early Urbanism in the Levant” (chapter 6), Greenberg moves from the regional scale of analysis to an examination of the various approaches used to understand social change in the southern Levant as a whole. The discussion takes a philosophical turn as it ponders some of the theoretical approaches used to explain these changes and reviews various approaches to the building of successful models of human adaptation and evolution. Moving from the theoretical to the specific, Greenberg then provides a short synopsis of what he views as a “disjunctive process” of urbanization in the Levant, in which he highlights some of the key data and evidence for this process across the broader region over time. He concludes with a series of recommendations for future research in the various periods of the EBA and MBI.

This short final chapter, while quite interesting, falls prey to the same flaw alluded to by Greenberg at the beginning of the book—this being the applicability of observations gleaned from regional analyses to generalizations on the broader geographical scale. Greenberg freely admits

the problem as one of the “major sticking points of the archaeological endeavour” (p.112), but really fails to rise to this challenge. One can hardly blame him for this, as none before him have really successfully managed it either.

Overall the volume is a very worthwhile addition to studies concerning the processes of urbanization in the Levant and adds a great deal to this dialogue in a region that has until now been largely excluded from this discussion. One can only wish that the acquisition of this very useful volume would be within the reach of more scholars, but the price, I fear, means that this will be one to borrow from your local library.

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***Dan II: A Chronicle of the Excavations and the Late Bronze Age “Mycenaean” Tomb*, by Avraham Biran and Rachel Ben-Dov. Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, 2002. vi + 248 pp. 223 figures, 4 color plates, 20 tables. Cloth. \$58.00.**

Six years after the long-awaited publication of *Dan I*, the second Final Report of the Tel Dan Excavations has appeared. For a remarkable 33 consecutive years, Avraham Biran directed excavations at this major tell site located in modern-day Israel near the Lebanese border. Since 1974 the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion (of which Biran was the director) has been the primary sponsor; accordingly, both final reports appear as *Annals of the School*.

*Dan II* is divided into two parts: The first and shorter part (pp. 3–32) is a chronicle of excavations from 1993 to 1999 written by Biran; and the second, longer part (pp. 33–248), of which Rachel Ben-Dov is the principal author, is primarily a description of the funerary assemblage from a single Late Bronze Age tomb. The publication of Tomb 387, or the “Mycenaean” Tomb, includes also several specialist studies submitted by various other authors (pp. 178–228).

Part I completes the chronicle of excavations begun in *Dan I* that covered the years 1966 to 1992 (Biran, Ilan, and Greenberg 1996: 1–64). During the last several sea-