

# HdO

## The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria



*Edited by*  
Herbert Niehr

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BRILL

# The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria

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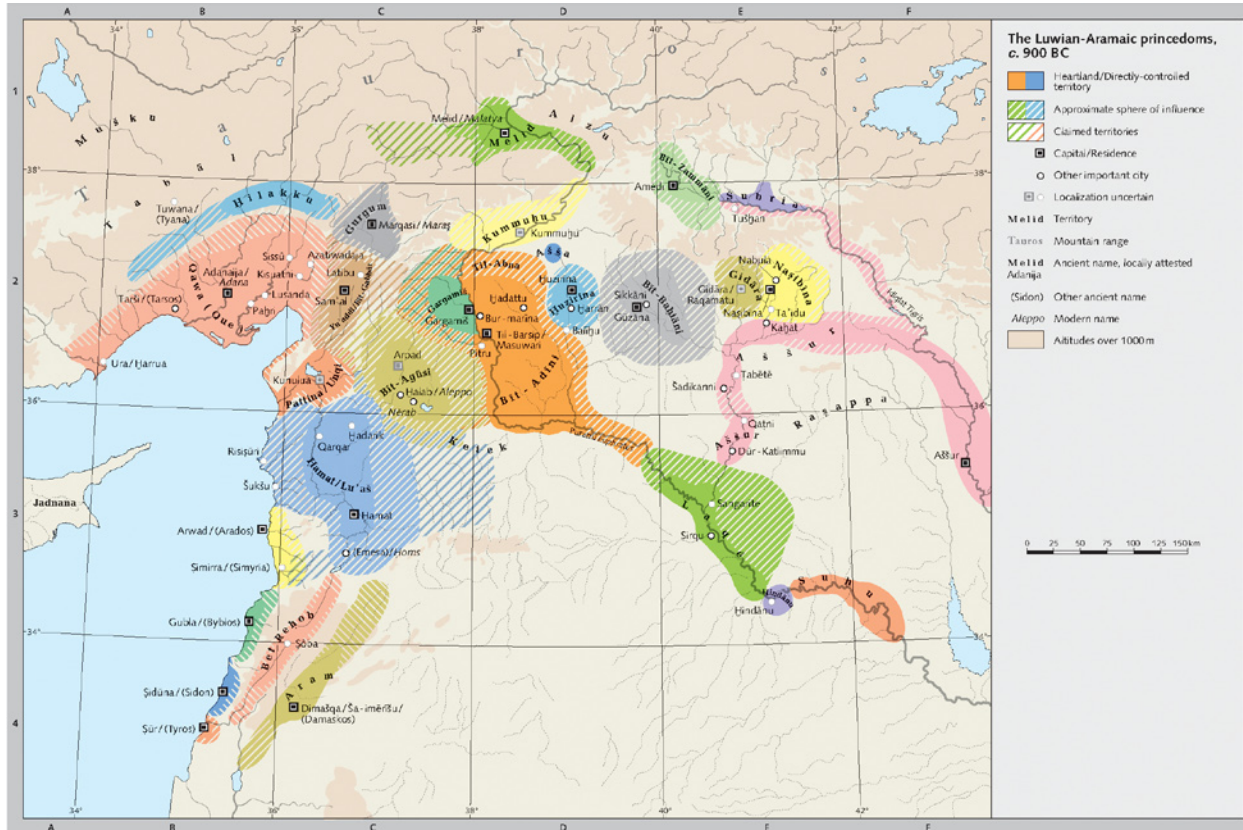
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Map 1. The Luwian-Aramaic princedoms ca. 900 B.C., after Wittke – Olshausen – Szydłak 2010: 43.

# The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria

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Herbert Niehr



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*Cover illustration:* King Bar-Rakkab of Sam'al (relief, ca. 730 B.C.). Bpk / Vorderasiatisches Museum, SMB / Jürgen Liepe.

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## CONTENTS

List of Maps and Plates .....	ix
List of Abbreviations .....	xiii
List of Contributors .....	xxi
Preface (Herbert Niehr) .....	xxiii
I. Introduction (Herbert Niehr) .....	1
II. History (Hélène Sader) .....	11
1. Geographical and Chronological Scope .....	11
2. The Sources for a History of the Aramaeans of Ancient Syria .....	13
3. The Aramaeans in the Iron Age I (1200–900 B.C.): From Kin-Based Groups to Polities .....	16
4. The Iron Age II: Aramaean Polities and the Assyrian Conquest .....	27
5. Concluding Remarks .....	36
III. Society, Institutions, Law, and Economy (Dagmar Kühn) .....	37
1. Society .....	37
2. Institutions .....	47
3. Law and Jurisdiction .....	61
4. Economy .....	62
IV. Language and Script (Holger Gzella) .....	71
1. Introduction .....	71
2. Script and Orthography .....	76
3. Phonology .....	79
4. Morphology and Morphosyntax .....	84
5. Syntax .....	105
6. Lexicon .....	105
V. Literature (Paolo Merlo) .....	109
1. Introduction .....	109
2. Terminology .....	109

3. Overview on History and Literary Genres .....	110
4. Historical Narrative in Royal Inscriptions .....	111
5. Elements of Religious Literature .....	117
6. Wisdom Literature .....	123
VI. Religion (Herbert Niehr) .....	127
1. Introduction .....	127
2. Between the Tigris and Euphrates .....	128
3. From the Euphrates to the Mediterranean .....	150
4. Middle Syria .....	193
5. Outlook .....	200
VII. Art (Dominik Bonatz) .....	205
1. Introduction .....	205
2. Monumental Art in Architecture .....	208
3. Free-Standing Sculptures .....	225
4. Seals and Minor Arts .....	242
VIII. Architecture (Mirko Novák) .....	255
1. Introduction .....	255
2. City Planning .....	256
3. Citadels and Fortifications .....	261
4. Palaces .....	265
5. Temples .....	267
6. Houses and Workshops .....	270
7. Conclusion .....	271
IX. Outlook: Aramaeans Outside of Syria .....	273
1. Assyria (Martti Nissinen) .....	273
2. Babylonia (Michael P. Streck) .....	297
3. Anatolia (André Lemaire) .....	319
4. Phoenicia (Herbert Niehr) .....	329
5. Palestine (Angelika Berlejung) .....	339
6. Egypt (Alejandro F. Botta) .....	366
7. Northern Arabia (Herbert Niehr) .....	378
X. Aramaean Heritage (John F. Healey) .....	391
1. Edessa, Hatra, Palmyra .....	394
2. Mesopotamia, Judaea, Nabataea .....	398
3. Areas under Strong Greco-Roman Influence (Antioch to Dura Europos) .....	399

CONTENTS

vii

Bibliography .....	403
Indices	
Index of Persons .....	453
Index of Deities .....	456
Index of Lands, Peoples, Tribes, Cities, Sites .....	458
Plates .....	463



## LIST OF MAPS AND PLATES

### MAPS

1. The Luwian-Aramaic principedoms ca. 900 B.C., after Wittke – Olshausen – Szydlak 2010: 43 ..... frontispiece
2. Distribution of Aramaic documents, after Porten – Yardeni 1999: 304 ..... 370

### PLATES

- I. Series of orthostats, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the Western part of the outer citadel gate, Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Luschan 1902: pl. 37 c.
- II. Divine trias, Sam'al (Zincirli), orthostats from the Eastern part of the outer citadel gate, Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after Orthmann 1975: fig. 357
- III. King Bar-Rakkab, Sam'al (Zincirli), orthostat from *hilani* IV, Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 1992: no. 170
- IV. High officials, Sam'al (Zincirli), orthostat from *hilani* III, Museum of Ancient Near East, Istanbul, after Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 1992: no. 167
- V. Portal lion, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the area of the inner citadel gate (not in situ), Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Luschan 1902: pl. 46, below
- VI. Portal lion, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the area of the inner citadel gate (not in situ), Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Luschan 1902: pl. 47, below
- VII a–c. Orthostats, Guzana (Tell Halaf), from the Western Palace, Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Oppenheim 1955: pls. 65a, 92b, 33a
- VIII. Statue of a seated couple, Guzana (Tell Halaf), from the cult room in the lower city, after Bonatz 2000a: pl. VI. B9
- IX. Statue, Guzana (Tell Halaf), from the cult room in the lower city, after von Oppenheim 1955: pl. 149a



- X. Stele, Til Barsib (Tell Aḥmar), Aleppo National Museum, after Hawkins 2000: pl. 99D, Tell Ahmar 1
- XI. Stele, Hadattu (Arslan Tash), Musée du Louvre, Paris, after Orthmann 1975: fig. 217
- XII. Stele, Terqa (Tell Ašara), Aleppo National Museum, drawing by C. Florimont in Masetti-Rouault 2001: fig. 9
- XIII. Stele, Qadbun, Tartous Museum, after Abou Assaf 1992: pl. 40
- XIV. Stele, Til Barsib (Tell Aḥmar), Musée du Louvre, Paris, after Green – Hausleiter 2001: fig. 10
- XV. Statue on double-lion base, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the citadel, Museum of Ancient Near East Istanbul, after Bonatz 2000: pl. II. A6
- XVI. Statue, 'Ain al-Arab, Aleppo National Museum, after Bonatz 2000a: pl. I. A1
- XVII. Funerary stele, Neirab, Musée du Louvre, Paris, after Bonatz 2000a: pl. XV. C35
- XVIII. Funerary statue, Guzana (Tell Halaf), Aleppo National Museum, after Bonatz 2000a: pl. V. B54
- XIX. Funerary stele, Neirab, Musée du Louvre, Paris, after Bonatz 2000a: pl. IX. CII
- XX. Funerary stele, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the lower city, Gaziantep Archaeological Museum, after Struble – Herrmann 2009: fig. 3
- XXI. Bulla with impression of King Bar-Rakkab's seal, Sam'al (Zincirli), Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after Wartke 2005: fig. 77
- XXII. Scarab, carnelian, Bible Lands Museum, Jerusalem, after Avigad 1997: no. 763
- XXIII. Ivory plaque, Hadattu (Arslan Tash), Aleppo National Museum, after Winter 1981: pl. 13a
- XXIV. *à-jour* ivory plaque, Hadattu (Arslan Tash), Musée du Louvre, Paris, after Winter 1981: pl. 10a
- XXV. Ivory panel, Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, room SW 37, National Museum of Iraq, after Herrmann 1986: pl. 230, no. 891
- XXVI. Horse frontlet, bronze, Heraion Samos, after Kyrieleis – Röllig 1988: pl. 9
- XXVII a–b. Hand-lion bowls, serpentine, Sam'al (Zincirli), Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Luschan 1943: pl. 14
- XXVIII. Hazrak (Tell Afis), after Soldi 2009: 99 fig. 1
- XXIX. Til Barsib (Tell Aḥmar), after Naumann 1971: 233 fig. 299
- XXX. Guzana (Tell Halaf), after von Luschan 1950: pl. I
- XXXI. Sam'al (Zincirli), after Schloen – Fink 2009b: 4 fig. 3

- XXXII. Tell Šaiḥ Ḥassan, after Boese 1995: 247 fig. 4
- XXXIII. Citadel of Guzana (Tell Halaf), after von Luschan 1950: pl. II
- XXXIV. Citadel of Sam'al (Zincirli), after Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 418 fig. 550
- XXXV. Citadel of Kunulua (Tell Tayinat) with palaces of the *hilani*-type and two temples *in antis*, after Harrison 2012: 6 fig. 3
- XXXVI. Palace of the *hilani*-type (*hilani* III) in Sam'al (Zincirli), after Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 419 fig. 553
- XXXVII. Palace of the *hilani*-type in Guzana (Zincirli), after Cholidis – Martin (eds.) 2010: 72 fig. V. 5
- XXXVIII. Temple of the Storm-God of Aleppo, after Gonnella – Khayyata – Kohlmeyer 2005: 88 fig. 117
- XXXIX. Temple in Hazrak, after Mazzoni 2010: 376 fig. 10
- XL. Temple of 'Ain Dara, after Abou Assaf 1990: fig. 18
- XLI. Residential quarter in Tell Mastuma, after Braemer 1997: 67 fig. 5c
- XLII. Residential quarter with artisan houses and workshops from Tell Mishrife, after Morandi Bonacossi 2009: 122 fig. 2
- XLIII. Stele of Betsaida, after Bernett – Keel 1998: fig. 1c
- XLIV. Stele (?) of Gath; courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority; photo by Benjamin Sass
- XLV. Stele from Saqqara, after *CIS* II/1 no. 122 pl. XI



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AA</i>	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i>
<i>A(A)AS</i>	<i>Annales (Arabes) Archéologiques Syriennes</i>
<i>AAAScH</i>	<i>Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
<i>AAE</i>	<i>Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy</i>
<i>AASOR</i>	<i>Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>AB</i>	Anchor Bible
<i>ACFP</i>	<i>Atti del I Congresso Internazionale di Studi Fenici e Punici</i> I–III, Rome, 1983
<i>ActOr</i>	Acta Orientalia
<i>ADAJ</i>	Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
<i>ADD</i>	C. H. Johns, <i>Assyrian Deeds and Documents</i> , Cambridge, 1898–1923
<i>ADOG</i>	Abhandlungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
<i>ADPV</i>	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
<i>ÄAT</i>	Ägypten und Altes Testament
<i>AECT</i>	F. M. Fales, <i>Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period</i> (Studi Semitici NS 2), Rome, 1986
<i>AfO (B)</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung (Beihefte)</i>
<i>AION</i>	<i>Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>KM</i>	Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
<i>ALASP(M)</i>	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Altsyrien-Palästinas (und Mesopotamiens)
<i>AnAnt</i>	<i>Anatolia Antiqua</i>
<i>ANES(S)</i>	Ancient Near Eastern Studies (Supplements)
<i>AnOr</i>	Analecta Orientalia
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i>
<i>AnSt</i>	<i>Anatolian Studies</i>
<i>AOAT</i>	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
<i>AoF</i>	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
<i>ARM</i>	Archives Royales de Mari
<i>ATSAT</i>	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
<i>Aug</i>	<i>Augustinianum</i>
<i>AulOr</i>	<i>Aula Orientalis</i>
<i>AulOrS</i>	Aula Orientalis. Supplement

<i>AW</i>	<i>Antike Welt</i>
<i>BAAL</i>	<i>Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises</i>
BaF	Baghdader Forschungen
BAH	Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique
<i>BaM</i>	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i>
BAR (IS)	British Archaeological Reports (International Series)
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BATSH	Berichte der Ausgrabung Tall Šēḥ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient
BHR	Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana
<i>Bibl</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
<i>BiOr</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
BK AT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
<i>BMB</i>	<i>Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth</i>
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BTAVO	Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
BTS	Beiruter Texte und Studien
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago</i> 1–21; Chicago – Glückstadt, 1956–2010.
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CB. OTS	Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament Series
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CDOG	Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CIS	Academia Inscriptionum et Litterarum Humaniorum (ed.), <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum</i> , Paris, 1881ff
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
<i>CMAO</i>	<i>Contributi e Materiali di Archeologia Orientale</i>
<i>CRAIBL</i>	<i>Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
CRB	Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
<i>CRRAI</i>	<i>Compte Rendu de la Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale</i>
CSF	Collezione di Studi Fenici
<i>CTH</i>	E. Laroche, <i>Catalogue des Textes Hittites</i> , Paris, 1971
CTN	Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud
DaF	Damaszener Forschungen

<i>DaM</i>	<i>Damaszener Mitteilungen</i>
<i>DBS</i>	<i>Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément</i>
<i>DCPhP</i>	E. Lipiński (ed.), <i>Dictionnaire de la Civilisation Phénicienne et Punique</i> , Turnhout, 1992
<i>DDD<sup>2</sup></i>	K. van der Toorn et al. (eds.), <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> , Leiden, <sup>2</sup> 1999
<i>DJD</i>	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
<i>DMOA</i>	Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui
<i>DNP</i>	H. Cancik – H. Schneider (eds.), <i>Der Neue Pauly</i> 1–16, Stuttgart – Weimar, 1996–2003
<i>EB.NS</i>	Études Bibliques. Nouvelle Série
<i>EBR</i>	H.-J. Klauck et al. (eds.), <i>Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception</i> , 1ff, Berlin – New York – Boston 2009ff
<i>EHS</i>	Europäische Hochschulschriften
<i>EI</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
<i>EpAn</i>	<i>Epigraphica Anatolica</i>
<i>EPRO</i>	Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain
<i>ERC</i>	Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations
<i>ESE</i>	<i>Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik</i>
<i>EVO</i>	<i>Egitto e Vicino Oriente</i>
<i>FAT</i>	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
<i>FoSub</i>	Fontes et Subsidia ad Bibliam Pertinentes
<i>FRLANT</i>	Forschungen zu Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>GAT</i>	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
<i>HANE</i>	History of the Ancient Near East
<i>HBS</i>	Herders Biblische Studien
<i>HdO</i>	Handbuch der Orientalistik
<i>HSAO</i>	Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient
<i>HSM</i>	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IDD</i>	C. Uehlinger et al. (eds.), forthcoming, <i>Iconography of Deities and Demons</i> , Leiden
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IGLS</i>	Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie
<i>IM</i>	Iraq Museum
<i>IstMitt</i>	<i>Istanbuler Mitteilungen</i>
<i>JAAS</i>	<i>Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies</i>

- JANER* *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*  
*JANES* *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*  
*JAOS* *Journal of the American Oriental Society*  
*JBL* *Journal of Biblical Literature*  
*JCS* *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*  
*JEA* *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*  
*JEOL* *Journal Ex Oriente Lux*  
*JESHO* *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient*  
*JNES* *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*  
*JNSL* *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*  
*JSHRZ.NF* Jüdische Schriften aus Hellenistisch-Römischer Zeit. Neue Folge  
*JSOTS* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplements  
*JSS* *Journal of Semitic Studies*  
*JSS Suppl.* Journal of Semitic Studies. Supplements  
*KAI* H. Donner – W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften I–III*, Wiesbaden, <sup>4–5</sup>1973–2002  
*KTU* M. Dietrich – O. Loretz – J. Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (ALASPM 8), Münster, 1995  
*KUSATU* *Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt*  
*LAOS* Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien  
*LAPO* Littératures Anciennes du Proche Orient  
*LHBOTS* Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies  
*LIMC* J. Ch. Balty et al. (eds.), *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, Zürich, 1981–1999  
*MAIBL* Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres  
*MARI* Mari Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires 1–8, Paris, 1982–1997  
*MDOG* *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft*  
*MEOL* Mededelingen en Verhandelingen van het Egyptisch-Voora-  
 ziatisch Genootschap “Ex Oriente Lux”  
*MIOS* Mitt(h)eilungen aus den Orientalischen Sammlungen  
*MSL* B. Landsberger et al., *Materialien für das sumerische Lexikon/*  
*Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon* 1–17, Rome, 1937–2004  
*MUSJ* *Mélanges de l'Université St. Joseph de Beyrouth*  
*MVS* Münchener Vorderasiatische Studien  
*N.A.B.U.* *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires*

- NALK* Th. Kwasman, *Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents in the Kuyunjik Collection of the British Museum* (StP SM 14), Rome
- NEA* *Near Eastern Archaeology*
- NEAEHL* *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*
- NESE* *Neue Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik*
- NL* H. W. F. Saggs, *The Nimrud Letters* (CTN 5), London, 1952–2001
- NMES* Near and Middle East Series
- NTOA* *Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus*
- NWL* J. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists. A Study of Men and Administration at the Assyrian Capital in the Eighth Century B.C.* (CTN 1), London, 1972
- OAC* *Oriens Antiqui Collectanea*
- OBO* *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*
- OBO.SA* *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Series Archaeologica*
- OIP* *Oriental Institute Publications*
- OIS* *Oriental Institute Seminars*
- OLA* *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*
- OLP* *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*
- Or NS* *Orientalia Nova Series*
- OrAnt* *Oriens Antiquus*
- OrOcc* *Oriens et Occidens*
- OTS* *Oudtestamentische Studiën*
- PEQ* *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
- PIASH* *Proceedings of the Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities*
- PIHANS* *Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique Néerlandais de Stamboul*
- PJB* *Palästina-Jahrbuch*
- PKG* *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*
- PNA* K. Radner – H. D. Baker (eds.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire I–III*, Helsinki 1998–2002
- PSAS* *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*
- RA* *Revue assyriologique*
- RAC* Th. Klauser et al. (eds.), *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, Iff, Stuttgart, 1950ff
- RAI* *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*
- RB* *Revue Biblique*
- REI* *Revue des Études Islamiques*



<i>RES</i>	Academia Inscriptionum et Litterarum Humaniorum (ed.), <i>Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique</i> I–VIII, Paris, 1900–1968
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
RGTC	Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes
RIMA	Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian Period
RINAP	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
<i>RIA</i>	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie</i> 1 ff, Berlin-Leipzig 1932ff
RM	Die Religionen der Menschheit
<i>RSF</i>	<i>Rivista di Studi Fenici</i>
RSOu	Ras Shamra-Ougarit
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
<i>SAAB</i>	<i>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</i>
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAHL	Studies in Archaeology and History of the Levant
SAOC	Studies of the American Oriental Society
SBA	Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Archäologie
SBL (MS)	Society of Biblical Literature (Monograph Series)
<i>SEL</i>	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici</i>
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
<i>SemClas</i>	<i>Semitica et Classica</i>
<i>SMEA</i>	<i>Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici</i>
SÖAW	Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
SSAW	Sitzungsberichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
SSU	Studia Semitica Upsaliensia
StBoT	Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten
StOr	Studia Orientalia
StP SM	Studia Pohl. Series Maior
StPh	Studia Phoenicia
StSem	Studia Semitica
SUSMA	Studi Udinesi sul Mondo Antico
SVA	Schriften zur Vorderasiatischen Archäologie
<i>TA</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
<i>TAD A</i>	<i>B. Porten – A. Yardeni, Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt I. Letters</i> , Jerusalem, 1986
<i>TAD B</i>	<i>B. Porten – A. Yardeni, Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt II. Contracts</i> , Jerusalem, 1989

<i>TAD C</i>	<i>B. Porten – A. Yardeni, Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt III. Literature, Accounts, Lists, Jerusalem, 1993</i>
<i>TAD D</i>	<i>B. Porten – A. Yardeni, Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt IV. Ostraca and Assorted Inscriptions, Jerusalem, 1999</i>
TAVO	Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
THeth	Texte der Hethiter
<i>ThWAT</i>	G. J. Botterweck et al. (eds.), <i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> 1–9, Stuttgart, 1970–2001
<i>Trans</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
<i>TRE</i>	G. Krause – G. Müller (eds.), <i>Theologische Realencyklopädie</i> 1–36, Berlin – New York 1977–2004
TStO	Texte und Studien zur Orientalistik
<i>TUAT</i>	<i>Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments</i>
<i>TUAT.NF</i>	<i>Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments. Neue Folge</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
UISK	Untersuchungen zur indogermanischen Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft
<i>VO</i>	<i>Vicino Oriente</i>
VOK	Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTS	Vetus Testamentum. Supplements
<i>WO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
<i>WZKM</i>	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
YDCL	Yearbook of Deuterocanonic and Cognate Literature
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie</i>
ZAKMIRA	Zentrum für die Antiken Kulturen des Mittelmeerraumes
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBK.AT	Zürcher Bibelkommentar. Altes Testament
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
<i>ZDMGS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft. Supplement</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
<i>ZOrA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Orient Archäologie</i>



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## PREFACE

Over the past years several monographs concentrating on the Phoenician and Punic cultures, the Luwians, and Ugarit have appeared in the series *Handbook of Oriental Studies*. In contrast, Central Syria has been largely neglected, especially with regard to its Aramaean culture.

This handbook aims to provide a comprehensive view of the current research on the culture of the Aramaeans of Syria. It extends from their first mention in written sources in the 12th century B.C. to the crushing defeat of the last Aramaean insurgency under Ya'ubidi of Hamath in 720 B.C. However, both this time frame and the borders of Syria will be exceeded in this handbook for various reasons, as the Aramaeans influenced or were influenced by the Assyrian, Babylonian, Anatolian, Phoenician, Palestinian, Egyptian, and North Arabian cultures.

Given the detailed and extensive research that has been conducted in all areas of Aramaean culture, such as its history; social, legal, and economic conditions; philology and epigraphy; religion, art, and architecture it would not be possible for a single researcher to have a comprehensive knowledge of all these areas. I have thus invited an international group of specialists to contribute to this volume. I thank them all very much for their efforts and willingness to participate. Overlaps and contradictions in their representation of the different areas of Aramaean culture reflect the current state of research.

When I first presented the idea for this anthology to the editor of the *Handbook of Oriental Studies*, Prof. Wilfred H. van Soldt (Leiden), at the *Rencontre Assyriologique* in Paris in 2009, he immediately recognized the desideratum of such a volume and readily agreed to include it in the series, for which I am very grateful. Jennifer Pavelko and Katelyn Chin handled everything on the part of Brill Publishing. They have carefully and competently supervised the development of this book, and I heartily thank them.

In Tübingen, several of my staff have helped with the creation of this volume over the years: Jessica Baldwin translated several of the chapters into English and Benjamin Glissmann helped with the plates. Alexandra Gath, Christiana Hägele, Judith Klaiber, Susanne Maier, and Barbara

Schatz assisted in procuring the relevant literature and proofreading. Dr. Dagmar Kühn and Dr. Angela Rohrmoser contributed important content. I am very much obliged to all of them for their dedicated work.

Herbert Niehr  
Tübingen, April 2013

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Herbert Niehr

#### I. THE SOURCES

When working on the Aramaeans of Syria and their religion, a distinction must be made between sources referring *to* the Aramaeans of Syria and those originating *from* the Aramaeans of Syria.

The former consist of Old-Babylonian texts that mention nomads, in general, and inscriptions of Assyrian kings, beginning in the 12th century B.C., that explicitly mention Aramaeans. Aramaeans appear primarily in opposition to the sedentary population or as nomadic shepherds who were seen as a threatening to cultivated land and the state. The inscriptions include those of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.) and his successors,<sup>1</sup> King Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) and his successors,<sup>2</sup> Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.), Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.),<sup>3</sup> Sargon II (721–705 B.C.),<sup>4</sup> Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.),<sup>5</sup> Esarhaddon (681–669 B.C.),<sup>6</sup> and Ashurbanipal (669–627 B.C.).<sup>7</sup> Another important source for the Aramaeans of western and southern Syria is the Old Testament.

As for the Aramaic sources, it can be determined that the Aramaeans adopted their script from the Phoenicians sometime around the late 10th and early 9th century B.C. The oldest inscription from the kingdom of Sam'al was written during the time of King Kulamuwa (ca. 840–810 B.C.) in the Phoenician language and script (KAI 24). A Luwian influence is visible in the relief-like letters. Also from the reign of King Kulamuwa is a dedicatory inscription in Aramaic but still using the Phoenician script (KAI 25). Outside of Sam'al the transition from Phoenician to Aramaic

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Grayson 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Grayson 1996 and Yamada 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Tadmor 1994 and Tadmor – Yamada 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Fuchs 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Frahm 1997 and Grayson – Novotny 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Borger 1956 and Leichty 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Borger 1996.



script is visible, in, for example, the oldest known Aramaic inscription on the so-called “little altar” from Tell Halaf (KAI 231; late 10th or early 9th century B.C.),<sup>8</sup> and the votive inscription to the god Melqart from Breğ near Aleppo (KAI 201; second half of the 9th century B.C.).

Further epigraphic changes occur in the inscriptions from Tell Fekheriye (KAI 309). They exhibit several epigraphic innovations compared with the older Aramaic inscriptions. These concern the shape of several letters and the usage of *matres lectionis* as vowels.<sup>9</sup>

From this time onward, the existence of an independent Aramaic script can be assumed. In an 8th-century B.C. Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription from Carchemish the prince regent Yariri boasts of his knowledge of twelve languages and four scripts. The scripts are Hieroglyphic Luwian, Phoenician, Assyrian, and Taymanite, i.e., the Aramaic script of Syria.<sup>10</sup>

Because of the westward expansion of the Assyrian Empire and its associated deportations,<sup>11</sup> the Aramaeans as well as their language and culture were able to spread to Assyria<sup>12</sup> and Babylonia.<sup>13</sup> Here, the coexistence of Aramaic with the Assyrian and Babylonian language as well as the coexistence of the Aramaic script with cuneiform writing is documented.<sup>14</sup> In 8th-century Assyria, scribes copying old texts even spoke Aramaic as their everyday language.<sup>15</sup> Thus, a tablet of the Gilgamesh epic with an unusual way of writing vowels exhibits an Aramaean scribal tradition. It was written in the 7th century B.C. and found in Sultantepe.<sup>16</sup>

There is one known case of an Aramaic inscription written in cuneiform: this is the so-called Uruk Incantation from the 3rd century B.C.<sup>17</sup> Even though none of the textual corpus of Aramaean literature of Syria,

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dankwarth – Müller 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Andersen – Freedman 1988.

<sup>10</sup> The inscription of Yariri in Hawkins 2000: 130–133 and cf. esp. Starke 1997a: 389–392; Hawkins 2000: 133; Rollinger 2006: 77f.

<sup>11</sup> See Lamprichs 1995; Yamada 2000; Bagg 2011.

<sup>12</sup> See Garelli 1982; Tadmor 1982; id. 1991; Millard 1983; id. 2009; Görke 2004; Parpola 2004; Zehnder 2007, and the contribution of M. Nissinen in this volume.

<sup>13</sup> See Brinkman 1968: 267–288; id. 1977; Dietrich 1970; Lipiński 2000a: 409–489; Oelsner 2007a; Kessler 2008; Fales 2011c; Jursa 2012, and the contribution of M. P. Streck in this volume.

<sup>14</sup> Cf., among others, Aggoula 1985a; Oelsner 1986; id. 2006; id. 2007b; Fales 1980; id. 1986; id. 2000; Geller 1997: 44–47; Röllig 2002a; id. 2002b; id. 2005a.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Lieberman 1990: 334.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. George 2003: 369–373 and also Röllig 2005b.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Delsmann 1986–1991; Garbini 2006: 205; Kessler 2008: 468, 471 with fig. 336, 485f.

Assyria, and Babylonia has survived, its importance should not be underestimated.<sup>18</sup>

The Aramaic inscriptions, which are primarily royal inscriptions, first occur in the 10th or 9th century B.C. Their genres include construction, votive, victory, dedicatory, and treaty inscriptions. Additionally, there is a collection of proverbs written on papyri from North Syria or Upper Mesopotamia and an associated didactic narrative. Both were known by the name of the wise Aḥiqar in a 5th-century B.C. copy from Elephantine, based in the Syrian tradition from the 7th or 6th century B.C.<sup>19</sup>

Although proving a mythology of the Aramaeans of Syria is more than difficult its existence is assumed. However, because papyrus was the main writing material in Syria during the 1st millennium B.C. no traces of any written mythological texts survive. There are occasional references to Aramaeans writing mythological texts or showing knowledge of Anatolian or Mesopotamian mythology and passing that knowledge on.

For example, the motif of the fight between the weather god and the snake was known in Tell Ašara and the motif of the weather god's weapon was known in Sam'al.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, several reliefs from Tell Halaf provide insight into no longer extant mythological or epic narratives. This is especially true of the representation of an animal orchestra.<sup>21</sup> The proverbs of the Aḥiqar novel also exhibit mythical elements, for example, the Labbu myth from Mesopotamia. They also refer to plant and animal fables.<sup>22</sup>

Likewise, it is known that the Aramaeans imported the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh to the West by way of the Greeks.<sup>23</sup> The entablature of the Temple of Bel in Palmyra shows signs of knowledge of the Babylonian Enuma Elish epic; it is an adaptation of the *akitu* myth that was recited during the New Year's feast.<sup>24</sup>

Archaeological sources<sup>25</sup> show new developments in art and architecture after the Aramaeans gained dominion over Syria, although it is

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<sup>18</sup> See esp. Oelsner 1986: 245–250 and the considerations in George 2003: 59 and Parpola 2005: III f.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the contribution of P. Merlo in this volume.

<sup>20</sup> See the contributions of D. Bonatz on art and of H. Niehr on religion in this volume.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Orthmann 1971: 398, 408–412.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Niehr 2007: 17 n. 49.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. George 2003: 54–70.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Tubach 1995; Dirven 1997; ead. 1999: 147–156.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. the contributions of D. Bonatz and M. Novák in this volume.

not always easy to determine what is Aramaean. This question is especially pertinent to southern Anatolia and northern Syria, as the differentiation between Luwian and Aramaean architecture and art can be very problematic.<sup>26</sup>

In architecture two types of urban construction are distinguished: newly founded settlements and acquisition or expansion of existing older settlements. Both are referred to in inscriptions and are found on archaeological sites.

References to newly built cities or expansions of existing cities and settlements are made, for example, in the inscriptions of kings Panamuwa I of Sam'al (ca. 790–750 B.C.), who had construction work done in his capital city (KAI 214,10–15), and Zakkur of Hamath, who expanded Hazrak around 800 B.C. (KAI 202 B 3–12).

Cities founded by the Aramaeans are recognizable by their rectangular or circular layout. They also have a citadel located in the city center or near one of the outer walls. Examples of this layout are found in Guzana (Tell Halaf), Hadattu (Arslan Tash), Arpad (Tell Rifa'at), and Sam'al (Zincirli). Older settlements that were taken over by Aramaeans and expanded include Til Barsib, Aleppo, Hazrak, and Damascus.

In terms of architecture, the palaces of the *hilani* type, for example in Guzana (Tell Halaf), Sam'al (Zincirli), Hamath, and Tell Tayinat, are considered a typically Aramaean construction form in North Syria.<sup>27</sup>

In Aramaean art, the working of ivory was very important. There were two major craft centers in Guzana (Tell Halaf) and in Damascus. Further examples of Aramaean art are found in the reliefs of the palace walls in Guzana (Tell Halaf) and Sam'al (Zincirli). The latter reliefs, especially, have been heavily influenced by Luwian examples from Carchemish. Additionally, there are a number of statues of lions, sphinxes, and kings from several different locations.<sup>28</sup>

Particularly important to understanding the Aramaean culture are the explorations of numerous sites and regions of the Aramaean kingdoms of Syria, which began at the end of the 19th century and are still ongoing, in,

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Aro 2003: 281–285.

<sup>27</sup> See the contribution of M. Novák in this volume.

<sup>28</sup> See the contribution of D. Bonatz in this volume.

for example, Tell Halaf,<sup>29</sup> Tell Fekheriye,<sup>30</sup> Til Barsib,<sup>31</sup> Sam'al (Zincirli),<sup>32</sup> Tell Afis,<sup>33</sup> Hamath,<sup>34</sup> and Damascus.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. CHRONOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY

Aramaeans existed before they were called the Aramaean people as such. Fundamental to an understanding of the prehistory and early history of the Aramaeans is the concept of nomadism in the Upper and Middle Euphrates and Middle Syria, mentioned in written sources during the late 3rd and early 2nd millennium B.C. The letters from Mari dating to the 18th century provide particular insight into the conflict between the sedentary and nomadic populations. The nomads appeared under the catch-all term Amorites ("Westerners") and could be further differentiated into tribes such as Yaminites, Sim'alites, or Suteans.<sup>36</sup>

The home range of the Yaminites reached from the Middle Euphrates to Mari in the south, to the Baliḥ region and Harran in the north. They had access to the Mediterranean by way of Aleppo and Qaṭna. The Sim'alites roamed the area around the Khabur River and east and south of Mari up to the region around Suḥu. The Suteans were found in the Middle Euphrates and west of there, along the Jebel Bishri to Damascus. Sporadic contacts to the north are referred to in texts from Alalaḥ and Ugarit. They also participated in a raid on Byblos.

In addition to these three major tribes or tribal confederations, several other smaller tribes existed. 19th-century B.C. Old-Babylonian texts mention the term *aḥlamû*, which describes nomadic tribes from both

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. von Oppenheim 1931; id. 1943; id. 1950; id. 1955; id. 1962; Elsen-Novák – Novák 1994; Orthmann 2001; id. 2002; Baghdo – Martin – Novák – Orthmann (eds.) 2009; iid. (eds.) 2012; Cholidis – Martin 2002; iid. (eds.) 2010; iid. (eds.) 2011; Martin – Novák 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Bonatz – Bartl – Gilibert – Jauss 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936a; iid. 1936b; Bunnens (ed.) 1990; id. 1994; id. 1997b; id. 2009; Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1893; id. 1898; id. 1902; id. 1911; id. 1943; Landsberger 1948; Wartke 2005; Schloen – Fink 2009a; iid. 2009b; iid. 2009c; Casana – Herrmann 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Mazzoni et al. 1992; Mazzoni – Cecchini 1995; Cecchini – Mazzoni (eds.) 1998; Mazzoni 1998a; ead. 2001b; ead. 2002–2003; ead. 2008; ead. 2012; Mazzoni et al. (eds.) 2005; Venturi 1998; id. 2000; id. 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Ingholt 1934; Fugmann 1958; de Maigret 1979; Ploug 1985; Riis 1948; id. 1987; Riis – Buhl 1990.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Watzinger – Wulzinger 1921; Sauvaget 1939; id. 1949; Pitard 1987; Sack 1989; ead. 1997; Burns 2005.

<sup>36</sup> See Kupper 1957.

Mesopotamia and Syria. This term stems from the Semitic word for “boy.” It is found in the Ugaritic *ġlm*, Hebrew *‘aelaem*, Aramaic *‘ulīm*, and Arabic *ġulām* or *ġlm* in South Arabic. The sedentary population used this term in the plural to refer to marauding nomads, who raided and attacked settlements and travelers.<sup>37</sup> The *aḥlamû* were also, however, partially sedentary. They gained their power from controlling the trade and travel routes through the steppe. The *aḥlamû* originated from Suḥu, a country in the Middle Euphrates, but they also roamed parts of Upper Mesopotamia. The portrayal of nomads in texts changes in the 15th or 14th century B.C. Particularly relevant in this context is the kingdom of Mittani. Mittani’s dominance over Upper Mesopotamia was dissolved by King Šuppiluliuma I (ca. 1355/50–1320 B.C.), the founder of the Hittite Empire, in the second half of the 14th century after which it was reduced to the small kingdom of Hanigalbat, which was later conquered by the Assyrians around 1200 B.C. The unrest and disputes between the former kingdom of Mittani and Egypt, the Hittites, and the Assyrian Empire led to a substantial decrease in settlements in the Jazirah region and caused its population to turn to nomadism, a turn that was further encouraged by the destruction of several Mittani cities, including the destruction of the city of Emar in the first quarter of the 12th century.

This settlement break in Upper Mesopotamia should not be equated with a population vacuum. The kingdom of Mittani had previously dominated the Semitic nomads, but this changed after 1200 B.C. as the Assyrians were only able to sustain their newly acquired control over the regions west of the Euphrates from the second half of the 8th century B.C.

Further references to the *aḥlamû* are found in texts from Emar from the late 13th century B.C. In these texts mention is made of three persons called *aḥlamû*.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, *aḥlamû* messengers from Suḥu report on a raid by *aḥlamû* people on the city of Qaṭna. Suḥu was probably the city from which the nomadic raiders of Qaṭna came.<sup>39</sup>

The first explicit mentions of Aramaeans come from the Assyrian heartland. During the 12th century B.C., King Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.) had, by his own account, repeatedly crossed the Euphrates to fight against the Aramaeans without being able to permanently subdue them.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Herles 2007 and esp. Lipiński 2000a: 37f and Younger 2007: 135–137.

<sup>38</sup> Arnaud 1986: 301f no. 322: 5; 307 no. 331: 1; id. 1991: 211–213 no. 9: 39.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Arnaud 1986: 259f no. 263 and also Adamthwaite 1996: 94–97.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. the contribution of H. Sader in this volume

The Aramaeans can be located geographically in the Middle Euphrates; in central Syria, near Jebel Bishri; in Tadmor (Palmyra); and in Babylonia. The Aramaeans must thus be viewed in connection with the above-mentioned other tribes in these regions and their existence, therefore, has to be seen as part of a lengthy ethnogenesis and not simply as immigration.

The expansion of the Aramaeans in Syria is decidedly more differentiated than is often assumed in current research. Basically, there are several external factors that allowed the Aramaeans to take central stage in Syria. Furthermore, regional differences between Upper Mesopotamia and North, West, Middle, and South Syria must be considered.<sup>41</sup>

For the purposes of this volume Syria is considered to extend from the Jazirah region in the east to the Mediterranean in the west and from southern Anatolia in the north to Damascus in the south. Lebanon in the west and Palestine to the west and east of the Jordan River are excluded. This comprises the core area of the kingdoms of the ancient Aramaeans.<sup>42</sup>

### 3. ON THE STATE OF RESEARCH

Aramaic language and culture have not been forgotten. In the West they were first known by way of several Old Testament texts (e.g., the Book of Daniel). In addition, there was the reception of the Aramaic *Aḥiqar*, which conveyed the Aramaean culture of Syria to the West by means of various translations and editions.<sup>43</sup>

The Aramaic language has survived as a spoken language in the form of Western Neo-Aramaic, for example, in Ma'lula in central Syria, and as Eastern Neo-Aramaic, for example, in the region of Tur 'Abdin in south-eastern Turkey.<sup>44</sup>

Analysis of Aramaic sources was greatly enhanced when the French Abbé J.-J. Barthélemy first deciphered the Palmyrene script in 1754 and the Phoenician script in 1858.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. esp. Sader 1987; ead. 1992; ead. 2000; ead. 2010 and her contribution in this volume.

<sup>42</sup> Cf., on the geography, esp. Dussaud 1927; Wirth 1971; Parpola – Porter 2001: 2–4, 8–10; Bagg 2007; id. 2011; Wittke – Olshausen – Szydlak (eds.) 2010: 42f, 46f, 48f, and 50f.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Niehr 2007: 1.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. the individual studies Arnold 1989–1991; id. 2000; Jastrow 1988; id. 1994; id. 2011 and for overviews Arnold 2011; Jastrow 1997; Khan 2011.

<sup>45</sup> See David 1961; Dupont-Sommer 1971; Garbini 2006: 23f; Briquel-Chatonnet 2009.

Research into the Aramaean cultures of ancient Syria began in the early 20th century after the decipherment of cuneiform in the 19th century allowed a new view of them. A. Šanda<sup>46</sup> and M. Streck<sup>47</sup> were the first to present monographic works on the Aramaeans. The continual increase in sources, especially from Aramaean Syria allowed for further works. These include the comprehensive studies of S. Schiffer,<sup>48</sup> E. G. H. Kraeling,<sup>49</sup> and A. Dupont-Sommer.<sup>50</sup> Additional detailed studies were conducted by F. Rosenthal<sup>51</sup> on Aramaic studies, R. O'Callaghan<sup>52</sup> on Aram and Aram-Naharayim, A. Malamat<sup>53</sup> on the Aramaeans of Aram-Naharayim and their state-building, and M. F. Unger<sup>54</sup> on Israel and the Aramaeans of Damascus.

The source material on the Aramaeans of Syria further increased with the publication of numerous Assyrian and Aramaic sources, leading to many important detailed and comprehensive studies. H. S. Sader<sup>55</sup> researched the state-building of the Aramaeans of Syria and E. Lipiński<sup>56</sup> and G. G. G. Reinhold<sup>57</sup> wrote about the relations between Israel and the Aramaean states of Syria. S. Ponchia worked on the states west of the Euphrates<sup>58</sup> and A. Jasink on the Neo-Hittite states.<sup>59</sup> P.-E. Dion<sup>60</sup> and E. Lipiński<sup>61</sup> presented large syntheses on the history, politics, societies, law, and religion of the Aramaeans of Syria.

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<sup>46</sup> Šanda 1902.

<sup>47</sup> Streck 1906.

<sup>48</sup> Schiffer 1911.

<sup>49</sup> Kraeling 1918.

<sup>50</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1949.

<sup>51</sup> Rosenthal 1939.

<sup>52</sup> O'Callaghan 1948.

<sup>53</sup> Malamat 1952.

<sup>54</sup> Unger 1957.

<sup>55</sup> Sader 1987.

<sup>56</sup> Lipiński 1978 and id. 1979.

<sup>57</sup> Reinhold 1989.

<sup>58</sup> Ponchia 1991.

<sup>59</sup> Jasink 1995.

<sup>60</sup> Dion 1997.

<sup>61</sup> Lipiński 2000a.

Since the mid-20th century, editions and studies of Aramaic inscriptions and texts<sup>62</sup> along with works on philology,<sup>63</sup> and detailed studies on archaeology,<sup>64</sup> art and architecture,<sup>65</sup> and religion have been published as well.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. the following editions and translations: *Academia Inscriptionum et Litterarum Humaniorum* (ed.) 1889–1976; Cowley 1923; Koopmans 1962; Donner – Röllig<sup>4-5</sup>1971–2002; Vattioni 1970; id. 1971a; id. 1971b; Grelot 1972; Gibson 1975; Hoftijzer – van der Kooij 1976; Delsmann 1982–1985; Abou-Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982; Lipiński 1975; id. 1994; id. 2010; Rössler 1982–1985; Lemaire – Durand 1984; Bordreuil 1986b: 75–107; Fales 1986; Porten – Yardeni 1986; iid. 1989; iid. 1993; iid. 1999; Otzen 1990; Tropper 1993; Fitzmyer<sup>2</sup>1995; Lemaire 1996; id. 2001b; Avigad 1997: 280–319; Schwiderski (ed.) 2004; id. (ed.) 2008; Niehr 2007; Healey 2009; Porten et al.<sup>2</sup>2011.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Degen 1969; Kaufman 1974; Hug 1993; Gzella – Folmer (eds.) 2008.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Lehmann 2002; Akkermans – Schwarz<sup>4</sup>2006; Huot 2004, and the contribution of M. Novák in this volume.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Orthmann 1971; Genge 1979; Bonatz 2000a; Winter 2010; Gilibert 2011, and the contribution of D. Bonatz in this volume.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Hoftijzer 1968; Gese 1970: 216–229; Greenfield 1987; Kreuzer 1996; Niehr 1998: 148–194; Lipiński 2000a: 599–640; Xella 2007: 69–94; Martínez Borobio 2008.





## CHAPTER TWO

### HISTORY

Hélène Sader

This chapter presents a survey of the history of the Aramaeans of ancient Syria from their origin and state formation until the end of their existence as independent polities; it takes into account the latest written and archaeological evidence. Emphasis will be laid on the formative period of Aramaean history, the understanding of which has drastically changed in the light of recent discoveries.

#### 1. GEOGRAPHICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL SCOPE

The geographical scope of this chapter coincides roughly with the borders of the modern state of the Syrian Arab Republic, infringing in the north on the Amuq Valley and the slopes of the Amanus Mountains, which are situated in Modern Turkey. It is within this geographical space that we can trace the origin and development of the Aramaean states of ancient Syria.<sup>1</sup>

Chronologically, this chapter deals with the Iron Age I and the larger part of the Iron Age II (ca. 1200–622 B.C.), a period that witnessed the rise and decline of the Aramaean polities. After this period, and in spite of the fact that Aramaean culture continued to thrive, these polities ceased to exist. Their political history thus starts after the collapse of the Late Bronze Age city-states and ends with the Assyrian conquest of Syria and their incorporation into the territory and administrative system of the imperial Assyrian state.

It is important to stress in this context the fact that Syria toward the end of the Late Bronze Age had a geopolitical landscape that was totally different from the one provided by the Neo-Assyrian annals, the Iron Age Hittite-Luwian, and the Aramaic royal inscriptions.<sup>2</sup> All the kingdoms that

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the map in the frontispiece.

<sup>2</sup> For the Late Bronze Age kingdoms of Syria, see Klengel 1992.

existed in the 2nd millennium B.C. disappeared and were replaced by new polities, some ruled by Luwian-speaking dynasts and some ruled by Semitic-speaking Aramaean rulers. It is the history of the latter kingdoms that is the focus of this chapter.

However, the history of the Aramaeans of ancient Syria is closely connected with that of the Neo-Hittite or Luwian states. The latter are “rump” states that were created from and on the ruins of the Late Bronze Age Hittite Empire.<sup>3</sup> Newly discovered Luwian inscriptions<sup>4</sup> have led to the conclusion that the vacuum created by the collapse of the Hittite Empire around 1200 B.C. was filled immediately—but only partly—by surviving polities whose rulers were of Hittite royal descent. Not only did these local dynasties continue to rule but they expanded their territories at the expense of the former Late Bronze Age Syrian kingdoms. New epigraphic material reveals that next to the kingdom of Carchemish, which had survived the collapse of the Hittite Empire,<sup>5</sup> another state called Walastin or Palistin was immediately formed and claimed dominion over a large part of central and western Syria during the early Iron Age, in the years immediately following the collapse.<sup>6</sup> This new kingdom, which was ruled by a local dynasty of Hittite descent, was founded on the ruins of the former kingdom of Mukish in the Amuq Plain, with Tell Tayinat as its capital. This is suggested by the inscriptions of one of its rulers, Taitas, which were found in Aleppo and Hamath.<sup>7</sup> This epigraphic evidence raises the possibility that a local dynasty (next to that of Carchemish and Malatya) survived the Hittite Empire’s collapse<sup>8</sup> and continued to rule in the tradition of the former Hittite state over a territory stretching from the Amuq Plain to the Orontes Valley, including Aleppo and Hamath. These Neo-Hittite or Luwian states were the direct neighbors of Aramaic-speaking communities and included probably among their population large groups of the latter. So both the territory and the history of Aramaeans and Luwians are imbricated and often difficult to disentangle for lack of sufficient documentation. This is mainly true for the period of formation of the Aramaean states during which the political landscape of Syria appears to be

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<sup>3</sup> Harrison 2009b: 187.

<sup>4</sup> Hawkins 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Hawkins 1988; see also Klengel 1992: 183f.

<sup>6</sup> Harrison 2009a: fig. 1

<sup>7</sup> Hawkins 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Harrison 2009a: 174.

“fragmented”, or “balkanized.”<sup>9</sup> As a result, any history of the Aramaeans of ancient Syria will have to take into account this close interconnection.

## 2. THE SOURCES FOR A HISTORY OF THE ARAMAEANS OF ANCIENT SYRIA

### 2.1 *The Written Record*

The first problem that the historian of the Aramaeans of ancient Syria faces is the scarcity and disparity of the written record. The main contemporary sources are the annals of the Middle- and Neo-Assyrian kings,<sup>10</sup> the Luwian<sup>11</sup> royal inscriptions, and the inscriptions left by the Aramaeans themselves.<sup>12</sup> The biblical account (mainly 1 Kgs 11: 23–25; 15: 18; 20: 1–34; 22: 1–4; 2 Kgs 6: 8–33; 7: 1–8; 8: 7–15; 12: 18–19; 13: 3–7, 24–25; 15: 37; 16: 5–9), which often deals with the tense relations between the Israelite and Aramaean kingdoms has to be used with great caution. It is mainly relevant for the history of the Aramaean kingdom of Aram-Damascus.<sup>13</sup>

### 2.2 *The Archaeological Record*

In the absence of a comprehensive corpus of written sources covering the entire period of Aramaean history, one has to turn to the archaeological record to try and fill in the gaps left by the texts. This task is not easy for here, too, one is faced with the problematic and lacunal nature of the evidence. Until the end of the 20th century, little was known about the Iron Age I, which is the period that saw the formation of the Aramaean states. Little was also known about the layout and organization of the Aramaean cities and territories in the Iron Age II because of the very limited number of excavated sites with substantial Iron Age remains. Apart from the evidence from early 20th-century excavations (Tell Halaf,<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Harrison 2009b: 187.

<sup>10</sup> Grayson 1991; id. 1996; Tadmor 1994; Leichty 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Hawkins 2000.

<sup>12</sup> KAI 201–227; Abou Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982; Biran – Naveh 1993; iid; 1995; Schwiderski (ed.) 2004; Pardee 2009 a; id. 2009b.

<sup>13</sup> Kraeling 1918; Unger 1957; Pitard 1987; Reinhold 1989; Axskjöld 1998; Hafþórrson 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Von Oppenheim 1931; id. 1943; id. 1950; id. 1955; id. 1962.

Tell Fekheriye,<sup>15</sup> Zincirli,<sup>16</sup> Tell Tayinat,<sup>17</sup> and Hamath),<sup>18</sup> no published information was available. In spite of its importance the evidence from the above-mentioned sites gave only a truncated view of the Aramaean settlement. It first focused exclusively on large urban sites and within these settlements on the upper cities and their Iron Age II monumental architecture. It entirely neglected the lower cities where the domestic and industrial quarters were located as well as the small rural settlements.

With a few exceptions, little attention was also given in these excavations to stratigraphy and to the establishment of reliable pottery sequences.<sup>19</sup> This failure has led to a major difficulty in interpreting the results of surveys that covered large areas of the Syrian territory in the 2nd half of the 20th century. Little can be gathered about the Iron Age occupation from most of them because scholars were unable to identify and to determine clearly the nature and date of the Iron Age pottery. So in spite of the large number of surveys only the results of the most recent ones, such as those at Tell Tayinat<sup>20</sup> and the Euphrates,<sup>21</sup> revealed substantial information about the settlement pattern and distribution during the Iron Age. Real progress has nevertheless been made in the last two decades regarding the Iron Age archaeology of Syria. Next to surveys, new excavations such as those of Tell Afis<sup>22</sup> and Tell Qarqur<sup>23</sup> have yielded refined pottery sequences ranging from the Iron Age I until the end of Iron Age II, allowing a better understanding of the characteristics of the Early Syrian Iron Age. This new evidence has changed our understanding of the situation that prevailed in the period immediately following the collapse and shed new light on the origin and formation of the Iron Age polities of ancient Syria.

In addition to these new excavations, work recently resumed on several major sites that had been excavated at the beginning of the 20th century yielding extremely important new archaeological and epigraphic evidence, allowed for new insights into the history of some Aramaean kingdoms.

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<sup>15</sup> McEwan et al. 1958.

<sup>16</sup> Von Luschan 1893; id. 1898; id. 1902; id. 1911; id. 1943.

<sup>17</sup> Haines 1971.

<sup>18</sup> Fugmann 1958 and Riis 1948.

<sup>19</sup> Jamieson 2000: 261–263 and n. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Harrison 2009a.

<sup>21</sup> Wilkinson 1995.

<sup>22</sup> Mazzoni 1995; ead. 2000a; ead. 2000b; ead. 2000c; ead. 2005; Cecchini – Mazzoni (eds.) 1998; Venturi 1998; id. 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Dornemann 2002 and id. 2003.

These sites are Tell Fekheriye<sup>24</sup> and Tell Halaf<sup>25</sup> on the Khabur, Tell Aḥmar<sup>26</sup> on the Euphrates, Zincirli<sup>27</sup> on the eastern slopes of the Amanus Mountains, Tell Tayinat<sup>28</sup> in the plain of Antioch, and Aleppo<sup>29</sup> in central-northern Syria.

### 2.3 *Origin of the Name “Aramaean”*

Before dealing with the history of the Aramaeans of ancient Syria it is important to define the origin of the appellation “Aramaean.” This designation derives from the geographical name Aram, which appears for the first time in connection with groups called *aḥlamû*<sup>30</sup> in the Middle-Assyrian texts of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.) and Aššur-bēl-kala (1073–1056 B.C.).<sup>31</sup> The inscriptions of these 11th-century B.C. kings mention *aḥlamû* of the land Aram or *aḥlamû*–Aramaean,<sup>32</sup> the land Aram indicating the area between Khabur and the Euphrates<sup>33</sup> as well as the west bank of the Euphrates,<sup>34</sup> since these *aḥlamû*–Aramaean moved freely as far as Jabal Bishri, Palmyra, and Mount Lebanon.<sup>35</sup> It is interesting to note in this context that later Aramaean dynasts never refer to themselves as Aramaeans or to their country as Aram, with the exception of the king of Aram-Damascus since his kingdom was also called Aram. In the 8th century B.C. Aramaic inscriptions of Sefire (KAI 222–224) expressions “All Aram” and “Upper and Lower Aram” were variously interpreted<sup>36</sup> but it can be safely argued that “All Aram” refers to a geographical area<sup>37</sup> that included the territories of the Aramaean and non-Aramaean kingdoms united in the coalition against Mati’el of Arpad, and that roughly covers

<sup>24</sup> Bonatz – Bartl – Gilibert – Jauss 2008: 89–135.

<sup>25</sup> Cholidis – Martin 2002; iid. (eds.) 2010; iid. (eds.) 2011; Baghdo – Martin – Novák – Orthmann (eds.) 2009; iid. (eds.) 2012; Novák 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Bunnens 1995a and Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 167–172.

<sup>27</sup> Schloen – Fink 2009a; iid. 2009b; iid. 2009c.

<sup>28</sup> Harrison 2009a and id. 2009b.

<sup>29</sup> Kohlmeyer 2000; id. 2009; id. 2012; Gonnella – Khayata – Kohlmeyer 2005.

<sup>30</sup> Postgate 1981: 48–50 and Lipiński 2000a: 37f.

<sup>31</sup> Nashef 1982: 34f. For earlier occurrences of the term Aram, see Reinhold 1989: 23–38 and, more recently, Lipiński 2000a: 26–40.

<sup>32</sup> Nashef 1982: 35.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> For the later use and meaning of the term Aram, see the review in Sader 2010: 276f.

<sup>35</sup> Grayson 1991: 23, 37f.

<sup>36</sup> Sader 1987: 279–281.

<sup>37</sup> Pitard 1987: 178–179; Fitzmeyer 1995: 65–68; Grosby 1995; Sader 2000: 70; Kahn 2007.

the boundaries of modern Syria, while “Upper and Lower Aram” may refer to North and South Syria, respectively.<sup>38</sup> So Aram is a geographical term that refers at times to part and at others to all of the Syrian territory in the Iron Age, hence the appellation “Aramaeans” given to the 1st-millennium B.C. inhabitants of Syria.

### 3. THE ARAMAEANS IN THE IRON AGE I (1200–900 B.C.): FROM KIN-BASED GROUPS TO POLITIES<sup>39</sup>

#### 3.1 *The Texts*

The foundations of the Aramaean polities were laid during the three centuries that followed the collapse of the great Hittite Empire (ca. 1200–900 B.C.). The only texts that deal with the Aramaean population of Syria in the Iron Age I are the above-mentioned Middle Assyrian royal annals of Tiglath-Pileser I and Aššur-bēl-kala.

Tiglath-Pileser I says in one of his annals: “I marched against the *aḥlamû*–Aramaeans . . . I plundered from the edge of the land of Suhu to the city of Carchemish of the land Hatti in a single day. I massacred them (and) carried back their booty, possessions, and goods without number. The rest of their troops . . . crossed the Euphrates. I crossed the Euphrates after them. . . . I conquered six of their cities at the foot of Mount Bishri, burnt, razed, (and) destroyed (them). . . .”<sup>40</sup>

In another passage the same king says that he crossed the Euphrates 28 times, twice in one year, in pursuit of the *aḥlamû*–Aramaeans. Again, he claims to have defeated them “from the city of Tadmar of the land Amurru, Anat of the land Suḥu, as far as Rapiqu of Karduniash.”<sup>41</sup> Elsewhere he says: “I brought about their defeat from the foot of Mount Lebanon, the city Tadmar of the land Amurru, Anat of the land Suhu, as far as Rapiqu of Karduniash.”<sup>42</sup>

Aššur-bēl-kala<sup>43</sup> also led several campaigns against various contingents or caravans of Aramaeans (KASKAL šá KUR *a-ri-me*) in northeast Syria.

<sup>38</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 214 identifies “Upper Aram” as the sphere of influence of the kingdom of Bit Agusi and “Lower Aram” with that of Aram-Damascus.

<sup>39</sup> For this formative phase of Aramaean history, see also Sader 2000; ead. 2010; ead. forthcoming.

<sup>40</sup> Grayson 1991: 23.

<sup>41</sup> Grayson 1991: 36–38, 43.

<sup>42</sup> Grayson 1991: 23, 37f.

<sup>43</sup> Grayson 1991: 101–103.

The Akkadian term *aḥlamû*, which is used to refer to the inhabitants of Aram, referred from the 2nd millennium B.C. to tribal groups, leading scholars to infer that the groups referred to as Aramaeans had a tribal social structure. The fact that the Assyrians called the inhabitants of Aram *aḥlamû*, a term “with the general range of ‘nomad’ or ‘barbarian’,”<sup>44</sup> has led to the assumption that the Aramaeans were semi-nomadic agropastoral groups.

### 3.2 *The Archaeological Evidence*

The archaeological evidence seems to match the general picture provided by the 11th-century B.C. Assyrian texts, not only in the valley of the Euphrates but throughout North Syria. This evidence comes from both surveys and large-scale excavations. Surveys were conducted east of the Euphrates, in the Jabbul area, in the Orontes Valley, and in the coastal area.<sup>45</sup> The available survey data indicates an increase in the number of Early Iron Age settlements as compared to the previous Late Bronze Age both east and west of the Euphrates.<sup>46</sup> A large majority of them were new foundations of a small size, indicating “a ‘dispersal’ of the population into small, rural settlements. . . .”<sup>47</sup> The so-called “cities” of the Aramaeans mentioned by Tiglath-Pileser I in the 11th century B.C. and by Assur-dān in the 10th century B.C.<sup>48</sup> are certainly to be understood as part of this early Iron Age settlement process.

The survey results were confirmed by those of large-scale excavations, which have demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of excavated early Iron Age I sites had an economy based predominantly on agriculture and small cattle breeding with strong evidence of production, storage,

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<sup>44</sup> Grayson 1976: 13 n. 70.

<sup>45</sup> For these surveys, see Braidwood 1937; Maxwell Hyslop et al. 1942–1943; Braidwood – Braidwood 1961; van Loon 1967; Courtois 1973; Matthers et al. (eds.) 1981; Akkermans 1984; Braemer 1984; Shaath 1985; Meijer 1986; Geyer – Monchambert 1987; Sapin 1989; Ciafardini 1992; Schwartz et al. 2000: 447–462; Melis 2005; Janeway 2008: 126f; Harrison 2009a: 175f; Tsuneki 2009: 50.

<sup>46</sup> Wilkinson 1995: 152; see also McClellan 1992: 168f; Bartl – al-Maqdissi 2007: 243–251; Fortin 2007: 254–265; Harrison 2009a: 175f.

<sup>47</sup> Morandi Bonacossi 2007a: 86 observed that “the diffusion throughout the countryside around Mishrifeh of dispersed rural settlements dependent on a larger central site located at the geographical centre of the system, following a ‘scattered’ model also found in the Syrian and Iraqi Jazirah—which seems to constitute a developmental pattern shared by northern Mesopotamia and inner Syria in the IA II and III.”

<sup>48</sup> Grayson 1991: 133.



and processing of food represented by silos, pithoi, and bread ovens.<sup>49</sup> The rural and egalitarian character of the sites is clearly indicated by the architecture: each house had its own storage and work areas as indicated, for example, in the well-preserved remains of Tell Afis<sup>50</sup> and Tell Deinit.<sup>51</sup> Most 12th–11th century B.C. sites had no monumental public buildings and contained only dwellings characterized by domestic installations such as *tannurs*, silos, and pithoi, indicating food processing and storage. Tell Afis, for example, displays in levels 7abc–6 (Iron Age IB) “a regular plan with rectilinear streets separating units of houses with inner courtyards furnished with domestic and industrial installations for weaving, storage and probably dyeing.”<sup>52</sup> As suggested for the southern Levant, the fact that Iron Age I sites in Syria were also composed of agglomerations of domestic structures would seem to confirm the complex patriarchal family as the fundamental social unit.<sup>53</sup>

This archaeological evidence may lead to the conclusion that the new communities that appeared after the collapse of the Late Bronze Age settlements in Syria were founded on new principles, and “stressed domestic autonomy and an ideology of categorical equality between domestic groups,” as suggested by B. Routledge<sup>54</sup> for the Jordanian Iron Age. What happened toward the end of the Late Bronze Age is that people from within and from outside the cities “began to gravitate to new communities focused on mutual defense and subsistence security.”<sup>55</sup>

### 3.3 *A Population Continuum*

The Middle Assyrian texts mentioned above confront the student of Aramaean history with two main difficulties. First, they describe the situation prevailing only in a specific area of Syria, stretching from the Khabur to Mount Lebanon. On the other hand, the only population groups they refer to in this area are the *aḥlamû*–Aramaean. Did this group form the entire population of northeastern Syria or were they only its agro-pastoral component? Was “Aramaean” presence restricted to the area mentioned

<sup>49</sup> Mazzoni 2000c: 121–124.

<sup>50</sup> See Chitti 2005 and Venturi 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Shaath 1985. The Iron Age II houses uncovered in Tell Mastuma (Iwasaki et al. [eds.] 2009) seem to be in the tradition of these early Iron Age I dwellings.

<sup>52</sup> Mazzoni 2000c: 123.

<sup>53</sup> Routledge 2004: 128.

<sup>54</sup> Routledge 2004: 113.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

in the Middle-Assyrian annals or were these groups also present elsewhere in Syria? Finally, were these *ahlamû*–Aramaeans newcomers or the descendants of the Late Bronze Age population?

While the term *ahlamû*–Aramaeans may be understood in the specific context of Tiglath-Pileser I's annals as referring to agro-pastoral groups this does not imply that they included only semi-nomadic elements or that they were the only inhabitants or social group of Iron Age I Syria. As G. Bunnens rightly stated, "there were no great shifts of population after the collapse of Late Bronze Age society. Local rural communities together with unstable, possibly but not necessarily nomadic groups such as the Ahlamu... became the primary components of the political and social fabric, and the tribe replaced the former territorial states as the basic unit of collective organization."<sup>56</sup>

In spite of clear regional differences, the recent archaeological evidence clearly supports a population *continuum*, which is attested by the evidence of both the language and the material culture. Regarding the linguistic evidence, it supports continuity between the Late Bronze Age West Semitic-speaking population, of which the *ahlamû*–Aramaeans were part, and the later Aramaeans. The Emar texts show continuity between 2nd-millennium West Semitic and 1st-millennium Aramaic dialects and suggest that the Aramaeans had been part of the local population of Syria since the Late Bronze Age: "Most of the roots occurring in the huge Amorite documentation of upper Mesopotamia and northeastern Syria recur later in Aramaic. Furthermore, several Amorite names... are the forerunners of exclusively Aramaic anthroponyms..."<sup>57</sup>

As for the archaeological evidence, when available it attests the survival of Late Bronze Age architectural traditions, industries, and other aspects of the material culture, more specifically the local ceramic assemblage<sup>58</sup> found at all excavated sites. According to S. Mazzone, "the analysis of the local pottery and elements of architecture, such as the plans of domestic buildings in Ras Ibn Hani, Tell Sukas and Tell Afis, has successfully demonstrated the native character of the local Iron Age II population."<sup>59</sup> This continuity is also indicated by the fact that some early Iron Age sites re-occupied Late Bronze Age settlements and a larger number of them

<sup>56</sup> Bunnens 2000b: 16.

<sup>57</sup> Zadok 1991: 114.

<sup>58</sup> Fugmann 1958: 135, 266; Bounni – Lagarce – Lagarce – Saliby – Badre 1979: 243, 245; Lund 1986: 40–42; Venturi 1998: 128.

<sup>59</sup> Mazzone 2000a: 34.

continued to be settled in the Iron Age II.<sup>60</sup> So it can be safely assumed that the settlers of the Iron Age I sites were part of the local population of Syria and that the groups called *aḥlamû*–Arameans were also part of this population. The theory that was widely spread 30 years ago and according to which the Aramaeans are foreign invaders coming from the Syro-Arabian desert<sup>61</sup> no longer holds in view of the recent archaeological and epigraphic evidence. As B. Sass<sup>62</sup> correctly puts it: “Rather than as invaders, new on the scene, the Aramaeans are rightly understood as a local element in changing social conditions.”

### 3.4 *Northeast Syria between Assyrian Pressure and Neo-Hittite Expansion*

What was the prevailing political situation in northeast Syria in the Iron Age I according to the above evidence? The Middle Assyrian texts do not refer to individual Aramaean polities but only to an undifferentiated group called *aḥlamû*–Arameans who were present in the area extending from the Khabur to Mount Lebanon. With the exception of the kingdom of Carchemish, which was in the hands of a Neo-Hittite dynasty, northeast Syria in the Iron Age I appears to have been occupied by rural settlements controlled by a confederation of large kin-based groups referred to as *aḥlamû*–Arameans. These groups were not yet organized in individual political entities and their settlement was peaceful and resulted from the collapse of the large Late Bronze Age urban settlements. No leading house or leader is mentioned individually by name but these groups appear nevertheless to have been well organized and armed, for they were able to resist the mighty Assyrian army. They also apparently enjoyed great wealth, as suggested by the expression “their goods without number.”<sup>63</sup>

While the *aḥlamû*–Arameans were resisting Assyrian advances east and west of the Euphrates, the settlers of central and northern Syria had to face the growing power of the land of Palistin. This area, from the plain of Antioch in the west to Aleppo and Hamath in the east, was being rapidly transformed into a polity by the rise of a Luwian dynasty. Indeed, Taitas appears to have conquered central and northern Syria as early as the 11th century B.C. According to the archaeological evidence, the situation

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<sup>60</sup> Venturi 2000: 533–536 and table 1.

<sup>61</sup> E.g., Dupont-Sommer 1949 and Malamat 1973.

<sup>62</sup> Sass 2005: 63.

<sup>63</sup> See note 40, above.

in the conquered area was probably quite similar to that prevailing in the northeast before this Neo-Hittite expansion.

Northeast Syria, the heartland of the Aramaeans, was therefore pressured by the Assyrians in the east, and by the Luwian kingdoms of Carchemish and Palistin in the north and west, respectively. This constant threat was instrumental in creating a defense mechanism that led to the regeneration of complex societies.

### 3.5 *The Regeneration of Complex Societies*

It does not seem far-fetched to suggest that in the early stages of the Aramaean state formation kinship or belonging to what B. Routledge calls a “founding house” or “domestic group”<sup>64</sup> was instrumental in creating the necessary cohesion among the population and in formulating new sociopolitical relationships that became the basis of the emerging state. As already argued, the textual and archaeological evidence supports this assumption. This social organization may be inferred also from the name later given to the new polity as “House” of an eponymous ancestor.

Two main factors may have prompted the regeneration of complex societies toward the end of the Iron Age I in northeast Syria. The first is the proximity of already established Neo-Hittite kingdoms. It is important not to underestimate the Aramaean states’ desire to emulate the successful Luwian models, which had survived the great collapse and the territories of which were interwoven with those held by Aramaean groups. T. S. Harrison is right in stating that the diverse cultural and ethnic milieu may have “provided the stimulus that forged the small vibrant nation-states that would come to define Iron Age civilization in this region.”<sup>65</sup> So, “the survival of institutions or ideas from before the collapse,”<sup>66</sup> embodied in the Luwian polities may have played a role in the formation of Aramaean centralized states.

The second factor that may have accelerated the regeneration of complex societies and the creation of centralized states in Aramaean-held territories is trade. G. M. Schwartz notes that “trade with external societies has been identified as a crucial variable in the revival of complex societies”;<sup>67</sup> indeed, it may have played an important role in the

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<sup>64</sup> Routledge 2004: 113.

<sup>65</sup> Harrison 2009b: 187.

<sup>66</sup> Schwartz 2006: 10.

<sup>67</sup> Schwartz 2006: 11.

regeneration of such societies in Iron Age I Syria. There is a clear indication in the archaeological and written record that these Iron Age I communities witnessed a growing economic power represented by the storage of production surpluses, local industry, and trade activity. The Euphrates was one of the most important trade routes in ancient Syria and, as already noted, it was under the control of the Aramaeans, who may have quickly resumed trade and exchange. This trade activity is clearly attested in the rich booty from the Aramaean groups on the middle Euphrates collected by Tiglath-Pileser I in the 11th century B.C. and by Assurnasirpal II at the dawn of the 9th century B.C.: precious metals, ivory, sheep, and dyed textiles.<sup>68</sup> This revival of trade activity is attested as early as the 11th century at several sites by the presence of imported pottery.<sup>69</sup> The settled communities could have intensified their own level of production to participate in this active commerce, as evidenced, for example, by the flourishing textile industry attested in Tell Afis<sup>70</sup> and in the sheep and dyed textiles that are constantly mentioned as part of the booty collected from Aramaean groups.

It was this growing prosperity and increased contact with the wider world that may partly explain the growth of the settlements and the rise of new complex centers in Syria in the Iron Age II. It is highly likely that the need to protect the settled territory and the privileges and wealth acquired by controlling the main trade routes was instrumental in leading Syria toward rapid urbanization, which in turn paved the way to the emergence of centralized states.

So the creation of the Aramaean polities started with large kin-based groups—around which smaller domestic groups may have clustered—establishing control over a territory they had settled and which they secured with strongholds. Once a group had firmly established its control over a territory it was able to expand in order to conquer more land for defensive, strategic, or economic purposes. There is evidence in the Assyrian records that the Aramaeans had to use military force to conquer or maintain control over settlements that were of economic and/or strategic importance for their survival. This was the case in the conquest of Pitru, Mutqinnu,<sup>71</sup> and Gidara<sup>72</sup> on the western bank of the Euphrates as well

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<sup>68</sup> Sader 2000: 69.

<sup>69</sup> Riis 1948: 114; Bonatz 1998; Mazzoni 2000a: 36; Venturi 2000: 522–528.

<sup>70</sup> Cecchini 2000.

<sup>71</sup> Grayson 1996: 19, 51, 64f, 74.

<sup>72</sup> Grayson 1991: 150.

as of many other cities that were previously held by the Assyrians or by Luwian kingdoms. The Neo-Hittite kingdom of Palistin lost large parts of its territory to the Aramaean kingdom of Bit Agusi and to Hamath: the first controlled Aleppo—a key city on the way to Anatolia—and its area and the second Hamath and its area. Under the pressure of the newly established Aramaean polities, this great Luwian kingdom, known in the Neo-Assyrian annals as Pattina-Unqi, shrank to its original core around Tell Tayinat in the plain of Antioch. The Aramaean kingdom of Bit Adini, on the other hand, conquered territories that were in Luwian hands, such as Masuwari,<sup>73</sup> Aramaean Til Barsib, and modern Tell Aḥmar, a key site controlling the crossing of the Euphrates from east to west that was conquered by Aḥuni of Bit Adini, who turned it into his main stronghold.

### 3.6 *Territorial Organization and Consolidation of the State*

Independent polities ruled by Aramaic-speaking dynasts appear for the first time in the late-10th-century B.C. annals of the Neo-Assyrian king Adad-nirari II (911–891 B.C.). Most of them are characterized by a new naming: “house of PN” (Bit Baḥiani, Bit Adini, Bit Asalli, Bit Agusi) and their rulers are called in the Assyrian annals and in some Aramaic inscriptions “sons of PN,” the personal name in both appellations being that of the historical or legendary founder of the state.<sup>74</sup> There were, however, some exceptions to this rule: The kingdom of Hamath was always called by the name of its territory and never “house of PN.” This may be explained by the fact that after having been part of the land of Palistin, Hamath may have been ruled by an offshoot of this Luwian dynasty, since its 9th-century rulers, Parata, Urḫilina, and his son Uratami, bear Luwian names.

The other exception is the kingdom of Aram-Damascus. This kingdom was referred to as Aram or Aram-Damascus in the Aramaic inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible and as *ša imērišu* in the Neo-Assyrian annals. Only rarely do these annals refer to it as *bīt-hazaʿili*.<sup>75</sup> Finally, the successors of Gabbar never call their kingdom Bit Gabbari but refer to it by the name of the territory, “Yādiya,” or by that of its capital “Samʿal.” Only the earliest ruler mentioned in the Assyrian annals, Hayyan, is called “Son of Gabbar.” Here, again, the mixed Aramaean-Luwian character of the ruling dynasty

<sup>73</sup> Hawkins 1983.

<sup>74</sup> Routledge 2004: 124–128 recently discussed this issue.

<sup>75</sup> Summ 4, 7; Summ 9, rev. 3; cf. Tadmor 1994: 138, 186.

may have been the reason behind choosing the name of the territory instead of the traditional tribal designation.

The Aramaean kingdoms that developed in the territory of modern Syria<sup>76</sup> are those of Bit Baḥiani on the upper Khabur, Bit Adini on the east and west bank of the Euphrates, Bit Agusi in central north Syria from Aleppo to the Syro-Turkish borders, Hamath and Lu'aš from the Orontes Valley to the coast, and Aram-Damascus from Palmyra to the Golan Heights, including the Lebanese Beqa'.<sup>77</sup> Aramaean polities, like Laqe and Bit Ḥalupe on the Middle Euphrates and lower Khabur, and Nisibis and Bit Zamanni in the Tur 'Abdin area, were short-lived and do not appear to have initiated large-scale urbanization, since there is no mention of their royal or fortified cities.<sup>78</sup> They were incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system towards the middle of the 9th century B.C.

When the Assyrian annals first mention these Aramaean kingdoms all appear to have undergone large-scale urbanization. The Assyrian texts always associate these urban settlements with the person of the polity ruler by referring to them as his royal (*alānu šarrūti-šu*) or his fortified cities (*alānu dannūti-šu*).<sup>79</sup> Political authority may have preceded urbanization and the building of fortified cities may be explained by the need "to enhance the managerial and coordinating capabilities of the emerging leadership."<sup>80</sup> As S. Mazzoni correctly observed, urbanization was linked to the emergence of "political entities based on territorial control and exploitation," which later achieved "central administration and a palace-oriented organization."<sup>81</sup>

Urban centers with fortifications and monumental buildings are widely attested in the archaeological record of Syria from the 10th century onward in Hamath,<sup>82</sup> Zincirli,<sup>83</sup> Tell Halaf,<sup>84</sup> Tell Fekheriye,<sup>85</sup> Tell

<sup>76</sup> Sader 1987, Dion 1997, and Lipiński 2000a recently discussed the political history of these kingdoms. Cf. also the map in the frontispiece.

<sup>77</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 298 claims that the Beqa' Valley was in the hands of the kingdom of Hamath in spite of the fact that the provinces created by the Assyrians on the territory of Aram-Damascus clearly include cities located in the Beqa' Valley.

<sup>78</sup> For their boundaries and their political role, see Lipiński 2000a: 77–117.

<sup>79</sup> For these cities, see Ikeda 1979.

<sup>80</sup> Cohen 1984: 347.

<sup>81</sup> Mazzoni 1994: 329.

<sup>82</sup> Fugmann 1958.

<sup>83</sup> Von Luschan 1893; id. 1898; id. 1902; id. 1911; id. 1943; see more recently Wartke 2005 and also Schloen – Fink 2009a; iid. 2009b.

<sup>84</sup> Von Oppenheim 1950; id. 1955; id. 1962 and more recently Cholidis – Martin 2002; iid. (eds.) 2010; iid. (eds.) 2011; Baghdo – Martin – Novák – Orthmann (eds.) 2009; iid. (eds.) 2012.

<sup>85</sup> McEwan et al. 1958.

Afis,<sup>86</sup> ‘Ain Dara,<sup>87</sup> Tell Rifa‘at,<sup>88</sup> Tell Mishrife,<sup>89</sup> and Tell Qarqur.<sup>90</sup> New urban foundations such as that of Hazrak-Hatarikka continued all through the 8th century B.C. and they are attested in both the written and the archaeological record.<sup>91</sup> Almost all these urban centers were new foundations and this fact may account for the drastic change in the toponymy of the area.

Urbanization was accompanied by an increase in the number of small rural settlements mentioned simply as “cities” or “towns” (*alāni*), for lack of a specific name for this type of settlement. Shalmaneser III says in the account of his campaign against Bit Agusi, for example, that he “captured the city Arne, his royal city. I razed, destroyed, and burned together with (it) 100 cities in its environs”;<sup>92</sup> in the annals relating to the battle of Qarqar, the same king says that “he conquered the city of Aštamakku together with 89 (other) cities,”<sup>93</sup> which belonged to the kingdom of Hamath; finally, in Tiglath-Pileser III’s campaign against Damascus, the Assyrian king says that he conquered “591 towns” of Damascus.<sup>94</sup> This settlement pattern, consisting of an urban administrative center surrounded by a large number of small rural settlements, is supported by the archaeological evidence.<sup>95</sup>

The territory of the Aramaean polities was divided into administrative districts the number of which varied from one state to another. This may again be inferred from the Assyrian inscriptions, which indicate, for example, that the kingdom of Aram-Damascus, on the eve of its transformation into an Assyrian province, was divided into at least 16 districts<sup>96</sup> while 19 districts of the land of Hamath were conquered by Tiglath-Pileser III and annexed to the Assyrian Empire.<sup>97</sup> These districts may have been organized around major urban centers.

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<sup>86</sup> Cecchini 2005; Affani 2005; for a recently discovered monumental Iron Age I temple, cf. Soldi 2009: 106–116.

<sup>87</sup> Abou Assaf 1990 and Kohlmeyer 2008.

<sup>88</sup> Seton-Williams 1961 and id. 1967.

<sup>89</sup> Morandi Bonacossi 2006 and id. 2007a.

<sup>90</sup> Dornemann 2002 and id. 2003.

<sup>91</sup> Mazzoni 2000a: 48–55.

<sup>92</sup> Grayson 1996: 46.

<sup>93</sup> Grayson 1996: 38.

<sup>94</sup> Ann 23, 16’–17’; cf. Tadmor 1994: 80f.

<sup>95</sup> Morandi Bonacossi 2007a: 86; cf. note 47, above.

<sup>96</sup> Pitard 1987: 187.

<sup>97</sup> Ann 19, 9–10 and 88–89; Ann 26, 5; cf. Tadmor 1994: 62f and Radner 2006–2008a: 58–61 nos. 50, 54.



The borders of these Aramaean territorial states were never clearly defined and they were often the cause of armed conflicts, echoes of which are occasionally found in the written record such as the conflict opposing Bar-Gayah of Kittika to Mati'el of Arpad recorded in the Sefire inscriptions,<sup>98</sup> or the one opposing Sam'al to the kings of the Danuna<sup>99</sup> and to Gurgum<sup>100</sup> in the royal inscriptions of Kulamuwa and Panamuwa II respectively, or, finally, the conflict opposing the kings of Damascus to the kings of Israel recorded in the Bible<sup>101</sup> and in the recently discovered Aramaic inscription of Tell Dan.<sup>102</sup>

In the 9th and 8th centuries B.C., state authority as well as administrative and economic duties were concentrated in one urban center and in the hands of a hereditary monarch. This centralization process is evidenced in the building of new capitals. Some Aramaean capitals were clearly new foundations especially built to be the seat and the symbol of power of the ruling dynasties. The most obvious examples are Hazrak, the capital of the kingdom of Hamath and Lu'aš (KAI 202), and Arpad, which became the new capital of Bit Agusi after the destruction of Arne. Other cities, which had existed before, like Sam'al, Qarqar, and Damascus, became with time the vital centers of their respective kingdoms. This trend toward centralization is clearly seen in the fact that Aramaean rulers of the 8th century B.C. were no longer called "sons" of their eponymous ancestor, of whom they were the hereditary descendants, but by the name of their capital: while in the 9th century B.C. Hayyan is called son of Gabbar, the 8th-century king Panamuwa is called the Sam'alite.<sup>103</sup> The traditional designation of the ruler as "son of PN" seems to have been abandoned in the 8th century B.C., since the Aramaeans had adopted for themselves the title of king: Attarsumki and Mati'el are kings of Arpad,<sup>104</sup> Panamuwa is king of Yādiya,<sup>105</sup> and Bar-Rakkab the king of Sam'al.<sup>106</sup>

Centralization created an organic link between the fate of the capital and that of the kingdom. The royal residence became the life-giving organ

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<sup>98</sup> KAI 222–224.

<sup>99</sup> KAI 24.

<sup>100</sup> KAI 215.

<sup>101</sup> 1 Kgs 15: 20–22; 2 Kgs 6: 12–15.

<sup>102</sup> Athas 2003.

<sup>103</sup> Ann. 3,4; 13,12; 27,4; cf. Tadmor 1994: 68, 87f.

<sup>104</sup> KAI 222.

<sup>105</sup> KAI 214.

<sup>106</sup> KAI 216 and 217.

of the state and its destruction automatically led to the collapse of the entire polity.

#### 4. THE IRON AGE II: ARAMAEAN POLITIES AND THE ASSYRIAN CONQUEST

The incorporation of the newly established Aramaean kingdoms into the Assyrian provincial system started as early as the mid-9th century B.C. with the conquest of Bit Baḥiani and Bit Adini, two Aramaean kingdoms located east of the Euphrates on the route from Assyria to the Mediterranean. It was also in the first half of the 9th century B.C. that the Aramaean territories of Laqe and Bit Ḥalupe were subdued by Assurnasirpal II. They seem to have fallen later into the hands of the Hamathite rulers.<sup>107</sup>

##### 4.1 *Bit Baḥiani*

Regarding Bit Baḥiani, recent archaeological and epigraphic discoveries in Tell Halaf have led the excavators to reconsider the chronology of events and the succession of the rulers of this Aramaean polity.<sup>108</sup>

Bit Baḥiani is mentioned as early as the reign of Adad-nirari II, who received the tribute of Abisalamu, son of Baḥianu,<sup>109</sup> in the year 893 B.C. Two royal cities of Bit Baḥiani—Guzana, modern Tell Halaf; and Sikani, modern Tell Fekheriye, on the upper Khabur near Ras el ‘Ain—are also mentioned, indicating that the kingdom was founded as early as the 10th century B.C.

M. Novák<sup>110</sup> places the foundation of the kingdom at the beginning of the 10th century B.C. and the rule of Hadyanu and his son Kapara, whose inscription was written in cuneiform on the female statue of the *hilani* toward the middle of the 10th century B.C. before the first Assyrian campaign. M. Novák considers Kapara to be the builder of the *hilani* and of its impressive scorpion gate.<sup>111</sup> He justifies a date in the 10th century for his rule by

<sup>107</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 105; Radner 2006–2008a: 55 n. 34.

<sup>108</sup> Novák 2009: 97.

<sup>109</sup> Grayson 1991: 153.

<sup>110</sup> Novák 2009: 97.

<sup>111</sup> Novák 2010: 12. The date proposed by Novák for the rule of Kapara and the building of the *hilani* diverges from the 9th-century date previously established by Moortgat in Oppenheim 1955 and Hrouda in Oppenheim 1962 for the orthostats and small finds, respectively, and the 8th-century date proposed by Akurgal 1979 for the building of the *hilani*. Lipiński 2000a: 123,132 suggests that Kapara is a king of the Baliḥ area who conquered Guzana in the second half of the 9th century B.C.

the absence of Assyrian influence on the iconography of the *hilani* and on the palaeography and wording of the inscription.<sup>112</sup> If this assumption is correct the *hilani* of Tell Halaf would be the oldest building of this type in Syria known to date.

The date M. Novák suggested for Kapara's rule raises various questions and clearly contradicts the generally accepted 9th-century date for that building.<sup>113</sup> First, although both Kapara and his father bear clearly Aramaic names, Kapara does not refer to his kingdom as "house of PN" as do other early Aramaean rulers. Kapara refers to himself as "King of Pale," an otherwise unknown kingdom. Lipiński suggests for Pale a reading of *bá-li<sub>8</sub>-e*, and identifies it with an Aramaean kingdom that developed in the Baliḥ area. According to him, Kapara was the ruler of the Baliḥ kingdom around 830 B.C.<sup>114</sup> and extended his dominion over Guzana during that period.

In M. Novák's sequence, Kapara's rule is followed by that of the Aramaean house of Baḥianu. Only Abisalamu is known by name while another ruler, a contemporary of Assurnasirpal II, is simply referred to as "son of Baḥiani."<sup>115</sup> Bit Baḥiani was conquered by the Assyrians in the first half of the 9th century B.C. and Guzana became the seat of an Assyrian governor before 866 B.C., the eponym year of the earliest-mentioned governor of Guzana, Šamaš-nūrī.

The recently discovered bilingual inscription of Tell Fekheriye<sup>116</sup> has confused scholars because the author of the inscription, Haddayis'ī, gives himself and his father Šamaš-nūrī the title "Governor of Guzana" in the Assyrian text and that of "King of Guzana" in the Aramaic version. The problem that confronted scholars was, first, to reconcile the dual status of these rulers—how could they be kings and Assyrian governors at the same time?—and second, to determine the date of their rule knowing that Guzana became an Assyrian province before 866 B.C. A. R. Millard<sup>117</sup> identified Haddayis'ī's father, Šamaš-nūrī, with the above-mentioned governor of Guzana. M. Novák,<sup>118</sup> following E. Lipiński's suggestion, identifies

<sup>112</sup> Novák 2009: 94.

<sup>113</sup> Sader 1987: 37.

<sup>114</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 123, 132. This date contradicts Novák's dating of Kapara's rule.

<sup>115</sup> Grayson 1991: 216.

<sup>116</sup> Abou Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982.

<sup>117</sup> Abou Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982: 112.

<sup>118</sup> Novák 2009: 95.

Haddayis'ī with Addu-rēmāni, the eponym of the year 841 B.C.<sup>119</sup> Based on this identification he suggests that when Bit Bahiani was incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system the Assyrians appointed members of its Aramaean dynasty to be governors of Guzana. Haddayis'ī and his father would therefore be members of an Aramaean royal house and not Assyrian aristocrats.<sup>120</sup>

M. Novák's interpretation, which attempts to solve the duality of the titles of Haddayis'ī and his father and to reconcile the provincial status of Guzana with the existence of "kings" of Guzana, is based on the unproven assumption that members of local dynasties could be appointed governors of an Assyrian province simply on the occurrence of Aramaic names of some eponyms. This interpretation still needs to be substantiated by more decisive evidence.

The last episode in Guzana's history is a rebellion against the Assyrians, which Adad-nirari III subdued in 808 B.C. This episode may perhaps indicate that Guzana had attempted to secede after the Assyrian conquest by Assurnasirpal II and that the two rulers mentioned in the Tell Fekheriye inscription may have been the authors or initiators of this "coup d'état" against Assyria.

The recent archaeological evidence may have shed light on the occupation sequence in Tell Halaf and on the nature and date of some of its monuments but it has not yet solved the many problems regarding the history of this Aramaean kingdom. It is to be hoped that future results from Tell Halaf and from the recent excavations of Tell Fekheriye, ancient Sikani, will yield better insights into the history of this kingdom.

#### 4.2 *Bit Adini*

The relationship between the Assyrians and the Aramaean polity of Bit Adini seems very clear, on the other hand: the texts betray an unprecedented determination on the part of the Assyrians to destroy and erase from the map all the cities of Aḥuni, son of Adini, the only ruler of Bit Adini attested in the texts. The reason is obvious: the Assyrians needed to control the key passage on the Euphrates, which was held by Bit Adini. According to the Assyrian annals, Aḥuni held the city of Til Barsib, modern

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<sup>119</sup> One wonders why Haddayis'ī, unlike his father, should have had two names and why his Aramaic name should appear in the Assyrian eponym list and not in the Aramaic version of the Tell Fekheriye, inscription where he calls himself "King of Guzana."

<sup>120</sup> Abou Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982: 109f have cautiously made this suggestion.

Tell Aḥmar. Recent evidence<sup>121</sup> has shown that this city, called in Hittite Masuwari, was ruled by a Luwian dynasty. So Aḥuni must have conquered it from the Luwian dynasty, which ruled it.<sup>122</sup> It is this event perhaps that led the Assyrians to end the expansion of Bit Adini.

Aḥuni—and probably also his predecessors—who appears for the first time in the annals of Assurnasirpal II, were also able to protect the large territory they controlled east and west of the Euphrates, with no fewer than nine fortified cities that Shalmaneser III would systematically attack and destroy over four consecutive years (856–853 B.C.). Til Barsib was renamed Kār-Šulmānu-ašarēd, “Shalmaneser’s harbor,” and became the seat of the Assyrian governor.

Recent excavations at sites located in the territory of Bit Adini have not yielded any new evidence for the Aramaean occupation of Aḥuni’s cities. The main city of Aḥuni, Til Barsib/Tell Aḥmar, for example, which was excavated in the early 20th century by the French,<sup>123</sup> was re-investigated recently by the University of Melbourne.<sup>124</sup> According to the excavator, “no remains dating from the pre-Assyrian Iron Age were found in place in the middle and lower city... and no stratified remains surely datable to the Iron Age were found on the tell below the level of the Assyrian palace...”<sup>125</sup> On the other hand, the site of Tell Shuyukh Fawqani, which has been identified with Burmar’ina,<sup>126</sup> one of Aḥuni’s fortified cities, has not yielded remains from the early Iron Age<sup>127</sup> and thus does not provide additional information on the history of the Aramaean kingdom. Until more textual evidence becomes available the history of Bit Adini will remain restricted to the last years of its existence.

The Aramaean polities that developed west of the Euphrates had a longer life span than those located east of the river. They were able to establish centralized kingdoms, build new capitals, and rule over a large territory for about two centuries. Next to the information provided by the Assyrian annals, details of their political history are available from their own local inscriptions.

<sup>121</sup> Hawkins 1983 and id. 1996–1997.

<sup>122</sup> According to Lipiński 2000a: 184, Aḥuni was the son of a Luwian ruler of Til Barsib, Hamiyata, who was a usurper.

<sup>123</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936a and iid. 1936b.

<sup>124</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999 with relevant bibliography in n. 5.

<sup>125</sup> Roobaert – Bunnens 1999: 167.

<sup>126</sup> Bagg 2007: 55 with relevant bibliography.

<sup>127</sup> Bachelot 1999: 143–153.

### 4.3 *Bit Agusi*

This polity developed in central north Syria at the expense of Bit Adini in the east and the kingdom of Palistin in the northwest. Its political history is one of the best documented by both Assyrian and local Aramaic inscriptions.

Its original territory, known as the land of Yaḥanu, is first mentioned in the annals of Assurnasirpal II.<sup>128</sup> Its ruler, Gusi, is considered to be the founder of the polity known later as Bit Agusi. He is also the founder of its ruling dynasty, which can be reconstructed without gaps until the last ruler Mati'el.<sup>129</sup> From this core territory, Bit Agusi expanded; at the peak of its power its territory extended from the Euphrates in the east to the Afrin River in the west, and from the Jabbul Lake area in the south to the Turkish borders in the north.

The history of Bit Agusi is one of constant wars. Since the first Assyrian incursions west of the Euphrates, this polity seems to have held a leading position in the coalitions against Assyria. Moreover, Bit Agusi had a border conflict with Zakkur, King of Hamath and Lu'aš, that was settled by Adad-nirari III and the Turtan Šamši-ilu.<sup>130</sup> It also participated in a coalition of Syrian kingdoms against Zakkur.<sup>131</sup> The last king of Bit Agusi, Mati'el, had a particularly aggressive policy: he fought a war against the King of Kittika<sup>132</sup> and he allied himself with the King of Urartu against Assyria.<sup>133</sup> This alliance led his dynasty and his kingdom to their downfall: in 740 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III marched against the capital, Arpad, destroyed it, and annexed it to the Assyrian Empire.

Little archaeological evidence is available to complement the history of this kingdom. The main capital Arpad-Tell Rifa'at was excavated<sup>134</sup> but only preliminary reports have been published and these do not provide insights into the city's organization and monuments. Aleppo<sup>135</sup> and 'Ain Dara<sup>136</sup> have yielded monumental temples of the 11th century B.C., built

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<sup>128</sup> Grayson 1991: 218.

<sup>129</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 219. Lipiński has adopted the reading *hdrm* proposed by Puech (1992) for the inscription of the Breğ stele instead of *brm* (Zadok 1997b: 805), and identifies the Bar-Hadad of the Breğ stele as king of Bit Agusi and son of Attarsumki I.

<sup>130</sup> Grayson 1996: 203.

<sup>131</sup> KAI 202.

<sup>132</sup> KAI 222–224.

<sup>133</sup> Tadmor 1994.

<sup>134</sup> Seton Williams 1961 and id. 1967.

<sup>135</sup> Kohlmeyer 2000; id. 2009; id. 2012; Gonnella – Khayyata – Kohlmeyer 2005.

<sup>136</sup> Abou-Assaf 1990 and Novák 2012.

probably under the rule of the Luwian dynasty of Palistin but which continued to be in use in the Iron Age II under the rule of Bit Agusi. Apart from the temple nothing is known about the Iron Age city of Aleppo and investigations in the lower city of 'Ain Dara have been limited.<sup>137</sup> No other substantial information relevant to the history of Bit Agusi is available from the excavated sites.

#### 4.4 *Bit Gabbari-Yādiya*

The Aramaean kingdom of Yādiya, which was founded by Gabbar, is mentioned for the first time in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III for the year 858 B.C. It is located on the eastern slope of the Amanus Mountain and was founded as early as the late 10th century B.C. The northern location of this Aramaean kingdom seems to indicate that the settlement area of Semitic-speaking Aramaeans was not confined to northeast Syria but that these groups were also present at the northern edge of Syrian territory. The history of the kingdom of Yādiya is well documented by the Assyrian annals and by local Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions of its rulers<sup>138</sup> and officials.<sup>139</sup> These inscriptions allow the reconstruction of its ruling dynasty from the founder Gabbar to the last ruler Bar-Rakkab, after whose rule Sam'al became an Assyrian province.<sup>140</sup>

Severe crises threatened both the ruling dynasty and the polity during its two-century-long existence. This complex and insecure situation was created on the one hand by the mixed Aramaean and Luwian population, which co-existed with difficulty, and on the other by the fact that the Aramaean kingdom of Yādiya was perceived as an alien body by its threatening Neo-Hittite neighbors. The troubled internal situation and the external threats are clearly reflected in the 9th-century B.C. royal inscription of Kulamuwa (KAI 24) and in the 8th-century B.C. inscriptions of Panamuwa I (KAI 214) and Bar-Rakkab (KAI 216–221). This situation led the rulers of this Aramaean kingdom to seek Assyrian protection very early, enabling them to develop and to prosper in spite of their precarious situation. The wealth of Sam'al is clearly reflected in the archaeological evidence, which has unveiled strongly fortified lower and upper cities and a series of

<sup>137</sup> Zimansky 2002.

<sup>138</sup> KAI 24 and 214–221.

<sup>139</sup> Schloen – Fink 2009a; iid. 2009b; iid. 2009c.

<sup>140</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 247.

beautifully decorated *hilani*.<sup>141</sup> Sam'al must have been incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system before 681 B.C., since a governor of Sam'al appears in the eponym list for that year.<sup>142</sup>

The University of Chicago's new excavations<sup>143</sup> investigating both the upper and the lower cities will certainly enhance our understanding of this kingdom's history by providing new archaeological and textual evidence such as the recently found inscription of Kuttamuwa, an official of the 8th-century B.C. king Panamuwa II.<sup>144</sup> The new archaeological investigation of the site of Zincirli, ancient Sam'al, also promises to yield substantial evidence for the study of Aramaean and Luwian relations and the impact these two cultures had on each other. It will also allow for a better understanding of the process that led to the formation of an Aramaean polity in such a hostile environment.

#### 4.5 *Hamath—Lu'aš*

The Aramaean kingdom of Hamath and Lu'aš in the 9th century B.C. was ruled by a Luwian dynasty that controlled only the land of Hamath. Three of its kings, Parata, Urḫilina, and his son Uratami, are known from both the Assyrian annals of Shalmaneser III<sup>145</sup> and the local Luwian inscriptions that were found scattered on Hamath's territory.<sup>146</sup> In these inscriptions the kings are called "Hamathite."

At the beginning of the 8th century and under hazy circumstances, an Aramaean leader called Zakkur<sup>147</sup> founded a new dynasty, added a northern territory called Lu'aš to the conquered kingdom of Hamath, and built a new capital called Hazrak. It was perhaps this usurpation that led other Aramaean and Luwian kingdoms to form a coalition against him as echoed in the stele he erected to commemorate his victory over them.<sup>148</sup> In 738 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III<sup>149</sup> incorporated 19 districts of his kingdom into the Assyrian Empire and formed the provinces of Şumur and Hattarika.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Von Luschan 1893; id. 1898; id. 1902; id. 1911; id. 1943.

<sup>142</sup> Millard 1994: 102f.

<sup>143</sup> Schloen – Fink 2009a; iid. 2009b; iid. 2009c.

<sup>144</sup> On the inscription, cf. Pardee 2009a; id. 2009b; Masson 2010; Nebe 2010; Lemaire 2012; id. 2013.

<sup>145</sup> Grayson 1996: 23.

<sup>146</sup> Hawkins 2000: 398–423.

<sup>147</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 301 suggests that he was from 'Ana on the Euphrates.

<sup>148</sup> KAI 202.

<sup>149</sup> Ann 19, 9–10 and 88–89, Ann 26, 5; cf. Tadmor 1994: 62f.

<sup>150</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 315 and Radner 2006–2008a: 58 n. 50; 62 n. 60.



The rest of the kingdom was annexed by Sargon II, who conquered the capital Qarqar in 720 B.C.<sup>151</sup>

Old and recent excavations on the site of Hamath,<sup>152</sup> Tell Qarqur,<sup>153</sup> Tell ‘Afis,<sup>154</sup> Tell Mastuma,<sup>155</sup> and Tell Mishrife<sup>156</sup> have yielded new and interesting evidence on the cities and villages of this kingdom. As we have seen, Tell Afis, commonly identified with the newly founded capital Hazrak,<sup>157</sup> and Tell Qarqur, also commonly identified with the old capital Qarqar,<sup>158</sup> have greatly contributed to the understanding of the transition period between the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. It is to be hoped that future excavations at both sites will reveal more insights into their history and the daily life of their inhabitants.

Recent excavations at Tell Mishrifeh, Bronze Age Qatna, have revealed a huge and complex city of the Iron Age II.<sup>159</sup> The archaeological evidence, which includes a palace, industrial zones, and warehouses, suggests that the site was a major city of the territory of Hamath in the Iron Age II. The existence of rural settlements scattered around the tell strengthens the assumption that Mishrifeh was a main regional and political center of the kingdom of Hamath, the capital of one of the “districts” of the kingdom. It represents a very good example of the administrative system in use in the kingdom during the Iron Age.

Tell Mastuma is in turn a very good example of a well-planned Aramaean rural settlement, displaying an arrangement composed of repetitive blocks of domestic buildings, which betrays a social structure based on large family groups and has yielded invaluable information about the town planning, architecture, and economy of a typical Aramaean rural site.

#### 4.6 *Aram-Damascus*<sup>-kur</sup> *Ša-imērīšu*

The kingdom of Damascus is mentioned for the first time in the annals of Shalmaneser III as a major participant in the Aramaean coalition against the Assyrian king at the battle of Qarqar. The biblical account, which ascribes the foundation of this kingdom to Reṣon,<sup>160</sup> an officer of Hadad-Ezer

<sup>151</sup> For a list of the kings of Hamath, see Lipiński 2000a: 318.

<sup>152</sup> Riis 1948 and Fugman 1958.

<sup>153</sup> Dorneman 2000.

<sup>154</sup> Mazzoni 1995 and ead. 2005.

<sup>155</sup> Iwasaki et al. (eds.) 2009.

<sup>156</sup> Morandi Bonacossi 2006 and id. 2007a.

<sup>157</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 305 and n. 374.

<sup>158</sup> For a recent discussion see Lipiński 2000a: 264f.

<sup>159</sup> Morandi Bonacossi 2006 and id. 2007a.

<sup>160</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 368f argues for a reading of Ezron.

of Şobah, is not corroborated by extra-biblical sources. So, little is known about the origin of this kingdom and its later history is mainly known from the Assyrian records and the Bible. The lacunal state of the Tell Dan inscription does not allow for decisive historical conclusions. The fact that Tiglath-Pileser III calls the kingdom *bit haza'ili*<sup>161</sup> may lead to the assumption that the key figure in the history of this Aramaean polity was Hazael,<sup>162</sup> a usurper and the 9th-century founder of the dynasty that ruled until the Assyrian conquest. A long list of rulers<sup>163</sup> can be reconstructed on the basis of the above-mentioned sources but only the rule of the 9th- and 8th-century kings is historically verified. The kingdom was repeatedly attacked by the Assyrians until it was finally annexed by Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 B.C.

The Bible insists on the armed conflicts that opposed the Israelites and the Aramaeans of Damascus and it conceals almost any positive aspects in these relations.<sup>164</sup> Territorial claims and the control of the trade routes that linked the Arabian Peninsula (King's Highway) and the Mediterranean to north Syria appear to be behind the lasting Israelite-Aramaean conflicts.<sup>165</sup>

After the creation of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, a long-lasting coalition seems to have been established between the Aramaeans of Damascus and the southern kingdom of Judah against the northern kingdom of Israel.

It is quite surprising that the territory of the kingdom of Aram-Damascus has been hardly touched by archaeological investigation to date. The only survey, undertaken by F. Braemer,<sup>166</sup> yields no information about the Iron Age settlement and no large-scale excavations have revealed extensive Iron Age remains. As for the capital, Damascus, the ancient settlement is most probably hidden under the modern old town.<sup>167</sup> The discovery of an orthostat representing a sphinx<sup>168</sup> that was found re-used in a Hellenistic wall under the Omayyad mosque may hint at the location of the Iron Age Hadad temple in that same area. There is a pressing need for new archaeological investigation of this kingdom's territory in

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<sup>161</sup> Tadmor 1994: 138, 186.

<sup>162</sup> For Hazael, cf. Niehr 2011.

<sup>163</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 407.

<sup>164</sup> For these relations, see Kraeling 1918; Reinhold 1989; Axskjöld 1998; Hafþórrson 2006.

<sup>165</sup> Pitard 1987: 94f, 109.

<sup>166</sup> Braemer 1984.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Sack 1989: 7–4 and ead. 1997: 386–391.

<sup>168</sup> Abd-el-Kader 1949: 191 and pls. 7 and 8; Trokay 1986; Caubet 1993.

order to gain more insights into its history and into its relations with its neighbors.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Aramaeans of ancient Syria were the descendants of the Late Bronze Age population of Syria in all its diversity and the heirs of its culture. The main lines of their formation process can be traced with a fair degree of probability in light of recent archaeological evidence. The new communities—among which predominated West Semitic-speaking groups—that emerged as a result of the collapse of the Late Bronze Age urban system were composed of people from within and without the cities. These communities were founded according to new principles of domestic autonomy and equality between kin-based groups.<sup>169</sup> The allegiance of the people in this kin-related society, relying mainly on agriculture and cattle breeding, belonged to the group. However, with the regeneration of complex societies this allegiance was transferred to the polity and to the representative of its identity and power: the ruling dynasty who was the descendant of the leader of the founding house.

The Aramaean polities of the Iron Age like those of the Late Bronze Age were never united in one kingdom and never shared a feeling of “national” belonging. Their external relations were dictated by the strategic interests of their kingdoms and not by any other consideration. The Assyrian threat prompted alliances with polities of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds: Luwians, Phoenicians, Israelites, and even Urartaeans. We find no instance of Aramaeans uniting together to fight against non-Aramaeans. The solidarity against a common enemy, mainly Assyria, did not prevent the Aramaean kingdoms from turning against each other for economic reasons and/or territorial claims.

Syria in the Iron Age was a mosaic of kingdoms and different ethnolinguistic groups but it is the language of the Semitic-speaking population that became the marker of this new era. The Assyrians might have inflicted a military and political defeat on the Aramaeans of Syria but the victory of the latter was a long-lasting cultural one: their language became the *lingua franca* of the Ancient Near East for several centuries and survives today.

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<sup>169</sup> Routledge 2004.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SOCIETY, INSTITUTIONS, LAW, AND ECONOMY

Dagmar Kühn

#### I. SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

##### 1.1 *Semi-Nomadic Origins*

We still have little knowledge about the origin of the Aramaean tribes in Syria or their political rise and social organization. We can obtain some information from Old Aramaic inscriptions and from the annals of the Assyrian kings. In addition, archaeological excavations in the last decades at different sites in Syria have contributed to a better understanding of these beginnings. Meanwhile, we know that the Aramaeans had already lived as different semi-nomadic groups in Syria and its peripheral zones.<sup>2</sup> As M.-G. Masetti-Rouault has noted, “[w]hile, during Iron I, Aramaean populations could be identified with the semi-nomadic sector of these social structures, they shared the same cultural, religious identity of the sedentary and urban components, which, during Iron II, as a social class, they eventually came to control and manage, within the states they had thus founded. In any case, they can no longer be considered as ‘primitives’, as far as their mentality, art or religion is concerned, quite the contrary: they appear now to have been the most active and creative part of the society, ready to resist the Assyrian occupation.”<sup>3</sup>

The first textual evidence of Aramaeans in Syria is found in the annals of Tiglath-Pileser I.<sup>4</sup> Tiglath-Pileser clashed with Aramaean groups (*ahlamû aramāyya*) as far as Carchemish and to the borders of Lebanon. He

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<sup>1</sup> I am much obliged to Jessica Baldwin, who kindly corrected my English.

<sup>2</sup> The heartland of these groups might have been the region between the Euphrates and the Khabur. The first hints of possible Aramaeans refer to the 13th century B.C.; Schwartz 1989; Dion 1997: 16f; Sader 2000; Lipiński 2000a: 45–50; Masetti-Rouault 2009: 143; Niehr 2010a: 201–206. Cf. also H. Sader’s contribution in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> Masetti-Rouault 2009: 143.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. H. Sader’s contribution in this volume.

crossed the Euphrates 28 times to defeat them.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Tiglath-Pileser gives no names of chiefs or tribes. Aside from their description as Aramaean *aḥlamû*,<sup>6</sup> their extreme mobility, which made pursuit difficult, and the absence of references to chariots and fortified villages in the Assyrian annals speak to a nomadic or semi-nomadic organization of these early tribes.<sup>7</sup> There are also indications that they may trace back to the Amorite tribes of the Mari letters.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the general term *aḥlamû aramāyya* does not allow for any conclusion as to the ethnicity of these tribes. Therefore, there is an ongoing debate about whether there was a direct connection between these early *aḥlamû* and the later Aramaic-speaking people in Syria.<sup>9</sup> The great variety of Aramaic dialects in the different kingdoms of the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.<sup>10</sup> as well as the lack of archaeological proof of a common Aramaean culture speaks in favor of ethnic diversity among the Aramaeans.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2 Tribal Society and the Formation of Kingdoms

In the course of the complex political changes of the so-called Dark Ages and especially during the decline of the Middle-Assyrian Empire, several Aramaean tribes succeeded in founding or taking over settlements,<sup>12</sup> or

<sup>5</sup> RIMA 2, text A.0.87.1, p. 23, ll. 46–47; A.0.87.2, p. 34, l. [28]; A.0.87.3, pp. 37–38, ll. 29–35; and A.0.87.4, p. 43, ll. 34–36.

<sup>6</sup> Nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes called *aḥlamû* are already mentioned in southern Babylonia in the 18th century B.C. For the etymology of the appellation *aḥlamû*, see Dion 1997: 16 with n. 7 and Lipiński 2000a: 36f. He concludes that “*Aḥlamû* was no proper name of a particular ethnic or linguistic group, but a nomadic designation of the raiding forces that were making forays or razzias for the capture of flocks, slaves, food supplies, etc.”; similar Herles 2007 and Bunnens 2009: 72.

<sup>7</sup> Sader 1987: 271f; Dion 1997: 17; Lipiński 2000a: 491.

<sup>8</sup> Zadok 1991: 105 and Niehr 2010a: 201.

<sup>9</sup> Bunnens 2009: 72: “No specific ethnic affiliation can be recognized for such groups and no specific material culture can thus be expected for them. They must have shared most of the cultural features of the other population groups and should thus be unrecognizable in the archaeological record.”

<sup>10</sup> Tropper 2001: 216: “Das Ausmaß der sprachlichen Differenzen setzt voraus, daß die Aramäer auch in vorliterarischer Zeit und damit auch in der Zeit vor ihrer Sesshaftwerdung keine einheitliche Volksgruppe gebildet haben. Es ist vielmehr mit einer Mehrzahl unabhängig voneinander agierender Stämme mit verwandten, aber nichtsdestoweniger unterschiedlichen Dialekten zu rechnen.” Cf. also H. Gzella’s contribution in this volume.

<sup>11</sup> The awareness of the Aramaeans as “relatively uniform social reality” was kept alive in the neighboring states, especially in Israel; cf. Lipiński 2000a: 497. He makes the cultural and linguistic resemblance among the Aramaean tribes responsible for this phenomenon. The awareness of the Aramaeans as a homogenous group in the Old Testament has had a long influence, especially in older research.

<sup>12</sup> McClellan 1992 for the beginning of the settled existence of the Aramaeans.

conquering villages and towns and establishing kingdoms.<sup>13</sup> In Assyrian and Aramaean sources of the 10th and 9th centuries B.C., we already encounter élites holding both political power and economic control within a certain area. The Assyrians do not generally call them Aramaeans anymore. The annals mention single small states instead. In place of chiefdoms and loose tribal confederations, several of these Aramaean small states established kingdoms, whose power was concentrated in an urban center with a royal administration and representative architecture.<sup>14</sup> Fortified towns with monumental buildings like palaces and temples demonstrated the prestige of the ruling élite. Nevertheless, these rulers kept their tribal structures alive as the heritage of their semi-nomadic past.<sup>15</sup> Fundamental to tribal societies is the high value they place on family lineage and close relationships in all sectors of society (social, political, and economic). As a result, a strong social connection is manifest in all levels of society as well as within a family or clan.<sup>16</sup> Whether these were connections within the ruling élite surrounding the king or within the rest of the population does not make any difference.<sup>17</sup>

Some characteristics of tribal societies can still be observed among the settled Aramaeans, such as the ancestor cult, the purpose of which is to maintain the social status of the dead within the family and clan, and to secure the protection of the family by the ancestors. The many statues and stelae dedicated to ancestor cult prove the importance the Aramaeans placed on their ancestors. Another tribal element is visible in the designation of several Aramaean states as *bītu/byt* (house) in connection with an eponym that marks the state as the territory of a special tribe, such as Bit Gabbari, Bit Baḥiani, Bit Agusi, Bit Adini, and Bit Zamanni. The inhabitants of such a small state were called ‘sons’ (*br*) of this eponym.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Sader 1992; ead. 2000; Niehr 2010a: 204–209.

<sup>14</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 512–514 hints at “degrees of development.” In Babylonia the Aramaean tribes did not found city-states but continued to live as nomads and semi-nomads. In his view, these tribes contributed to the aramaization of Babylonia; cf. also the contribution of M. Streck in this volume.

<sup>15</sup> Bunnens 2009: 73 thinks that the value of the tribal structures was further increased during the decline of the great states at the end of the Late Bronze Age: “The weakening of centralized political structures forced local populations to adopt forms of organization that could no longer be based on a hierarchy of power represented by an administration headed by a king. The only possible alternative was kinship.”

<sup>16</sup> Tribal structures do not necessary depend on the principle of equality. They continue to work in hierarchical societies today. Cf. Bunnens 2009: 72f, 77.

<sup>17</sup> For characteristics of tribal societies, see Szuchman 2009: 62f and Bunnens 2009: 72f.

<sup>18</sup> Dion 1997: 225f.

It is not entirely clear whether the eponym refers to a famous historical ancestor of the tribe or dynasty or to a legendary or mythic figure to whom the tribe or the royal dynasty traced its descent.<sup>19</sup> H. Sader postulates historical founders of a dynasty for at least some of the eponyms.<sup>20</sup> The importance of the genealogical link with the eponyms obviously lost its significance over time. It was even possible to become a member of a *bit* without any tribal or ethnic connections.<sup>21</sup> The expression “*bit* + PN” soon merely defined a geographic affiliation.<sup>22</sup> Not even a dynasty change had an effect on the name of the state. Furthermore, it must be noted that the expression “*bit* + PN” was used primarily by the Assyrians and not by the Aramaeans themselves. In the Aramaic inscriptions of the Aramaean kingdoms, the kings mostly refer to the geographic name of the state.<sup>23</sup> The genealogical link with the ancestor of the tribe was apparently no longer the only important aspect for their identity and representation. Instead, the kings acquired their identity from the new organization as a city-state or kingdom, which was expressed in representative architecture. This new identity, independent of tribal affiliation, guaranteed the loyalty of the indigenous non-Aramaean populace. The genealogical ties and the familiar links nevertheless remained important for inner cohesion because they guaranteed the continuity of the dynasty.

### 1.3 *Ethnic Diversity*

Especially at the fringes of Syria, which, in contrast to central Syria, were always inhabited, we find mixed populations of Aramaeans and indigenous non-Aramaeans after the establishment of the Aramaean kingdoms. The expanding Neo-Assyrian Empire also had a decisive influence on the composition of the population in the conquered regions. The prevailing ethnic composition made up the special cultural coloring of the single state.<sup>24</sup> In religion (through the adoption of indigenous gods and their

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Dion 1997: 228–231 for discussion.

<sup>20</sup> Sader 1987: 273 assumes a historical background for Gusi and Gabbar. She thinks that these two were the founders of dynasties.

<sup>21</sup> Fales 2011a: 213 with n. 4. He therefore rejects the traditional model of a semi-nomadic proto-history of the Aramaeans and prefers a model of “self-appointment.”

<sup>22</sup> Sader 1987: 273 hints at the difference between the expression “*bit* + PN” for the territory and “*mār* + PN” or the Aramaic variant “*br* + PN” for the ruling dynasty in this territory.

<sup>23</sup> Röllig 2000a: 181 n. 19.

<sup>24</sup> Kühne 2009: 54 speaks of interaction spheres, in which material goods and ideas were exchanged. For the region of the lower Khabur his archaeological findings reveal that

cults) as well as in art and in architecture, it becomes evident that the new Aramaean élites co-opted and continued regional and local customs.<sup>25</sup>

In the oldest inscription from Sam'al (KAI 24), we have a good example of ethnic diversity in an Aramaean kingdom. The two terms *mškbm* and *b'rrm* in lines 9–15 probably describe two different ethnic groups in the area of Sam'al. The lines hint at a relationship full of prior conflict. The *mškbm* might have represented the indigenous non-Aramaean population of Sam'al.<sup>26</sup> King Kulamuwa boasts of how he improved the conditions for the *mškbm* under his rule. Because of his sense of responsibility for these people, he provided them with a high social status and they in turn assured him of their loyalty. P. E. Dion takes into consideration the fact that the *mškbm* were partly independent farmers with their own estates and partly farmers who worked for the noble landowners and, after the Assyrian annexation, for the domains of Assyrian officials.<sup>27</sup> The *b'rrm* were probably connected with the new Aramaean population. E. Lipiński classifies them as nomadic and semi-nomadic herdsmen.<sup>28</sup> The peaceful co-existence of both groups obviously granted Sam'al a period of economic prosperity. The curses of Kulamuwa's inscription make clear how much the internal peace depended upon this co-existence. The loss of mutual respect between the two groups may be behind the curse threatening those who destroy the inscription (KAI 24: 14–15).

#### 1.4 *The Family—House of the Father*

The inscriptions of the kings of Sam'al mention several times the “house of the father” (*byt 'b*) as a designation for the royal dynasty.<sup>29</sup> However, the patriarchal structure behind this expression concerns all familial entities at all levels of society. The size of a small family in contrast to the branched clan or even the tribe is difficult to estimate. The treaties of Sefire (KAI 222–224) mention brothers, sisters, children, and grandchildren of the kings. “Brothers” does not necessarily mean full brothers in direct lineage but may define the broader relations of the clan or the tribe

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the 9th century B.C. “stimulated innovative symbiotic renderings or hybrids . . . creating a genuine style and a new tradition which brought about eventually material ‘cohabitation’.”

<sup>25</sup> Cf. the contributions of D. Bonatz and M. Novák in this volume.

<sup>26</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 236 and others consider them as the descendants of the older Luwian population. Lipiński traces the noun *mškb* back to the root *škb* ‘to settle.’

<sup>27</sup> Dion 1997: 286f.

<sup>28</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 236 traces *b'rr* back to the root *b'r* ‘to roam.’ Tropper 1993: 45 translates “die Wilden.”

<sup>29</sup> KAI 24: 5; 214: 9; 215: 2, 3, 7; 216: 7; 217: 3.



or even loyal allies without any family relation at all.<sup>30</sup> We have no definite information on the composition of the Aramaean nuclear family, the professions of its members, the number of children, the size of properties, or even the economic status of families in the Early Iron Age. Therefore, we must rely on comparisons with other patriarchal societies<sup>31</sup> or with later times under Assyrian dominion. Some information can be had from the so-called Harran census lists.<sup>32</sup> The Assyrians drew up these lists to provide them with the number of households in the Harran area for tax purposes. Although these lists mirror the conditions of a later time and of a limited geographic region under Assyrian dominion, we can learn something about the composition of families and their social and economic status. The *pater familias* is listed first, followed by details about his profession and the members of his family household.<sup>33</sup> The nuclear family consisted on average of four persons (parents and two children) plus extended family relatives.<sup>34</sup> The low number of children, an average 1.43 children per couple, can be attributed to high child mortality and early marriage.<sup>35</sup>

The social situation of women within these patriarchal structures appears to have been the classic situation of women in antiquity. They were mainly engaged in housekeeping, rearing children, textile production,<sup>36</sup> and most likely farm work (KAI 309: 21–22; 222: 21, 24).<sup>37</sup> In small farm families, every member of the household was an important laborer. Some young girls worked in service to the king or the nobility.<sup>38</sup>

We also know nothing about the legal position of women in the Aramaean kingdoms of Syria. The census lists of Harran counted them as part of the property of their husbands as per the laws in the ancient Near East. The women of a household were listed as nameless property.<sup>39</sup> We have no information as to whether widows, unmarried, or privileged women could act independently in business or legal matters, as is later evidenced

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<sup>30</sup> See *infra*.

<sup>31</sup> Dion 1997: 289f, 294 hints at the proverbs of Aḥiqar for information on patriarchal and family structures in general.

<sup>32</sup> For a thorough analysis of these lists, see Fales 1973.

<sup>33</sup> Dion 1997: 290–292.

<sup>34</sup> Dion 1997: 291.

<sup>35</sup> Fales 1973: 117 and Dion 1997: 291.

<sup>36</sup> Dion 1997: 296f.

<sup>37</sup> Dion 1997: 295.

<sup>38</sup> Dion 1997: 294f.

<sup>39</sup> Dion 1997: 290.

in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine and elsewhere in the ancient Near East.

Information about upper-class women can be obtained from iconography. Many funerary monuments from northern Syria and Anatolia depict women sitting at the table, having a meal with their husbands.<sup>40</sup> The motif of the dead sitting at a table laid out for a meal, which occurs on funerary monuments in the 1st millennium B.C., goes back to an Anatolian tradition. The women depicted hold a distaff and a spindle as a status symbol. Numerous spindles from different archaeological contexts and strata in Syria hint at the importance this tool held from the Chalcolithic period onward.<sup>41</sup> Most of them played a part in the manufacture of textiles and not in the commemoration of the dead. However, the connection of spindles with the commemoration of the dead already existed in Asia Minor in the Bronze Age. The tradition established itself in Syria during the Iron Age, where a rapid increase in the depictions of spindle whorls in Iron Age graves is observed.<sup>42</sup> These status symbols of upper-class women were probably not real tools but rather an attribute of their femininity. Apart from this, Hittite tradition views the thread of wool as the symbol of life, where goddesses of fate spin the thread of life for a king and other mortals.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the motif of the distaff and spindle in Syrian graves or on funerary monuments might also hint at the hope for a continuance of life in the hereafter.<sup>44</sup>

### 1.5 *Urban Society*

After the capture of cities and villages by Aramaean tribes, a kind of limited urban society developed that was restricted to the city. The city was the residence of the king and his immediate and extended family, who constituted an aristocratic élite. In a unique way, tribal and urban structures joined, resulting in a hierarchic, yet tribally structured society.<sup>45</sup> For Sam'al, a number of 7,500–9,000 inhabitants is estimated, for Arpad 10,000–12,000, and for Guzana/Tell Halaf 10,000–13,000.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Dion 1997: 293f and Bonatz 2000a: 79–85.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. section 3 of D. Bonatz's contribution in this volume.

<sup>42</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 80f.

<sup>43</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 81f.

<sup>44</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 82.

<sup>45</sup> See above for a general explanation of the settling of the semi-nomadic tribes.

<sup>46</sup> A density of 200–250 inhabitants is estimated per hectare of fortified city. For calculations of the density of inhabitants, see Lipiński 2000a: 526f with n. 68.

The appearance of “new” professions formed Aramaean society’s social classes. The extension and reinforcement of the foundations of cities required skilled workers and artisans. We only have references to such skilled workers from the Assyrian period, because they could start a career in the service of the Assyrians. For example, artisans who made the ivory carvings in the palaces at Nimrud left Phoenician and Aramaic signs on some pieces so that we can assume that Aramaean artisans produced the ivories.<sup>47</sup>

Religious worship in the temples required priestly personnel, and royal administration officials and scribes. Presumably, members of the extended royal family occupied many of these high and important social positions.<sup>48</sup>

While the inscriptions of the Aramaean kings provide some detail about social structures within the city-state, we have only scarce information on the social structures in the many villages. Therefore, analogies have been drawn from similar structures in neighboring cultures. It is reckoned that established institutions, common to other societies, such as the council of elders, continued.<sup>49</sup> King Bar-Rakkab of Sam’al mentions the *b’ly kpyry* along with the *b’ly rkb* (KAI 215: 10). For the most part, they are thought to be leaders of the village council and commanders of chariots.<sup>50</sup> As J. Tropper has remarked, “Der Satz könnte besagen, daß Panamuwa die Landwirtschaft und das Militärwesen wieder voll im Griff hatte.”<sup>51</sup> However, the etymology of *kp(y)r* (village, cf. akk. *kapru*) is problematic and unclear.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, E. Lipiński traces *kpyr* back to Sabaic *kfr* (sluice, covered cistern) and assigns both terms to the context of agriculture. He translates the terms as “proprietors of bituminized cisterns and proprietors of a cart.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Millard 2009: 210. Eventually the same holds true for bricklayers at Nimrud who left graffiti on some of the bricks. Millard reads some of them as Aramaic letters. We do not know if these artisans were migrants or mere deportees, but they contributed to the spreading of Aramaic in Assyria, cf. Millard 2009: 211 and *infra* 2.1.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *infra* chapter 2.

<sup>49</sup> Dion 1997: 284.

<sup>50</sup> Sader 1987: 178; Dion 1997: 254.

<sup>51</sup> Tropper 1993: 117.

<sup>52</sup> For the problem see Tropper 1993: 69f and Lipiński 2000a: 510f.

<sup>53</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 510f with n. 152.

## 1.6 *Rural Society*

### 1.6.1 *Farmers, Day Laborers, and Slaves*

The majority of ordinary people did not play an important role in royal inscriptions (but cf. remarks on Kulamuwa in KAI 24). Therefore, we can only presume that, like in other cultures and kingdoms, a large part of the population in the Aramaean kingdoms was engaged in agriculture and raising livestock to guarantee the sustenance of the rest.<sup>54</sup> Apart from the urban residence of the king and some important fortifications, there were only small villages. So an appropriately organized agricultural hinterland of the city for the economic supply of the state can be assumed. The social and economic status of farmers in the independent Aramaean states is unknown. We have no information on the proportion of independent farmers with real estate or of ordinary agricultural workers and day laborers before the Assyrian annexation.<sup>55</sup> It is only after the Assyrian annexation that contracts appear confirming the sale of real estate.<sup>56</sup>

From King Kulamuwa we hear about slaves captured in battles. Kulamuwa quotes the values of one sheep for a young female captive and one garment for a male captive (KAI 24: 8). The great number of slaves after the defeat of the Danunians with the help of the Assyrians may have led to a drop in the usual rates for slaves.<sup>57</sup>

Numerous clay tablets from the 7th century B.C., after the Assyrian annexation, bearing Aramaic contracts for the transfer of slaves testify to a vigorous slave trade.<sup>58</sup> The wording of these tablets is comparable to that found on Neo-Assyrian tablets.<sup>59</sup> Although the Aramaic tablets principally address the situation under Assyrian domination, they are nevertheless a valuable source attesting to the centuries-old existence of the slave trade.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>54</sup> See *infra* chapter 4 on the economy.

<sup>55</sup> See the cautious and vague suggestions of Dion 1997: 287–289.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *infra*.

<sup>57</sup> Tropper 1993: 38.

<sup>58</sup> For the ownership transfer of slaves Fales 1986: 3 lists the inscriptions nos. 2, 4, 5, 14, 17, 20, 24, 25, 27, 30, 31, 34, and 41; Lemaire 2001b: nos. 1, 3, 4, and 6a(?). For the inscription Lemaire no. 1, see also Lipiński 2000a: 575–577 and Lemaire 2010b, 210–216.

<sup>59</sup> They are also comparable with the contracts among the Elephantine papyri and with the contracts of slave ownership transfer among the papyri of Wadi ed-Daliyeh. For the formal aspects of the contracts, see Fales 1986: 1–4; Lemaire 2001b: 58–62; id. 2010b: 215; Dušek 2007. For an overview on Aramaic texts on Neo-Assyrian clay tablets that were found in Syria, see Fales 2000: 104–114; see *infra* 3.

<sup>60</sup> See Niehr forthcoming b for Ugarit and Emar.

E. Lipiński thinks that in peacetime the slave trade in the independent Aramaean kingdoms was of minor concern. During these periods, there was no supply of war captives to become slaves and a stable economic situation limited the number of debt slaves. A slave had to be bought for a high price. Furthermore, slaves were regarded as members of the household and had to be provided for. In contrast, day laborers or seasonal workers were only paid for the limited time of the harvest.<sup>61</sup> Later Aramaean contracts from the Harran region confirm these ancient agreements for temporary employment. Wages were paid in natural goods during the grain harvest. The parties involved arranged the conditions and agreements in the presence of several witnesses and recorded them on tablets.<sup>62</sup>

From the Aramaean ostrakon KAI 233 we learn that slaves had their names tattooed on their hands.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, KAI 227<sup>64</sup> and several inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian period from Tell Halaf<sup>65</sup> confirm the institution of slavery. Apart from the evidence of enslavement of war captives (KAI 24: 8), we have no information about other forms of slavery such as that, for example, caused by impoverishment or indebtedness. We know nothing about the legal status of slaves either, whether the children of slaves were the owner's property or if slaves could be freed. Because of the terminology, it is also impossible to differentiate between free farm laborers, forced workers, or slaves. All servants, ranging from a high official of the king to an ordinary slave, were called *'bd*. Therefore, we can only suspect that day laborers, forced workers, and slaves were employed in agriculture as well as in urban building projects.

### 1.6.2 *Estates and Properties*

The size of the average nuclear family has already been discussed in the context of the Harran census lists from the 7th century B.C., after the Assyrian annexation.<sup>66</sup> The lists also provide evidence about the property of farmers and the size of their estates. Farmers could own cows,

<sup>61</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 551f.

<sup>62</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 552f.

<sup>63</sup> Dion 1997: 288.

<sup>64</sup> Donner *apud* Donner – Röllig <sup>3-5</sup>1971–2002: 277f already had suspected a slave purchase for KAI 227. Lemaire 2001b: 64–68 confirms this view and uses the formal similarity with other Aramaic clay tablets as argument.

<sup>65</sup> Weidner 1940 = 1967: no. 23; Ungnad 1940 = 1967: nos. 103, 109, 111.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *supra* chapter 1.4.

oxen, and donkeys as well as grain fields.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, P.-E. Dion remains cautious about its application to the time before the Assyrian annexation: “Cette faculté de posséder était-elle une nouveauté? Les paysans attachés au sol en avaient-ils joui dès avant l’assyrianisation? On ne saurait dire.”<sup>68</sup>

## 2. INSTITUTIONS

### 2.1 *Kingship*

Most of the Aramaeans who lived in the countryside surrounding the Babylonian cities maintained their semi-nomadic lifestyle. In contrast, the Aramaeans who gained power over a distinct territory in Syria succeeded in establishing a kingship. Aramaean inscriptions as well as Assyrian annals testify that the chiefs<sup>69</sup> of the tribes adopted the title *mlk*.<sup>70</sup> Along with the title, they also took on the customs and traditions of an institutionalized kingship. Unfortunately, we have only a few sources that deal with the ideology of kingship among the Aramaeans. The Assyrian sources mention the name and title of Aramaean kings. The best information on the institution of kingship among the Aramaeans results from the inscriptions of the kings of Sam’al. The following considerations are mainly based on these.

Whereas a chief or sheikh was usually chosen and confirmed by members of his tribe based on his charisma, military strength, or affiliation with an important family, the Aramaean kings emphasized their divine legitimacy. From the inscriptions of the Aramaean kings we learn that the new Aramaean rulers borrowed the idea that kingship was bestowed by the gods, an idea prevalent in Neo-Hittite states and Assyria. From royal inscriptions and stelae, which depict the rulers and the symbols of their gods, it becomes evident that the gods bestowing kingship were not only the dynasty’s tutelary gods, but also the principal deities of the land or

<sup>67</sup> Fales 1973: 124; Dion 1997: 288; Lipiński 2000a: 519–521.

<sup>68</sup> Dion 1997: 288.

<sup>69</sup> In the Assyrian annals the leaders of the semi-nomadic Aramaean tribes in Babylonia are called *nasīku*, which probably means “sheikh.” For the term itself and several proposals of its etymology, see Lipiński 2000a: 494–496 and Dion 1997: 233–235.

<sup>70</sup> King Hazael of Aram-Damascus adopted the title *māri*?, cf. Lipiński 2000a: 388f, 390f, 499.

territory (Hadad, Ba'alšamayin, El, Šamaš). The oldest inscription from the Sam'al king Kulamuwa enumerates the tutelary gods of his ancestors (KAI 24: 15–16) and presents Rakkab'el as the tutelary god of his dynasty.<sup>71</sup> Later, King Panamuwa I enumerates Hadad, El, Rakkab'el, Šamaš, and Rešep, who laid the scepter of kingship in his hands (KAI 214: 2–3). Hadad is the god most often mentioned in the Sam'al inscriptions.<sup>72</sup> King Hazael of Damascus was also appointed to his position by Hadad (KAI 310: 4). The usurper<sup>73</sup> king Zakkur of Hamath and Lu'aš was supposedly appointed as king not by the family god Iluwer but by the principal deity Ba'alšamayin, who stood by the king in his political and military affairs (KAI 202: 3).<sup>74</sup> This reference to the local and national gods of the conquered territories mirrors the growing political self-confidence of the Aramaean kings. The reference to special tutelary gods remained restricted to the family and the dynasty, in the semi-nomadic tradition. The reference to the principal gods of the land or territory covered the whole state and the different ethnicities within their region. It legitimized the king before the entire population and ensured their loyalty.<sup>75</sup> The indigenous population seemed to have exerted considerable influence. The reference to the weather-god and the sun-god as gods of kingship in Sam'al, for example, shows the influence of the indigenous Luwian population,<sup>76</sup> whose loyalty King Kulamuwa felt it was prudent to win.

At the same time, the tutelary god of the family remained important for the dynasty. In Sam'al, Rakkab'el was the god of the dynasty probably from the time of King Hayyan, whose family or clan god he might have been. He was also called the "Lord of the House" (*b'l byt*: KAI 24: 16; 214: 22).<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Every dynasty seems to have had its own tutelary god: Ba'al Šemed (dynasty of Gabbar), Ba'al Hammon (dynasty of Banah), Rakkab'el (from Hayyan to Bar-Rakkab).

<sup>72</sup> He is mentioned 16 times, followed by Rakkab'el (11 times), cf. Tropper 1993: 20–24.

<sup>73</sup> For the origin of Zakkur from 'Anah, see Millard 1990.

<sup>74</sup> For the spread of the veneration of Ba'alšamayin into central Syria, see Niehr 2003: 89–96.

<sup>75</sup> Similar reasons may be assumed concerning the veneration of the gods Rešep and Arq-Rešep. They could have been the gods of parts of the population whose loyalty the king strove to inspire. The god Arq-Rešep, in particular, may have been introduced from tribes who stemmed from North Arabia; cf. Lipiński 2000a: 619 and id. 2009a: 225–227.

<sup>76</sup> For the *mškbm*, who probably represented the indigenous Luwian population, see section 3.1, above.

<sup>77</sup> Tropper 1993: 20f.

In the inscriptions of Bar-Rakkab of Sam'al Rakkab'el appears to have already held the same important position as the god Hadad had.<sup>78</sup>

Great accomplishments constituted an important factor for the king's legitimacy. The first well-known king from Sam'al, Kulamuwa, boasts of achievements that no one had attained before him (KAI 24: 4). The same is true for King Kapara of Guzana. Kapara repeats in all his building inscriptions that he had "done what his father and grandfather had not done." It becomes clear that this phrase was a fixed expression.<sup>79</sup> The formula was probably taken from Late Hittite tradition,<sup>80</sup> but it also shows that the first kings were still aware of a time before the institution of real kingship. They were the first Aramaeans to establish monumental buildings to add to their royal prestige. The formula is absent in later royal inscriptions. Bar-Rakkab of Sam'al only says that he had "made a better palace than his father and ancestors had built before" (KAI 216: 16–20).

Under the rule of Bar-Rakkab of Sam'al, new aspects of royal ideology can be observed. His inscriptions reveal an absolute loyalty to the Assyrian Great King. Neither Hadad nor the other principal gods had enthroned Bar-Rakkab as king, but rather the god of his dynasty, Rakkab'el, and the Assyrian king, his "Lord" (*mr'*, KAI 216: 6), who seems to have occupied the same position as the gods.<sup>81</sup> Bar-Rakkab called himself "servant" (*'bd*, KAI 216: 3) of the Assyrian Great King. King Bar-Rakkab had clearly given up older Luwian traditions as well and adopted ideological aspects of the Assyrian kingship instead. He was the first king of this dynasty who did not bear a Luwian name.

The adoption of Assyrian royal ideology by Aramaean kings becomes especially evident after the loss of Aramaean independence. The representations of some Aramaean kings show that their royal wardrobe was strongly influenced by Assyrian style.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, the various symbols of the gods on the stelae that bore the royal inscriptions must also be taken into consideration.

<sup>79</sup> Sader 1987: 11–14 and Orthmann 2002: 19f.

<sup>80</sup> Orthmann 2002: 20 n. 12 hints at the southern Anatolian stele from Çiftlik of the 9th century B.C., which has similar wording.

<sup>81</sup> Beyond the inscriptions that concern his kingship is the short inscription (KAI 218) on the orthostat, which shows the scribe in front of Bar-Rakkab, who sits on his throne. This inscription calls the god Ba'al of Harran, who is the moon-god Sin, "Lord" of Bar-Rakkab.

<sup>82</sup> The wardrobe was not copied exactly, but the Aramaeans borrowed stylistic elements from the Assyrians.



Loyal Aramaean vassal kings evidently did not lose their power and titles under Assyrian dominion.<sup>83</sup> On the contrary, it appears that the loyal vassal kings succeeded in strengthening their power within their territory. While they had to pay tribute to the Assyrians or support their military campaigns, they enjoyed the protection of the Assyrian king against political opponents or other enemies. This gave the loyal vassal kings absolute power in their kingdoms. Absolute loyalty to the Assyrian Great King therefore sometimes came at the cost of estrangement from the population. A. Fuchs draws attention to the oldest inscription of King Kulamuwa from Sam'al in which he boasts about the welfare of the people in his kingdom (KAI 24: 10–13). This boast corresponds to the old ideological principle of royal power that included responsibility for the population. Contrary to Kulamuwa's ethos, the statements in the inscriptions of the later king Bar-Rakkab only seem to increase his personal glory and wealth.<sup>84</sup> We hear about the extension of his kingdom and about building projects carried out at the expense of an excessively taxed population.<sup>85</sup> As Fuchs notes, "Für ihn [den König] schien es kaum mehr notwendig, noch Zeit und Mühe darauf zu verwenden, mit den eigenen Leuten zum Kompromiss oder gütlichen Ausgleich zu gelangen, konnte man ihnen doch mit der assyrischen Macht im Rücken die eigenen Wünsche ganz einfach diktieren!"<sup>86</sup> The Assyrian power behind the Aramaean king acted, for a long time, as a deterrent to revolts and subversive movements in Sam'al. The dynasty remained in power up to Bar-Rakkab. Kulamuwa from Sam'al reports that he "hired" the King of Ashur (KAI 24: 7–8).<sup>87</sup> Bar-Rakkab boasts that he and his father Panamuwa before him were running at the wheel of their master in the King of Ashur's military campaigns (KAI 215: 13; 216: 8–10). Elsewhere we learn about the rivalry of tributary kings for the favor of the King of Ashur and the lavish gifts involved (KAI 215: 12–15). Bar-Rakkab boasts of the privileged position of his father Panamuwa II (KAI 215: 12), for whom the Assyrian king probably organized mourning

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<sup>83</sup> The example of Haddayis'i shows that the rulers did not lose their self-confidence. The Assyrian inscription of the statue of Tell Fekheriye uses the title of governor (*šakin māti*, lines 8.19) to make his vassal status clear, while in the Aramaic inscription he stills speaks of himself as 'king of Guzana' (*mlk gwzn*, l. 6.13).

<sup>84</sup> Fuchs 2008b: 69f.

<sup>85</sup> Fuchs 2008b: 68–72.

<sup>86</sup> Fuchs 2008b: 68.

<sup>87</sup> Tropper 1993: 37: "Der Satz ist so zu verstehen, daß sich Kilamuwa mittels Geld und Geschenken den militärischen Beistand des Assyrerkönigs sichert. Für einen solchen politisch-militärischen Schachzug gibt es im Alten Orient zahlreiche historische Parallelen."

rites and honors after his death (KAI 215: 16–18). Nevertheless, the ultra-loyal rulers were also at risk of revolts. Bar-Rakkab was the last king of Sam'al and further details on what or who led to the end of the Aramaean kingship in Sam'al remain obscure. Furthermore, Assyrian annals recount numerous revolts and anti-Assyrian rulers of whom the most famous was probably King Hazael of Damascus.<sup>88</sup>

We learn from numerous inscriptions that kingship was hereditary, but that direct succession was not required.<sup>89</sup> Kulamuwa reports that his brother ruled before him (KAI 24: 3–4). Bar-Rakkab speaks about his father's involvement in inheritance disputes, which cost many their lives (KAI 215: 1–8).

The gods of kingship were also guarantors of the fertility and security<sup>90</sup> of the land and of numerous progeny,<sup>91</sup> who secured the continuity of the dynasty. As in other kingdoms the state cult of Sam'al, for which the king was responsible (KAI 214: 12), was of great significance, and was one of the king's main duties.<sup>92</sup> Excavations of the citadel of Sam'al have yet to yield temples, but Panamuwa I boasts of building temples for the gods (KAI 214: 20).<sup>93</sup>

Besides reports that the gods handed the scepter of kingship over to the king and that the appointed king took possession of the throne,<sup>94</sup> we know nothing about the rites of enthronement or other cults of kingship. Only the royal cult of the dead kings gives us information on the status of a dead king who had a special relationship with the gods. In Sam'al as well as in Guzana (Tell Halaf) we have evidence of the special relationship the dead kings enjoyed with the gods. In Sam'al, the practice of customary sacrifices to Hadad and King Panamuwa I is known from an inscription (KAI 214: 17–18, 21–22). In Guzana the customary sacrifice is proven by excavation of the statues of a god (?) and probably of a royal couple in a Kultraum.<sup>95</sup> Both hint at a posthumous divinization of the

<sup>88</sup> For the Assyrian sources, see Dion 1997: 264 n. 101.

<sup>89</sup> Dion 1997: 243f.

<sup>90</sup> The gods stood by the side of the kings or marched in front of them in military conflicts. Dion 1997: 248.

<sup>91</sup> KAI 214: 20.

<sup>92</sup> We do not know whether the king could function as a priest and personally perform the rites. Panamuwa I's statement that the gods used to take the sacrifice from his hand, does not rule out the possibility that a priest performed the rite on behalf of the king.

<sup>93</sup> But cf. section 3.3 in H. Niehr's contribution on religion in this volume.

<sup>94</sup> This is expressed by the phrase: "I sat on my father's throne" (KAI 24: 9).

<sup>95</sup> Niehr 1994b; id. 2001; id. 2006; id. 2010a: 217–223, 279–284; Orthmann 2002: 53–55; id. 2009.

king and possibly the queen. It is striking that according to the Hadad inscription sacrifices were made to the king together with the principal god Hadad rather than the dynastic god. The simultaneous sacrifice to the king and the principal god Hadad goes beyond the scope of family or dynasty, becoming a “state affair.” The cult of gods and dead kings continued in old Hittite tradition. Many parallels have been found in Anatolia and Syria (Yazılıkaya, Ebla, Tell Halaf, and others).<sup>96</sup>

In addition to the usual sacrifice to gods and dead kings, the representation of dead kings in public and prominent places must be mentioned. Corroboration for this custom is the colossal statue of a dead king from Sam'al, found at the exterior wall of building J.<sup>97</sup> As D. Bonatz remarks, “Unmissverständlich sicherte der besondere Standort der Statuen der darin verkörperten Persönlichkeit eine allgegenwärtige und dauerhafte Präsenz im anthropogenen Raum.”<sup>98</sup> The statue's monumentality as well as its lion base embodied the divinity of the dead ruler.<sup>99</sup> The statue is similar to several other monuments in northern Syria, which can be classified as Neo-Hittite art.<sup>100</sup> Obviously, the first kings of Sam'al had borrowed aspects of the royal ideology of the Neo-Hittite successor states. Kingship had an eternal, transcendent component expressed by these monumental statues. The ruling kings were responsible for the cult of the dead kings (see KAI 214). An orthostat at Sam'al possibly represents the dead king followed by his heir.<sup>101</sup>

The tasks of the kings included not only attention to internal and external security but also the founding of new villages, the control of the royal administration, and the encouragement of economic growth.

## 2.2 *Royal Administration and Its Dignitaries*

In the inscriptions of the Aramaean kings, “brothers” (*'ḥ*)<sup>102</sup> of the kings are often mentioned. King Kulamuwa of Sam'al reports that his brother sat on the throne before him (KAI 24: 3–4). Because Kulamuwa gives the name of his mother, too, he was probably referring to a half-brother who

<sup>96</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 151–158.

<sup>97</sup> The statue is 2.50 m tall, including its 3.25 m base. For a description and discussion of the statue, see Bonatz 2000a: 25f.

<sup>98</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 154.

<sup>99</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 105f.

<sup>100</sup> Bonatz 2000a and his contribution in this volume.

<sup>101</sup> Dion 1997: 242 n. 4 and Wartke 2005: 71 fig. 67.

<sup>102</sup> For the irregular forms of *'ḥ* in Sam'al, see Tropper 1993: 85.

had a different mother. Panamuwa I mentions brothers and friends (KAI 214: 13, 24–34). Bar-Rakkab mentions 70 brothers of his father Panamuwa II (KAI 215: 3). The inscription on the third stele from Sefire mentions brothers and other dignitaries as well (KAI 224: 4, 9, 13, 21). Obviously, the title “brother” was used in a broader sense to refer to the allies of the king.<sup>103</sup> It is not clear whether these allies were members of the king’s extended clan or tribe or mere political friends. P.-E. Dion assumes that the title refers only to members of the king’s family or clan.<sup>104</sup> He compares the constellation of the king surrounded by brothers with the Hittite tradition of nobles surrounding the king. He cites the example of Telipinu, who, like Panamuwa, tried to save the lives of the heir’s brothers and sisters and to prevent the new king from attempting to murder his siblings to secure his claim to the throne.<sup>105</sup> This makes it clear that the brothers and dignitaries were not only allies of the king but also permanent threats to the royal power. The death of a king could cause a political crisis. The legitimate heir of the throne had first to defend his claim to the throne against competitors from the circle of nobles.<sup>106</sup>

Besides brothers, especially in the inscription of Panamuwa I, friends (*mwddy*) and sisters are mentioned (KAI 214: 24–28). We do not know the exact relation of these friends to the brothers and sisters. J. C. L. Gibson sees a familial relationship.<sup>107</sup> In the treaties of Sefire, friends are mentioned immediately after the nobles (KAI 224: 12). Therefore, they might have belonged to the circle of advisors to the king. Nevertheless, it is hard to distinguish between the function of the nobles and that of the brothers and friends in the treaties of Sefire. The nobles (*rabīn*)<sup>108</sup> are characterized as people who enter the palace, meaning that they enjoyed a special relationship to the king. In the inscription of Panamuwa I, friends are mentioned along with brothers, and in the inscription on the third stele of Sefire, friends are mentioned along with nobles. A logical assumption may be that the friends and nobles are the same dignitaries, albeit under different names. While the designation “friend” places the emphasis on traditional tribal structures, the designation, *rabīn* (“nobles”), already shows Assyrian influence and adaptation to Assyrian terminology.

<sup>103</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 493.

<sup>104</sup> Dion 1997: 273.

<sup>105</sup> Dion 1997: 274.

<sup>106</sup> KAI 214:15.20–21.

<sup>107</sup> Gibson 1975: 49, 69.

<sup>108</sup> Aramaic *rabīn* corresponds to Akkadian *rabūti*.

The short inscription KAI 203 from Hamath verifies the *skn byt mlkh*.<sup>109</sup> The title *skn* is well-known already in the Late Bronze Age. From Ugarit, we know a *skn* of the palace, a *skn* of the land, and a *skn* of the city.<sup>110</sup> The title is also found in the Phoenician inscription on the sarcophagus of King Aḥirom (KAI 1) and in the Old Testament (Isa 22: 15: *sōkēn*).<sup>111</sup> The different references hint at a highly placed official, who was perhaps in charge of palace administration.<sup>112</sup>

The general title *ʿbd mlk* (servant of the king), likely also referred to high dignitaries. This title honored the holder as a high dignitary, but it was not connected with specific functions or a special office. All references to the title<sup>113</sup> show subordination to an important person. As E. Lipiński notes, “This title *ʿbd* does not specify the function of the office holder, it only expresses his dependence from the ‘lord’, the *māri*’.”<sup>114</sup> The holder of the title might bear a second functionary title. A good example can be seen in a letter written by the governor of Harran to Sargon II.<sup>115</sup> In the Akkadian letter the Aramaean priest, Siʿgabbar from Neirab is called “servant of the king,” but in the inscription on his stele, Siʿgabbar calls himself *kmr* (KAI 226: 1).

The use of the title *ʿbd* in the inscriptions of King Bar-Rakkab and probably in the inscription of the recently found stele of Kuttamuwa<sup>116</sup> sheds new light on the meaning of the title. King Bar-Rakkab calls himself *ʿbd tgltplysr*, “servant of Tiglath-Pileser” (KAI 216 and certainly also KAI 217), whereas Kuttamuwa calls himself *ʿbd pnmw*, “servant of Panmuwa.” The holder of this title therefore could have been a vassal or local dynast.<sup>117</sup> This is the case for Bar-Rakkab, King of Samʿal, vassal of Tiglath-Pileser III. If Kuttamuwa was in fact a local dynast rather than a royal official and belonged to the inner circle of King Panamuwa II this would explain

<sup>109</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 505 with n. 100 further mentions a stone weight with an inscription that contains a *skn*.

<sup>110</sup> See the references in del Olmo Lete – Sanmartín <sup>2</sup>2004: 757–759.

<sup>111</sup> For the evidence in the Amarna Letters, cf. Hoftijzer – Jongeling 1995: 786.

<sup>112</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 505: “the chief minister in charge of the royal administration and not only the steward of the royal residence or the administrator of the Crown properties.”

<sup>113</sup> Besides some stelae there are several seal inscriptions; cf. Dion 1997: 275f and Lipiński 2000a: 500.

<sup>114</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 500.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Parpola 1985.

<sup>116</sup> Struble – Herrmann 2009; Schloen – Fink 2009c; Pardee 2009a; id. 2009b.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Masson 2010: 51. Masson sees, with reference to Jasink 1998, a parallel to the Neo-Hittite titles *tarwani* and *tapariyali* mentioned in Hieroglyphic-Luwian, which designate local dynasts depending on a central power.

why Kuttamuwa claimed a special relationship to the god Hadad after his death and expected joint offerings for Hadad and his *nbš*<sup>118</sup> like the kings, especially King Panamuwa I (KAI 214), who also expected offerings to his *nbš* together with offerings to Hadad.<sup>119</sup>

### 2.3 Scribes

The most famous Aramaean scribe in Syria is depicted on the stele of Bar-Rakkab from Sam'al (with inscription KAI 218; pl. III), easily identified by his writing implement, the symbol of his profession and his social status.<sup>120</sup> During the Iron Age, there were still few trained scribes. These enjoyed a good reputation and such privileges as permission to bear the title "scribe" or to seal documents with a seal of their own. Already in Bronze-Age Syria, many inscriptions bore the name and title of the scribe.<sup>121</sup> As Bonatz remarks, "All dies ist umso bemerkenswerter, als neben 'Herrscher' und 'Priester', der Titel 'Schreiber' der einzige ist, der im sepulkralen Kontext ausdrücklich erwähnt wird."<sup>122</sup>

After the Assyrians annexed Syria, many scribes worked for them both in the Assyrian heartland and in Syria.<sup>123</sup> Some Assyrian palace reliefs<sup>124</sup> depict Aramaean scribes and different texts mention them.<sup>125</sup> In a relatively short time, Aramaic became a second language, especially in international correspondence and administration documents. Many Assyrian clay tablets of the 7th century B.C. have an additional Aramaic comment or were completely written in Aramaic.<sup>126</sup>

The statue of a seated person, whom the engraved inscription identifies as the scribe Kammaki, son of Ilu-lē'i, came from Tell Halaf.<sup>127</sup> The statue probably dates from the 8th century B.C. when Guzana was already under Assyrian domination. It proves that the tradition of an ancestors' cult continued into the Assyrian period. W. Röllig assumes that Kammaki

<sup>118</sup> The term *nbš* is variously defined as "soul" or "spirit of the dead" or "vitality of the dead"; see Kühn 2005: 124f, 134f.

<sup>119</sup> Niehr 1994a; id. 2001; id. 2006: 116–119.

<sup>120</sup> For the bibliography, cf. Tropper 1993: 145.

<sup>121</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 96.

<sup>122</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 96.

<sup>123</sup> Garelli 1982: 439–441.

<sup>124</sup> Görke 2004: 326.

<sup>125</sup> Dion 1997: 328 refers to the so-called wine lists from Nimrud, which list scribes.

<sup>126</sup> Most of the Aramaic tablets were found in Syria. Some finds were made in Ninive and Ashur. For a distribution of the Aramaic tablets and docketts, see Fales 2000.

<sup>127</sup> Röllig 2003.

belonged to the local élite who had not been eliminated by the Assyrians and that he enjoyed an appropriate worship after his death.<sup>128</sup>

#### 2.4 *Priests*

The only two inscriptions that refer to Aramaean priests in Syria are inscribed on commemorative stelae of two priests of the moon-god Šahr from Neirab (KAI 225; 226).<sup>129</sup> The priests were referred to by the title *kmr* as in later Aramaic, where this title is often found. The inscription and iconography of the stelae exemplify the high social position of the priests. One of the priests, Ši'gabbar, has already been mentioned in the letter of the governor of Harran to King Sargon II. In this letter, he is called <sup>16</sup>SANGA and “servant of the king.” As Lipiński notes, “The *sangû* was a priest of high rank or the chief religious administrator of a temple, by no means an ecstatic and his qualification as ‘servant of the king’ suggests that he was considered as a high dignitary.”<sup>130</sup>

#### 2.5 *Seers (ḥzyn) and Messengers (‘ddn)*

These two titles are documented in the inscription of King Zakkur (KAI 202). It is through seers (*ḥzyn*) and messengers (*‘ddn*), that Zakkur receives the advice of the god Ba'alšamayin. The difference between these two officials is unclear. E. Lipiński thinks that the seer is the man who receives the message and that the messenger conveys it to the king and probably interprets its meaning.<sup>131</sup> It is also not clear if the king had ordered the questioning of Ba'alšamayin. Also unclear is the exact relationship of the two functionaries to the king and to the temple of Ba'alšamayin.

The title *ml'k* is the general title for a messenger. In the treaties of Sefire (KAI 224: 8), officials of this title convey messages from the king to his loyal followers.

<sup>128</sup> Röllig 2003: 428.

<sup>129</sup> Niehr 2010a: 255–258 and id. 2010b.

<sup>130</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 507. He furthermore hints at the prophet Bala'am, who combines both qualities: “He is described in the text (sc. in the inscription of Tell Deir 'Alla, combination I:1) as ‘the man seeing the gods,’ *’š ḥzh 'lhn*, while Num 22: 5 calls him *p'tōrāh*, ‘interpreter’ of visions and dreams.”

<sup>131</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 509.

## 2.6 Further Court Officials

The inscriptions mention several other titles of officials of the royal administration whose functions are not clear. It is possible to trace several titles to their Akkadian synonyms attested in Assyrian administrative structures. There is a debate about whether the borrowing of these titles was accompanied by the borrowing of the function of the Assyrian officials. P.-E. Dion remarks that, “La nature et la distribution de ces attestations suggèrent que les Araméens adoptèrent l’expression akkadienne, et il n’est pas impossible qu’ils aient reçu des Assyriens l’institution elle-même.”<sup>132</sup>

One of these titles is *sārīs* (*srs*). P.-E. Dion thinks that the *srs* had a similar rank to servants of the king. The term is also set down as *ša rēši* in Akkadian literature. Because the Aramaean *srs* is only attested in the (probably Assyrian-influenced) Sefire treaties, E. Lipiński doubts that he originally belonged to the royal officials of the Aramaean king.<sup>133</sup> It is further debated whether these officials were eunuchs who worked in the *harem* of the palace.<sup>134</sup>

The two functionary titles *ngr/d* and *pqd* are displayed side by side in the inscription of the Sefire stele III (KAI 224: 10). Because of the almost identical forms of the letters *resch* and *dalet* in Aramaic it is possible to read the first title as either *ngr* or *ngd*. Both make sense. P.-E. Dion votes for a reading of *ngr*.<sup>135</sup> The Assyrian title *nāgīru* (NIMGIR), marking a high official in the Assyrian-Babylonian context, is attested for a leader of Aramaean bandits in a cuneiform text of the 8th century B.C. from Suḫu.<sup>136</sup> E. Lipiński rejects the reading *ngr* and prefers the reading *ngd*.<sup>137</sup> In his view, this royal official functioned as envoy.<sup>138</sup> The origin of the title

<sup>132</sup> Dion 1997: 277 n. 26, especially on the function of the *srs*.

<sup>133</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 506.

<sup>134</sup> Dion 1997: 277, with detailed bibliography; Lipiński 2000a: 506 rejects the interpretation as eunuch; cf. Deller 1999 for the state of discussion.

<sup>135</sup> Dion 1997: 278, with detailed literature.

<sup>136</sup> Dion 1997: 278 n. 31.

<sup>137</sup> “The use of this title in the document from Suḫu simply reflects a particular Neo-Assyrian terminology. It does not fit the context of the Sefire treaty which deals with high-treason and regicide. The argument thus misses the point.,” Lipiński 2000a: 501.

<sup>138</sup> He hints at Syriac *nāgūda* and Jewish-Aramaic *nāgōda* with the meaning “chief, leader” and Hebrew *higgīd* “to report.” There is a parallel meaning of Aramaic *ngd* with the *mār šipri* from Ugarit who—according to the Amarna correspondence—obviously functioned as a messenger, cf. Lipiński 2000a: 501f.



should be sought in the Aramaeans' semi-nomadic past, where the herdsmen (*nāqīdu/nōqēd*) were the leaders of the herds.<sup>139</sup>

E. Lipiński also assumes a semi-nomadic past for the title *pqd*, because this title is found in neither the Aramaean nor Assyrian sources. He notes that, "It is basically a passive form *paqīd* derived from the Aramaic verb *pqd*, 'to survey', and etymologically designating one who is under a command, thus a 'subordinate'."<sup>140</sup> P.-E. Dion hints at the high position of this official, who is mentioned in the inscription of the Sefire stele III<sup>141</sup> along with the sons and brothers of the king.<sup>142</sup>

### 2.7 Military<sup>143</sup>

The warfare of nomadic people consisted of sudden attacks and retreats without direct confrontation with the enemy.<sup>144</sup> The conquest and defense of villages and fortified cities required different military equipment and tactics, and Aramaean warfare changed with the settlement process.<sup>145</sup> The annals of the Assyrian kings report considerable military contingents of Aramaean opponents and coalitions in Syria. Although one has to be cautious with the high numbers<sup>146</sup> given in the annals, as they might have been exaggerated to make the victories of the Assyrians appear more glorious than they actually were, the details allow a rough estimation of the strength of Aramaean opponents.<sup>147</sup> The contingents of Aram-Damascus and its allies in the battles of Qarqar (853 and 841 B.C.) are the best confirmed, although the details as to their size vary<sup>148</sup> in several Assyrian inscriptions.<sup>149</sup> After their conquests, the Assyrians often confiscated chariots or demanded horses as tribute. The loyal vassals fought with their contingents side by side with the Assyrians. Bar-Rakkab of Sam'al boasted

<sup>139</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 502f.

<sup>140</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 503.

<sup>141</sup> KAI 224: 4, 10, 13.

<sup>142</sup> Dion 1997: 278.

<sup>143</sup> Dion 1997: 301–324 offers a detailed discourse upon the different aspects of the military institutions.

<sup>144</sup> We hear about these "guerrilla tactics" in the Assyrian annals in the context of the conflicts with the nomadic *aḥlamū*; cf. paragraph 1, above.

<sup>145</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 498.

<sup>146</sup> For the Assyrian way of counting, see Mayer 1995b: 35–48.

<sup>147</sup> Mayer 1995b: 284 assumes that detailed lists about the Aramaean contingents came into the hands of the Assyrians after the battles and were used for the annals.

<sup>148</sup> This fluctuation in the details of one and the same military event is striking. Millard 1991: 216 has noticed that the numbers are increasing with the growing distance in time.

<sup>149</sup> Dion 1997: 316 arranges the detailed numbers in a table.

of having run at the wheel of his master Tiglath-Pileser III as his father Panamuwa II had done before him (KAI 215: 12–13; 216: 8–9).

### 2.7.1 *Military Equipment*

Bows and slings were some of the oldest weapons used by the semi-nomadic Aramaeans.<sup>150</sup> They were used for war<sup>151</sup> as well as for hunting.<sup>152</sup> The bow, in particular, was regarded as a status symbol of the king.<sup>153</sup> The different functions are depicted on several orthostats from Tell Halaf and from Sam'al. W. Orthmann notes, "Die Lanzenträger, die Steinschleuderer und die Männer mit Krummholz können den Jägern oder den Kriegern zugerechnet werden; wo die Lanzenträger mit Helm, Schild oder Panzerhemd dargestellt sind, handelt es sich sicherlich um Krieger."<sup>154</sup> Depicted on the orthostats from Tell Halaf<sup>155</sup> are chariots as well as battles fought on foot.<sup>156</sup> The excavations in Sam'al revealed arrowheads and other pieces of military equipment.<sup>157</sup> Tiglath-Pileser III mentions archers among the soldiers of the last king of Damascus.<sup>158</sup> The use of slings is attested on the orthostats in Tell Halaf<sup>159</sup> and by archaeological finds in Sam'al, next to the remains of lances, helmets, pieces of armor, and harnesses of chariots.<sup>160</sup> The sword is found primarily in iconography, especially in images of kings or gods, as it was their status symbol

<sup>150</sup> These are the typical weapons of nomads and are also well-known among the Arabs. Even in Roman times the skilfulness of the oriental archers was highly esteemed; they established an élite troop in the Roman army. For the development of the bow, see Collon 2008, with many pictures.

<sup>151</sup> The bow is mentioned in KAI 214: 26, 32 as a weapon or instrument of power.

<sup>152</sup> Hunting scenes with archers are depicted on several orthostats from Tell Halaf, see, e.g., Orthmann 2002: 82 fig. 63 or von Oppenheim 1950: pl. 10: archer with deer. "Die Bogenschützen sind . . . am ehesten als Jäger zu deuten; auf der jeweils anschließenden Platte könnte das vor ihnen aufgerichtete Jagdtier dargestellt gewesen sein; einer der 'kleinen Orthostaten' zeigt Jäger und Löwen zusammen [sc. von Oppenheim 1955: pl. 38, stone no. 35].", Orthmann 2002: 82. For other archers see von Oppenheim 1950: pls. 18, 20 and the arrangement of the orthostats with depictions of archers from Tell Halaf in Cholidis – Martin 2010 (eds.): 165.

<sup>153</sup> See Collon 2008 for the development of the bow in Mesopotamia.

<sup>154</sup> Orthmann 2002: 83.

<sup>155</sup> Von Oppenheim 1955: pl. 35.

<sup>156</sup> Orthmann 2002: 83 fig. 65.

<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, several orthostats from Sam'al depict archers with small bows and arrowheads; see Collon 2008: 110 fig. 10B and Cholidis – Martin (eds.) 2010: 165.

<sup>158</sup> Dion 1997: 305 n. 23, line 6. He also hints at the archer in 1 Kgs 22: 34, who shot the deadly arrow at the King of Israel.

<sup>159</sup> Stone no. 41, cf. Orthmann 2002: 76 fig. 51 and several orthostats in Cholidis – Martin (eds.) 2010: 166.

<sup>160</sup> See the arrangement of the military finds in Sam'al in Lehmann 1994: 120.

as strong warriors. However, swords are also mentioned in inscriptions, either as weapons (KAI 214: 25) or as metaphors for war (KAI 214: 9). A warrior's typical weaponry consisted not only of a sword but also a lance, sling, and/or axe. This outfit is also exhibited iconographically on several orthostats from Tell Halaf.<sup>161</sup>

The use of chariots began with Aramaean settlements, when they had to defend their conquered territories. The Aramaean chariot was similar to the Syrian chariot, of which there were also attestations in the Neo-Hittite kingdoms.<sup>162</sup> They were lightweight, with wheels of six spokes (instead of eight) and two horses. The chariot's crew consisted of two men, a charioteer and a warrior.<sup>163</sup> The inscription of Zakkur from Hamath (KAI 202) reports on the impressive military strength of the Aramaean kings. Around 800 B.C. King Bar-Hadad, son of King Hazael, established a coalition of ten northern Syrian kings against the kingdom of Zakkur. According to the details of the inscription, every little kingdom had its own army and chariots.

We do not know much about the storage of military weapons. It is possible that they were stored centrally. It may have been such a weapon depot that was found in the citadel of Hamath.<sup>164</sup>

### 2.7.2 *Military Ranks*

Other than the archaeological finds of weapons and sparse information on military equipment and strength of the troops in the inscriptions, we have almost no information on military ranks. A chief commander of the bodyguard (*rb mšm't*)<sup>165</sup> is mentioned on a bronze object that probably functioned as a fitting for a shield.<sup>166</sup> Another comparable metal object depicting the head of a bull was found in Sam'al, although the exact find spot is unknown.<sup>167</sup> M. Krebernik and U. Seidl note: "Da der Stil sowohl der Inschrift wie auch des Reliefs in Zincirli zu Hause zu sein scheinen,

<sup>161</sup> See the arrangement of orthostats, which depict men with different weapons in Cholidis – Martin (eds.) 2010: 165f.

<sup>162</sup> For the following, see in detail Dion 1997: 309–313.

<sup>163</sup> Orthmann 2002: 83 fig. 65.

<sup>164</sup> Dion 1997: 308.

<sup>165</sup> The noun *mšm't* is derived from *šm'*, 'to listen, to obey.' Until now the noun is only known in Moabitic (Meša KAI 181: 28) and in the Old Testament for the bodyguards of Saul and David (1 Sam 22: 14; 2 Sam 23: 23; 1 Chr 11: 25).

<sup>166</sup> Krebernik – Seidl 1997.

<sup>167</sup> Krebernik – Seidl 1997: 102f, with reference to von Luschan 1943: 89, 170 pl. 54 e.

dürfen wir die Herkunft der Bronzescheibe in Sam'al oder dessen Umkreis vermuten."<sup>168</sup>

From Sam'al comes a brief text implying (KAI 215: 10) that the king personally appointed charioteers. This might have been true of all higher military positions.

### 3. LAW AND JURISDICTION

P.-E. Dion stated correctly that "L'organisation judiciaire des états araméens est très mal représentée dans les sources."<sup>169</sup> The king and the inner circle of the ruling élite probably had judicial authority. This harkens to Hittite tradition. We do not know anything about juridical bodies in the villages. Dion assumes that, like elsewhere in the Ancient Near East, there existed the institution of the elders.<sup>170</sup>

From the inscription of the Hadad statue from Gerçin near Sam'al (KAI 214) we know that the death penalty was applied for revolt or other attempts at coup d'états against the house of the king. Accusations against the rebels as well as their declarations of innocence had to be corroborated by an oath in the presence of the king and other witnesses (KAI 214: 27–30).<sup>171</sup> The death sentence was stoning.<sup>172</sup> Male relatives stoned men, while women were stoned by their female relatives (KAI 214: 24–31). Political dissenters were jailed instead (KAI 215: 8).

The Sefire treaties can be viewed as legal documents. They are often compared to the Assyrian *adê*. It should be noted, though, that there is an ongoing debate on the origin of the Sefire treaties. In recent decades scholars have emphasized the western origin of their formal structure, or at least of several elements thereof (for example, curses).<sup>173</sup>

Other Aramaic inscriptions such as the inscription on the Hadad statue from Gerçin (KAI 214) or the inscription on the votive statue from Tell Fekheriye (KAI 309) also have legal implications. Typical in these inscriptions

<sup>168</sup> Krebbernik – Seidl 1997: 105.

<sup>169</sup> Dion 1997: 281. Many Aramaic legal documents are known from Elephantine or from the Dead Sea region. Although it is probable that they preserved older legal traditions, they should be kept in their immediate local context and should not be used to project legal conditions of the Aramaeans in Iron-Age Syria.

<sup>170</sup> Dion 1997: 284.

<sup>171</sup> For reading and translation, see Tropper 1993: 88–93.

<sup>172</sup> For other possible executions of the death penalty, see Dion 1997: 282.

<sup>173</sup> Tadmor 1982: 455–458 fits them into an Aramaean legal tradition; Morrow 2001: 97 thinks that the treaties represent an amalgam of different traditions; Millard 2009: 210.

is the role of the gods as guarantors of agreements. The gods were believed to impose curses upon those guilty of violating the agreements, and these curses were set down in the inscriptions.

From the Neo-Assyrian period, we have numerous Aramaic obligation contracts from the Syrian area, which detail the institution of lending.<sup>174</sup> The clay tablets or dockets were found at Tell Halaf, Tell Šeḥ Ḥamad, Tell Aḥmar, Tell Shioukh Fawqani, and Ma'allanate in the Baliḥ region. They bore a short Aramaic comment in addition to the Assyrian text or were completely written in Aramaic.<sup>175</sup> In most of these contracts, a loan is drafted and then witnessed by one or several witnesses.<sup>176</sup>

All Aramaic contracts date from the Assyrian annexation and their wording strongly resembles the formulaic wording of Neo-Assyrian contracts; nevertheless, they are important because they partly preserved a repertoire of legal terms of West Semitic origin, which were also used in the later Elephantine papyri.<sup>177</sup> A. Lemaire has recently drawn attention to the fact that the Aramaic wording has also influenced the Neo-Assyrian wording: "La symbiose était si forte et si durable (plus de deux siècles!) que les influences réciproques étaient inévitables et qu'il est même parfois difficile de préciser le sens de cette influence."<sup>178</sup>

In the economic sector, we have the already mentioned Aramaic contracts dealing with ownership transfer or purchase of land and persons.<sup>179</sup>

#### 4. ECONOMY<sup>180</sup>

##### 4.1 *Sources of Information about Economic Conditions*

From Aramaic inscriptions we have only a limited idea about the economy in the Aramaean kingdoms of Syria. The inscriptions from Sam'al

<sup>174</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 581–586; id. 2010; Fales 2000; Lemaire 2010b. We have evidence of loans of grain, silver, straw, and other materials.

<sup>175</sup> Fales 2000: 104–114 for an overview on the places. The Aramaic letters were written in clay or were painted on it. For a general classification, see Fales 1986: 1–4, following Postgate 1976. Cf. Lipiński 1975a: 114–142 for the legal documents from Tell Halaf and id. 2010 for the legal documents from Ma'allanate (aram. Ma'lānā); Fales – Radner – Pappi – Attardo 2005 for the tablets from Tell Shioukh Fawqani; Lemaire 2010b gives a bibliographical overview on the published tablets and presents new tablets with loan contracts.

<sup>176</sup> Fales 1986; id. 1996; id. 2000; Lemaire 2010b; Lipiński 1975a; id. 2010: 245–273 with a legal commentary.

<sup>177</sup> Fales 2000: 104–114.

<sup>178</sup> Lemaire 2010b: 219.

<sup>179</sup> See section 1.6.1, above.

<sup>180</sup> The following economic overview owes much to the thorough expositions of Dion 1997: 325–366 and Lipiński 2000a: 515–556. Both refer to the older work of Jankowska 1969.

hint at economically bad times with inflationary prices (KAI 215: 6) and economically prosperous times with low prices (KAI 215: 9–10). A good economic situation made it possible for the people to earn a living by their work alone. They had enough to eat and drink (KAI 214: 9; 215: 9).

The economic situation differed from kingdom to kingdom and depended upon several conditions: an optimal climate with enough rain, the availability of mineral resources or other raw materials, the location of overland trade routes, and the political situation. From the Aramaean inscriptions we read that in times of peace the population was able to start a family or buy farmland (KAI 214: 10–11). Kulamuwa boasts of having helped the Muškabim (*mškbm*)<sup>181</sup> climb economically and socially (KAI 24: 11–13). King Panamuwa I emphasized that under his rule the land and the vineyards could be tilled (KAI 214: 5–7). King Bar-Rakkab reports that the economic situation for the people was better after Panamuwa II voluntarily became a vassal of the Assyrian king. With the King of Ashur's help, it was possible to end the struggles for power and the throne.

Furthermore, times of peace were times of building projects. Cities could be extended and reinforced (KAI 214: 10). The kings of Sam'al legitimized their building activities by claiming the gods had demanded them (KAI 214: 13–15). In the past few decades, archaeological excavations have made it possible to obtain a lot of information on economic activities in different regions.<sup>182</sup>

The Assyrian conquest of the Aramaean states was decisive for the economic situation in Syria. We have several references in Assyrian sources that show that many Aramaeans were able to start careers in the service of the Assyrians especially as scribes or artisans.<sup>183</sup> In addition, many deportees were drafted into the Assyrian army.<sup>184</sup> The vassal states also had to provide workers for Assyrian building projects.<sup>185</sup> In the Aramaic inscriptions of Sam'al as well as in the findings at various archaeological excavations,<sup>186</sup> it becomes obvious that economic activity did not stagnate under Assyrian dominion but rather partly increased. That does not mean that the whole population participated in the economic profit.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. section 3.1, above.

<sup>182</sup> See, for example, the results of the excavations of Tell Mishrife in the late Iron Age, which make evident that the site and its surrounding area were an important center of the textile industry in the kingdom of Hamath. See Morandi Bonacossi 2009 and *infra* 4.7.

<sup>183</sup> Garelli 1982; Tadmor 1982; Dion 1997: 328; Görke 2004; Zehnder 2007: 432f; Millard 2009.

<sup>184</sup> Garelli 1982: 441–443 and Tadmor 1982: 451.

<sup>185</sup> Dion 1997: 263 with n. 100.

<sup>186</sup> E.g., on Tell Mishrife, see Morandi Bonacossi 2009.

While scribes or artisans had an opportunity to achieve high social positions in Syria as well as in the Assyrian heartland after their deportation, for ordinary laborers it depended decisively on the size of the tribute that they had to produce through hard work. When only moderate tributes were required, in the case of a loyal vassal king, it was possible for the people to live and work in peace and have enough surplus for a good life (see above). A loyal vassal king and his élite were undoubtedly the biggest beneficiaries of the situation. They could increase their wealth at the expense of the people, whom they could exploit without fear of a rebellion because they enjoyed Assyrian protection. King Bar-Rakkab reports that the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser gave several cities to his father Panamuwa II to express thanks for his services (KAI 215: 14–15). Bar-Rakkab also boasts of having built the most splendid palace in Sam'al (KAI 216: 11–17).<sup>187</sup> As the wealth of the loyal royal élite increased, therefore, so did the poverty of the ordinary people.

Because we have only sparse information about the economic situation in the Aramaean kingdoms, references from other ages are often used to create an overview of the economic situation in Syria, e.g., from conditions before the breakdown of the great states in the Ancient Near East at the end of the Bronze Age, or from the situation under Assyrian domination. This makes sense, for example, as far as the occurrences of mineral resources or other raw materials are concerned. These did not change and neither did the main trade routes.<sup>188</sup> In general, the comparison, especially with the flourishing economy of the Late Bronze Age, is problematic because after the breakdown of the states in the Ancient Near East and somewhat before this, enormous upheavals fundamentally changed economic systems and trade relations.<sup>189</sup>

We are thus fortunate to have some information, which can cautiously be used, about the economic situation of farmers and different professions from the time after the Assyrian annexation.<sup>190</sup> The lists of the so-called Harran Census provide a record of the economic conditions of a limited region in a limited time. E. Lipiński notes that “[T]he range of sources has to be expanded in order to include the Ḥarrān Census, as well as Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic contracts from the 7th century B.C., which certainly

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<sup>187</sup> For example, King Bar-Rakkab of Sam'al. See the explanation of kingship, above.

<sup>188</sup> For an overview on the overland trade routes in the Levant, see Astour 1995: esp. 1414–1416.

<sup>189</sup> For critical considerations, see Klengel 2000: 23f.

<sup>190</sup> Dion 1997: 328 hints at gardeners, shepherds, and metalworkers.

reflect the same global conditions as documents from the 9th–8th centuries B.C.”<sup>191</sup> The lists tell us about the work carried out as well about the economic situation of small farmers after the Assyrian annexation in the 7th century B.C. E. Lipiński gives the example of the farmer Iššar-dūri, who owned approximately 54 hectares of land, an orchard, and an ox. About half of his land was tilled.<sup>192</sup> The amount of farmland was sufficient to supply the farmer and his family and, in good years, to sell a surplus of the harvest to buy other necessary goods. In bad years, however, they had to take out loans of grain and seeds.<sup>193</sup>

#### 4.2 *Economic Goods*

Most of the products that were produced and sold are not mentioned in the Aramaic sources, but there is evidence of them in the Assyrian tribute and booty lists, in the texts from the victory stelae, and on the palace reliefs of the Assyrian kings. These enumerate or represent luxury goods of the élites of the conquered regions as well as natural goods or raw materials and other goods as tribute. Luxury goods like temple equipment and precious furnishings; raw materials like gold or other metals, ivory, and timber; precious textiles like byssus or purple dyed linen; and natural goods like grain or animals (oxen, sheep, horses, and also elephants) are mentioned. Many of these goods, such as ivory carvings, might have been produced in Syria.<sup>194</sup> Ezek 27: 17, in the Old Testament, hints at the export of precious stones, purple or multicolored cloths, and byssus from the Aramaean states to Phoenicia.<sup>195</sup> Ezek 27: 18 verifies the export of wine from Damascus to Phoenicia.

The states in western Syria profited from their proximity to the strong economic power of Phoenicia. Damascus and Hamath, in particular, profited from their location at the end of the overland trade routes leading from the east to Phoenicia and the Mediterranean. The new Aramaean rulers in western Syria were also able to organize enduring coalitions against the Assyrians. They were therefore able to maintain their economic independence longer than the Aramaean states in eastern Syria.

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<sup>191</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 515.

<sup>192</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 519f.

<sup>193</sup> For loan contracts, see Lipiński 2000a: 522.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. section 2.1, above.

<sup>195</sup> In this text ‘Aram’ is emended to ‘Edom.’ Lipiński 2000a: 542 suggests interpreting ‘Aram’ as the name for the whole of Syria.



The production of luxury goods is especially typical for city-states with élites. The tribute and booty lists of the Assyrians record gold and bronze household utensils; precious furniture with intarsia of gold, silver, or ivory; and elephants. Ivory did not have to be imported because elephants were native to Syria.<sup>196</sup> Ivory products were also available, because production centers of ivory carving existed in Syria. The different styles of ivory objects found in the storerooms of the Assyrian palaces<sup>197</sup> hint at several production centers in Syria.<sup>198</sup> These centers are assumed to have been located in Sam'al, Til Barsib, and Damascus.<sup>199</sup> E. Lipiński notes that "The discovery of an elephant's tusk and tooth next to carved ivories in the same room of building J at Zincirli, as well as the roughly carved, but not decorated piece of ivory from Til-Barsib, prove in any case that a tradition of ivory carving existed in the Aramaean states of North Syria, near the sources of raw material."<sup>200</sup> Assyrian palace reliefs show that an Assyrian ruling family used northern Syrian and Phoenician furniture with ivory carvings.<sup>201</sup>

#### 4.3 *Agriculture and Livestock Raising*<sup>202</sup>

Agriculture and livestock secured the food supply of the population in antiquity. In the mountainous region of northern and western Syria it was possible to carry out rain-based agriculture because of sufficient precipitation. In other regions like Damascus, Hamath, and in the triangle between the Khabur and the Euphrates farming was possible with irrigation. The fringes of the steppe, which had always been the home of semi-nomadic tribes, served as a livestock-raising zone.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> The so-called Syrian elephant lived in Syria. It was hunted and given as tribute to the Assyrians. Cf. Lipiński 2000a: 533: the elephants not only lived in the wild but were also domesticated and raised. The argument that ivory production in Syria came to an end when the elephant was eradicated by overhunting stands against domestication.

<sup>197</sup> Most of the ivories were found in the storerooms of Nimrud. For a bibliography of the contexts of the finds, see Bonatz 2004: 393f.

<sup>198</sup> Winter 1976a; ead. 1976b; ead. 1989; Barnett 1982; Herrmann 2000; Bonatz 2004: 393–396.

<sup>199</sup> Winter 1976b: 53 and ead. 1981: 129f.

<sup>200</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 534.

<sup>201</sup> Bonatz 2004: 394f. Bonatz takes into consideration the fact that the import of couches from Syria first introduced the tradition of dining on couches in Assyria.

<sup>202</sup> See Dion 1997: 330–345 and Lipiński 2000a: 516–524.

<sup>203</sup> Dion 1997: 330 allocates livestock raising to the Aramaean tribes and agriculture to the indigenous population: "L'élevage pratiqué par ces tribus araméennes servait de complément aux cultures de la vieille population sédentaire."

The grain fields and storehouses in the Aramaean settlement areas are mentioned in Assyrian annals. In the annals of Adad-nirari II we read about the confiscation of the harvest stored in the cities. The annals of Assurnasirpal mention the storage of the harvest in the city.<sup>204</sup> Panamuwa I and Bar-Rakkab mention the cultivation of barley, wheat, and garlic in Sam'al (KAI 214: 5–7; 215: 6). In addition to vegetable products (grain, straw, bread, beer, occasionally wine), the Assyrian annals<sup>205</sup> enumerate considerable numbers<sup>206</sup> of oxen and sheep,<sup>207</sup> often horses, and sometimes donkeys<sup>208</sup> and poultry.<sup>209</sup>

Horse breeding was of some importance to the Aramaeans. Tukulti-Ninurta arranged an agreement with the King of Bit Zamanni, according to which he could not sell his horses to the enemies of Assyria.<sup>210</sup> Arpad was the most important center of horse breeding for the Assyrians in the 7th century B.C.; Guzana followed as third or fourth in importance.<sup>211</sup> We know of the significance of Guzana for horse and mule breeding from the clay tablet archive of the Assyrian governor Mannu-ki-Aššur (8th century B.C.), who resided there.<sup>212</sup>

In addition to the cultivation of grain, mainly hardy barley, which could also grow during periods of drought, viticulture was also important. The Assyrians received wine as tribute from several regions, mainly northern Syria.<sup>213</sup> Viticulture is confirmed for the region north of Damascus and

<sup>204</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 517 with nn. 6–9 hints at the annals in RIMA 2, A.0.92.2, p. 149, 43b–44; A.0.101.1, p. 211, ii 117b–118a; RIMA 3, A. 0.102.5, p. 29, iii 4a; Fuchs 1994: 149, 330, Ann. 289.

<sup>205</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 517 with nn. 10–13 hints at the annals of Tukulti-Ninurta in RIMA 2, A.0.100.5, pp. 85, 86, 88, 91–92, 101, 103, and 175–177; RIMA 3 A.0.102.1, p. 11, 95'.

<sup>206</sup> The numbers are probably not exact. It is striking that often ten times more sheep than oxen are mentioned. For example, Shalmaneser III received 300 oxen and 3000 sheep from Sam'al; 500 oxen and 5000 sheep from Bit Agusi; RIMA 3, A.0.102.2, p. 18, ii 25, 27; Dion 1997: 331 with n. 23.

<sup>207</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 518f with nn. 29–31. RIMA 2, A.0.100.5, pp. 85, 86, 88, 91–92, 101, 103, 175–177; RIMA 3 A.0.102.1, p. 11, 95'; RIMA 3, A.0.102.2, p. 18, ii 25, 27.

<sup>208</sup> The description of Aram-Damascus as *ša-imērišu*, “land of his donkeys,” hints not at donkey breeding in Damascus, but at the significance of the city as a trade center for donkey caravans. While camels were suitable for transport in the desert, donkeys were more suitable for passage through the mountains of the Anti-Lebanon and Lebanon to the coast; cf. Lipiński 2000a: 347 and Klengel 2000: 24.

<sup>209</sup> Dion 1997: 344f.

<sup>210</sup> RIMA 2, A.0.100.5, pp. 23–25, 171–172, and Szuchman 2009: 57.

<sup>211</sup> Weidner 1940 = 1967: 2; Lipiński 2000a: 517 with nn. 17 and 18 and Lipiński 2010: 36f with hint on SAA XIII 90 (89), rev. 1, 100, rev. 3: III,11.

<sup>212</sup> Weidner 1940 = 1967: nos. 1, 3, 16, 38. Lipiński 2000a: 517 hints at an Aramaean contract.

<sup>213</sup> Dion 1997: 336.

for Sam'al (KAI 214:7).<sup>214</sup> The cultivation of date palms, which was widespread in Babylonia, is depicted only on a stele from Tell Halaf that shows the artificial pollination of the date palm blossoms by a worker.<sup>215</sup> The cultivation of olive trees in the Mediterranean zones of the Ancient Near East was already important in the Bronze Age and certainly continued in the Iron Age, but is absent from the textual sources. Bar-Rakkab only mentions olive oil (KAI 215: 6).

#### 4.4 *Timber*

Wood served as a building material and fuel for heating, cooking, and smelting metals. The Assyrians also received from the Aramaeans of Syria the famed cedar wood, which grew in the mountains of Lebanon, on the Anti-Lebanon and the Amanus Mountains. The resin was also an important raw material.<sup>216</sup> Besides cedar, boxwood from northern Syria had some importance. Valuable furniture with intarsia of ivory was made of boxwood and is mentioned in Assyrian annals.<sup>217</sup>

#### 4.5 *Textiles*

Linen, wool, animal skins, and animal hair were the products of agriculture and livestock raising. Dyed multi-colored textiles of linen, wool, and byssus were considered luxury goods, which the Assyrians received as tribute from Aramaean vassal states. These dyed textiles were not only imported from Phoenicia (famous for its purple), but there was obviously a native textile industry in Syria.<sup>218</sup> E. Lipiński draws attention to the local red-dyed wool (*swt*) in the inscription of Kulamuwa (KAI 24: 8). Economic prosperity under the rule of Kulamuwa made it possible to wear luxury textiles like linen and byssus (KAI 24: 12–13). Shalmaneser III received

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<sup>214</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 518 hints at deliveries of wine to the Assyrians from Bit Adini, Bit Agusi, Sam'al, and other northern Syrian regions.

<sup>215</sup> Von Oppenheim 1955: pl. 33, nos. 44, 45; Dion 1997: 334; Lipiński 2000a: 523.

<sup>216</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 524 draws attention to deliveries of wood and resin from Bit Adini, Til-Abni, and Sam'al to Assurnasirpal II, RIMA 2, A.O.101.1, p. 216, iii 55b–56a (cedar logs) and Salmanassar III, RIMA 3, text A.O.102.2, p. 18, ii 25 b and 26b (cedar beams and cedar resin).

<sup>217</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 526.

<sup>218</sup> There are still many problems concerning textile production in Syria. The finds from excavations are scarce and we can only obtain information on finished textiles indirectly from the Assyrian annals or in the Assyrian reliefs; cf. Cecchini 2000: 229.

two talents of purple wool from Pattina annually.<sup>219</sup> Excavations on Tell Mishrife (kingdom of Hamath) demonstrated the importance of this place for the textile industry under Assyrian dominion. The region may, however, have played a role in textile industry earlier. Excavations have brought to light many tools for the production of textiles: spindle whorls, clay looms, spool weights, bone spatulas. Tools for dyeing were also found in large numbers.<sup>220</sup> Excavations in Tell Afis, Hamath, Zincirli, and other places discovered loom weights and other weaving tools.<sup>221</sup>

#### 4.6 *Mineral Resources and Metalworking*

S. Mazzone noted that “Metalwork emerges throughout the period (sc. Iron Age IC), to become, in the following century, one of the major and more innovative crafts of the region (sc. Syria).”<sup>222</sup> In the tribute lists of Assurnasirpal II copper<sup>223</sup> and other metals such as iron and tin are documented. Metalworking is known to have taken place in the mountains of northern Syria. The mining of copper and other metals is accepted for the regions adjacent to Bit Zamanni.<sup>224</sup> Bit Zamanni was of great importance for metalworking. E. Lipiński states that “Bêt-Zammāni may have been a centre of Anatolian iron industry.”<sup>225</sup> The Assyrians also received iron from Laqe, Sam’al, Bit Ḥalupe, and Aram-Damascus.<sup>226</sup> Aside from iron, bronze was still used for weapons<sup>227</sup> and other utensils.<sup>228</sup>

<sup>219</sup> Dion 1997: 359 with n. 172.

<sup>220</sup> Morandi Bonacossi 2009: esp. p. 123 with figures 3a–e, which depict different tools.

<sup>221</sup> Cecchini 2000.

<sup>222</sup> Mazzone 2000a: 53.

<sup>223</sup> The mining of copper in Syria is, at best, indirectly attested in epigraphic sources. The tribute lists mention large numbers of bronze utensils. Lipiński 2000a: 535 hints at RIMA 2, A.0.101.19, p. 211, lines 121–122; A.0.101.17, p. 252, iv 115–118; A.0.101.19, pp. 88–89, 261.

<sup>224</sup> Dion 1997: 353 and Lipiński 2000a: 535 hint at the important mines in the area of modern Diyarbekir.

<sup>225</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 535. Similar Dion 1997: 352f.

<sup>226</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 535f; Dion 1997: 349 hints at the contradictory references of 2000 and 5000 talents of iron that Adad-nerari II received from Damascus.

<sup>227</sup> Dion 1997: 351.

<sup>228</sup> The Assyrian annals often mention bronze vessels as tribute. RIMA 2, A.0.101.19, p. 211, ll. 121–122; A.0.101.17, p. 252, iv 115–118; A.0.101.19, pp. 88–89, 261. For the production of bronze vessels and other bronze products and their stylistic classification, see the contribution of D. Bonatz in this volume.

The origin of metals is not always clearly determinable. Deposits of copper,<sup>229</sup> iron,<sup>230</sup> and tin<sup>231</sup> existed in the mountains of the Amanus and/or the Taurus. The metals could have been exported from these regions to other Syrian areas for refining and working.<sup>232</sup>

The Assyrians received larger amounts of tin from Bit Zamanni, Laqe, and Pattina. Especially in the case of tin is debatable whether it was of western provenance<sup>233</sup> or was imported from Afghanistan.<sup>234</sup> Kunulua in Pattina may have been an important trade center for imported tin.<sup>235</sup> Most metals were first smelted to bars and then further processed to produce weapons, decorations, jewelry, and other items.<sup>236</sup>

Typical tributes to the Assyrians were often paid in silver,<sup>237</sup> sometimes in gold, tin, copper, or other raw materials. The Aramaean kingdoms had silver deposits in their territories prominent among which were Damascus and Arpad.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Copper deposits can be found in the Taurus region, but there are also other important deposits in the Levant and abroad, which might have played some role; see Muhly 1993–1997: 130f.

<sup>230</sup> Dion 1997: 349.

<sup>231</sup> Small deposits of tin are assumed in the central Taurus Mountains, see Lipiński 2000a: 537 with n. 150. It is debated whether this tin played a considerable role in metalworking at all (see below).

<sup>232</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 537. For the difficulty of identifying bronze metal workshops, cf. the contribution of D. Bonatz in this volume.

<sup>233</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 537 and id. 2010: 35f assumes that this tin was of western provenance, because tin sources were found in the Taurus region.

<sup>234</sup> Muhly 1993–1997: 132: “The tin source in the central Taurus is at present more problematic. The geological presence of tin has been identified in the area, but in concentrations of no more than 0,6% tin in the host rock.” Dion 1997: 354 therefore assumes that tin was mainly brought to Bit Zamanni through long-distance trade from Afghanistan.

<sup>235</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 538.

<sup>236</sup> Dion 1997: 355f.

<sup>237</sup> Dion 1997: 348 hints at the contradictory references of Adad-nerari III, who received silver tribute from Damascus. RIMA 3, A.0.104.7, p. 211, line 6 records 2000 talents of silver and A.102.6, p. 209, line 20 records 1000 talents, while text A.0.102.8, p. 213, line 18 records 2300 talents.

<sup>238</sup> Dion 1997: 348.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT

Holger Gzella

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Aramaic first appeared on the stage of history when several newly emerging kingdoms, or chiefdoms, decided to use it as a written language during the opening centuries of the Iron Age. This process coincided with a change from syllabic cuneiform to alphabetic scribal culture and the rise of a novel style of public epigraphy, formerly unattested in Syria-Palestine, by means of which local rulers striving for prestige among their peers overtly celebrated their deeds. From a comparative point of view, Aramaic constitutes a sister branch of the idiom used in the Bronze-Age city-state of Ugarit, on the one hand, and Canaanite, which comprises languages further south in the speech area such as Hebrew, Phoenician, and Moabite, on the other. All three branches can be subsumed under the more general rubric “Northwest Semitic” and thus share a common origin according to a widespread model of historical linguistics. In addition, Aramaic also participated in a number of common structural developments that affected the languages of Syria-Palestine during the Iron Age, especially the loss of morphological case marking, a restructuring of the verbal system, and the rise of a definite article.<sup>1</sup>

##### 1.1 *Features of Aramaic*

The linguistic situation in Syria-Palestine, however, was already diversified during the Late Bronze Age. Although Aramaic cannot be directly connected to any of the Bronze-Age manifestations of Northwest Semitic, it exhibits a number of grammatical and lexical traits that set it apart from both contemporaneous Canaanite and earlier Ugaritic.<sup>2</sup> Several of these can be identified even in the largely consonantal writing system:

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<sup>1</sup> The Northwest Semitic background of Aramaic is briefly described in Gzella 2011a.

<sup>2</sup> Gianto 2008 succinctly outlines the early history of Aramaic as a language.

a reflex of the Proto-Semitic lateral \*/š/ written with the grapheme {q}; the third-person masc. singular possessive suffix \*/-ay-hū/ > /-aw-hī/ (following dissimilation of the final /ū/) with vocalic bases; aphaeresis of /ʾ/ in the numeral ‘one’ /ḥad/ (< \*/ʾaḥad/); the shift \*/n/ > /r/ in /bar/ ‘son’ and the numeral ‘two’; fem. plural forms with the ending -n /-ān/ in the absolute state; distinctive vocalic reflexes of the final vowel of verbal roots ending in /-ī/ in the “long imperfect” and the “short imperfect”; the loss of the N-stem; a few lexical items like *yhb*, ‘to give,’ or specific meanings such as *ʿbd*, ‘to make’; later also a post-positive definite article in /-ā(ʾ)/. One may thus assume that Aramaic, like Canaanite, took on its distinctive shape at some point in the Bronze Age but remained unwritten, and hence invisible, for several centuries.

### 1.2 *The Dialect of the Tell Fekheriye Inscription*

The first direct witnesses of Aramaic, composed between the 10th and the 8th centuries B.C. and unanimously subsumed under the term “Old Aramaic,” exhibit variation and thereby anticipate the enormous linguistic diversity within this group.<sup>3</sup> They are nonetheless connected by common literary forms and formulaic expressions.<sup>4</sup> The earliest attestation is a royal inscription from Tell Fekheriye in northeastern Syria, written on a statue around 850 B.C. in an archaic form of the Phoenician alphabet, with its Assyrian parallel version.<sup>5</sup> It conforms to a different spelling practice that is characterized by a more extensive use of word-medial vowel letters and by the employ of the grapheme {s} for the sound /θ/, and has some grammatical peculiarities vis-à-vis Aramaic from central Syria: loss of intervocalic /h/ in *kln* and *klm* ‘all of them’; no assimilation in contact (at least not in writing) of /l/ in the root *lqh* ‘to take’ and of /n/ in the only attested instance; the fem. singular demonstrative *zʾt* ‘this one’; the preformative /l-/ with the third person of the non-negated “short imperfect”;

<sup>3</sup> The internal subdivision of Aramaic remains a subject of debate; Beyer 1984: 23–71 with additions in id. 2004: 13–41 fully accounts for the complexity of the data in light of chronological, regional, and social variation, whereas simpler models operate first and foremost on the basis of consecutive developmental stages (“Old,” “Imperial/Official,” “Middle,” and “Late” Aramaic).

<sup>4</sup> The same curse formula, for example, recurs in Tell Fekheriye, Sfire, and Bukan, but has been affected by the respective regional variety of Aramaic (hence the /l-/ preformative in Tell Fekheriye; the problem of gender concord in l. 7 of the Bukan inscription could result from the substrate influence of another, unknown, local language that did not have the same gender system).

<sup>5</sup> Abou-Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982 and Kaufman 1982.

G-stem infinitive forms with /m-/ prefix; a Gt-stem with infixed /-t-/; and the by-forms *nšwn* ‘women’ and *sʾwn* ‘ewes’ instead of *nšn* and *šʾn*. They will be discussed at greater length in the sections on script, phonology, morphology, and lexicon.

### 1.3 *Aramaic in Central Syria*

Central Syrian Aramaic is best preserved in extensive royal treaties inscribed on three stelae from Sefire near Aleppo and dating from ca. 750 B.C.,<sup>6</sup> a short dedicatory inscription of King Bar-Hadad as well as a longer memorial inscription of King Zakkur from the same region and period; and a couple of graffiti consisting of personal names from Hamath. These texts appear to be rather homogeneous in terms of spelling and language. While the Aramaic variety underlying the Tell Fekheriye inscription has disappeared from the written record, the standard idiom of the region between Aleppo and Damascus subsequently seems to have become more influential in the west and in the south. Such a situation can explain the presence of numerous Old Aramaic phonological and morphological features in the Transjordanian Tell Deir ‘Alla plaster inscription from ca. 800 B.C. in addition to several lexical and stylistic Canaanisms in the same literary composition.<sup>7</sup> Aramaic varieties also grew deep roots in the administration of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires. They are associated with a younger stage of “Old Aramaic” by some and with early manifestations of “Official Aramaic” by others. During the Achaemenid Empire, however, these were all largely eclipsed by Official Aramaic in the strict sense, i.e., the medium of the Persian chancellery, which is based on a formerly unattested Babylonian dialect of Aramaic. Western forms of Aramaic nonetheless re-emerged after the fall of the Achaemenid Empire, especially in Palestine.<sup>8</sup> It is often maintained that the wisdom sayings of Aḥiqar, which have been incorporated into an Official Aramaic composition preserved in an Elephantine papyrus, originated in Syria between ca. 750 and 650 B.C.<sup>9</sup> Given the present state of knowledge, this claim is rather difficult to substantiate on purely linguistic grounds.

<sup>6</sup> See Fitzmyer 21995 for an edition with translation and extensive commentary.

<sup>7</sup> For a summary of the discussion, see Beyer 2011: 123–126.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Gzella 2008 for a brief outline of the history and impact of Official Aramaic.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lindenberger 1983: 279–304 (northern Syria); Kottsieper 1990: § 62h (southern Syria).



1.4 *Sam'alian and Aramaic at Zincirli*

Another language variety close to Aramaic emerged in the kingdom of Sam'al, modern Zincirli, in northwestern Syria, where it appears to have succeeded Phoenician as the regional prestige idiom after the 9th century B.C.<sup>10</sup> This change may reflect a shift in political loyalties as well as in cultural preferences. Two relatively long royal inscriptions by the kings Panamuwa (mid-8th century B.C.) and Bar-Rakkab (second half of the 8th century B.C.) constitute the chief witnesses. As some features agree with Aramaic while others do not, the place of Sam'alian within Northwest Semitic is still debated.<sup>11</sup> Distinctive grammatical phenomena will be treated separately in the present overview. The use of a first-person singular pronoun *'nk* 'I', the lack of a post-positive definite article, the presence of N-stem forms, and, especially, the distinction between nominative and genitive-accusative in the masc. plural can be explained as archaic vestiges inherited from an earlier type of Northwest Semitic. As a consequence, it could be suggested that Sam'alian still mirrors a developmental stage prior to the split of Northwest Semitic into Aramaic and Canaanite. The area's peripheral location may have cocooned this idiom from several linguistic innovations originating in the central areas of Syria-Palestine. Since most of the aforementioned traits (leaving apart the masc. plural) match the situation in Canaanite, however, these could be explained as contact-induced.<sup>12</sup> Sam'alian would then belong to Aramaic, distinguished only by some minor regional traits like the direct object marker *wt*. The pronoun *'nk* and an occasional N-stem form may indeed constitute individual lexical loans; the post-positive article, on the other hand, was not yet fully developed in Old Aramaic, hence its absence in Sam'alian is not really surprising.

Soon afterward, the rulers of Sam'al decided to adopt a form of Aramaic closely resembling the central Syrian variety, perhaps due to the latter's growing importance. It is documented by six texts and fragments issued by the same King Bar-Rakkab, as well as by four seals and silver bars, which contain little linguistic information. The recently discovered inscription

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<sup>10</sup> The use of Phoenician in Zincirli is documented by the Kulamuwa inscription (KAI 24) and perhaps also the Kulamuwa scepter (KAI 25). The latter is sometimes subsumed under Sam'alian or Aramaic because of the grapheme {h} used for the third-person masc. singular suffix (which is atypical for the Phoenician dialect adopted by the rulers of Zincirli) yet may in fact reflect a transitional stage (cf. Gianto 2008: 12 n. 2).

<sup>11</sup> Noorlander 2012 provides an up-to-date assessment of all relevant arguments.

<sup>12</sup> Gianto 1995 and id. 2008: 12.

of the royal functionary Kuttamuwa, servant of Panamuwa (one of Bar-Rakkab's predecessors on the royal throne?),<sup>13</sup> can be situated typologically between Sam'alian, with which it shares *'nk* 'I' and the object marker *wt*, and Aramaic, whose absolute masc. plural ending *-n* it has. It may indicate that another variety of Aramaic, again influenced by local peculiarities, was more widely in use at Sam'al outside the domain of royal inscriptions until a more international form of Aramaic also encroached on that prestigious register.

Another 9th- or even 10th-century textual witness was found at Ördék-burnu, in the immediate vicinity of Zincirli. It is written in the alphabetic script but remains controversial as to its linguistic affiliation.<sup>14</sup> Several sequences of letters can perhaps be read as Northwest Semitic words, but the enigmatic composition may contain a mixed Luwian and Semitic code.<sup>15</sup> Because of these fundamental uncertainties, it will receive no further consideration here.

### 1.5 Sources and Tools

The following grammatical sketch is based on the Aramaic dialect reflected in the Tell Fekheriye text, the Aramaic inscriptions from central Syria, and Sam'alian as well as its Aramaic successor at Zincirli.<sup>16</sup> For easier reference, primary sources (except for the Kuttamuwa stele) will be cited according to their sigla in KAI:<sup>17</sup> Tell Fekheriye = KAI 309;

<sup>13</sup> Pardee 2009a; id. 2009b; Nebe 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Edited by Lidzbarski 1915: 192–206, who doubts that the text reflects a Semitic language. But cf. Lemaire – Sass 2012 and iid. 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Nebe 2010: 315; Lemaire – Sass 2012; iid. 2013.

<sup>16</sup> There is no up-to-date synopsis of this material in its entirety. The Aramaic texts from Syria and Zincirli are discussed in detail, though from a largely synchronic perspective, by Degen 1969. More recent discoveries, such as the Tell Fekheriye and the Bukan inscriptions, as well as progress in Northwest Semitic philology, render a number of his conclusions obsolete. A grammatical outline with a glossary in Fitzmyer <sup>2</sup>1995: 177–232 is specifically devoted to the Sefire stelae. Folmer 2011 provides a concise but very nuanced overview of Old and Official Aramaic according to the most recent research and should serve as a starting point for further inquiry. These descriptions, however, exclude the Sam'alian language variety, which is extensively treated by Dion 1974 with comprehensive bibliographical references; on the new Kuttamuwa inscription and its relation with the rest of Sam'alian, see Pardee 2009a. The standard dictionary for Old Aramaic and Sam'alian, excepting Kuttamuwa, is Hoftijzer – Jongeling 1995, who give copious references to the scholarly literature in every entry; Beyer 1984: 503–728 supplies valuable material on the wider Aramaic background (including etymological noun patterns) of many lexemes.

<sup>17</sup> Donner – Röellig <sup>3-5</sup>1971–2002. The 2002 edition, to which the Tell Fekheriye inscription has been added, is confined to the first volume with all texts transliterated into square script. Degen 1969: 5–23 contains an edition of the Old Aramaic inscriptions in Latin

Sefire I–III = KAI 222–224; Zakkur = KAI 202; Bar-Hadad = KAI 201; graffiti from Hamath = KAI 203–213; Sam’alian = KAI 214–215; Aramaic from Zincirli = KAI 216–221. Nonetheless, the respective *editiones principes* with their photographs, drawings, and extensive philological notes should always be consulted.

## 2. SCRIPT AND ORTHOGRAPHY

### 2.1 *The Breakthrough of Alphabetic Writing*

After the collapse of cuneiform scribal culture in Syria and Palestine on the threshold from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age, alphabetic writing became the standard in the chancelleries of various emerging kingdoms. The decline of syllabic cuneiform coincided with the appearance of new official languages like the Aramaic varieties, Phoenician, Hebrew, Moabite, and others, all supposedly based on existing though erstwhile unwritten local vernaculars, in epigraphic documents. The reasons underlying this process are not yet well understood, but one may suppose that rulers who had recently risen to power consciously promoted their dialects to written, standardized, idioms. In doing so, they could rely on a writing system that, except for Ugarit and its vicinity, was formerly attested only for low-profile usages such as property marks or simple dedications. Consequently, this writing system appears to have been less affected by the breakdown of scribal institutions following the grave socioeconomic changes that washed over Syria-Palestine at the end of the Late Bronze Age. It was thus most readily available when administrative and royal propaganda needed a reliable form of recordkeeping.

### 2.2 *From the Phoenician to the Aramaic Alphabet*

Because the earliest Aramaic witnesses are, in terms of palaeography, essentially identical to the 10th-century Byblian inscriptions, it is commonly assumed that the 1st-millennium type of the alphabetic script spread from the Phoenician city of Byblos at the beginning of the Early Iron Age.<sup>18</sup> In all likelihood, the prestige of this ancient center for writing

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characters, supplemented by textual and grammatical notes. Dion 1974: 5–43 presents the Sam’alian material in Latin transliteration together with a French translation.

<sup>18</sup> For a succinct survey of this process, see Naveh 1970 and, more recently, Millard 2011. Further bibliographical references can be found in Beyler 2004: 14.

played an important role in advancing the Phoenician variant of the alphabet in Palestine, Syria, and Transjordan. The reduced set of twenty-two letter-signs (“graphemes”) of that particular script was more suitable for the inventory of distinctive consonantal sounds (“phonemes”) of a Canaanite language like Phoenician than for Aramaic, which had initially preserved some of the older Semitic consonantal phonemes already lost in Canaanite. Earlier variants of this type of script—structurally closer to some of the 2nd-millennium cuneiform alphabets, which still contained proper letters for these phonemes—would have been a more practical choice, but they were apparently forgotten by then or at least eclipsed by the Phoenician variant.

Since not every consonant that can be reconstructed for the earliest attested stages of Aramaic was thus represented by a proper letter-sign in the alphabet accepted by the Aramaeans, some letters served at least double duty: {z} for /z/ and /ð/; {š} for /š/, /θ/, and presumably also /ś/ or, in the Tell Fekheriye inscription, {s} for /s/ and /θ/; {š} for /š/ and /θ/ (Arabic /z/); and {q} for /q/ and the reflex of the Proto-Semitic lateral \*/š/ (Arabic /ḏ/), whose pronunciation in early Aramaic, however, remains controversial. Sam’alian spelling generally agrees with the standard variant of Syrian Aramaic reflected by the Sefire inscriptions.

### 2.3 *The Rise of Vowel Letters*

The original type of the West Semitic alphabet was purely consonantal and did not indicate any vowels. While this practice of writing survived for a considerable period of time in Phoenician scribal schools, other spelling traditions in Syria-Palestine employed, to an increasing degree, the graphemes {h}, {w}, and {y} for indicating long vowels (“*plene* spelling”), thereby reducing the amount of ambiguity. Hence, {h} could denote the laryngeal /h/ as well as the vowels /ā/ and /ē/, {w} served for the glide /w/ as well as the vowel /ū/ (later also regularly /ō/), and {y} could indicate the glide /y/ as well as the vowel /ī/ (later also habitually /ē/).<sup>19</sup> This innovation is generally attributed to the Aramaeans, since it occurred first in Aramaic inscriptions, but was soon thereafter adopted by other scribal

<sup>19</sup> The grapheme {ʿ}, by contrast, did not yet serve as a vowel letter for /ā/ although it was in certain cases preserved in historical spelling when the loss of the consonant /ʿ/ produced a long vowel, especially in the so-called “emphatic state.”

traditions in Palestine and Transjordan. It is to some extent inherent in the writing system.<sup>20</sup>

The three “vowel letters,” or *matres lectionis*, are used inconsistently, however, and “defective” spelling of long vowels without vowel letters continued as well: the surviving Sam’alian texts only have them for word-final long vowels, the inscriptions from central Syria regularly use them for word-final long vowels but feature very few instances with word-medial ones (e.g., *ymwt* /yamūt/ ‘he will die’ in KAI 224: 16),<sup>21</sup> and the Tell Fekheriye inscription, despite its early age, contains a considerable number of examples with both word-final and word-medial vowel letters. This curious distribution may result from a greater familiarity with cuneiform spelling in eastern Syria. *Matres lectionis* are a device that became increasingly popular in the history of the Aramaic script, but, like punctuation in several modern European languages, they could be employed somewhat unpredictably even in the same text as the oscillation between *šʿryn* (KAI 309: 19) and *šʿrn* (KAI 309: 22) for /ša‘ārīn/ ‘barley’ shows. In many other respects, by contrast, the orthography of early Aramaic between Sam’al and Tell Fekheriye appears quite homogeneous. This points to a fairly standardized scribal training that was adopted by the chancelleries of the region.

#### 2.4 Local Forms of the Alphabet

Identifiable local forms of the West Semitic alphabet evolved during the 1st millennium B.C.; the first distinctive traits of the Aramaic family of scripts appeared at the end of the 9th century B.C.: a {d} with a slightly elongated final stroke and a {z} in the form of a modern *zed* with a wavy central bar. The lion’s share of the evidence consists of monumental inscriptions chiseled in stone and thus employing a “lapidary” style, whereas more ephemeral documents were presumably written with ink on perishable materials. Cursive styles for daily use, at any rate, become visible during the 7th century B.C. However, at least the Aramaic hand of the Tell Deir

<sup>20</sup> A combination of sounds like /-iya/ in certain forms, for example, is customarily spelled *y*. Following the strong tendency of such triphthongs to monophthongize in Northwest Semitic, it would soon become /-ī/. Yet orthography does not change at the same pace as pronunciation, hence the traditional spelling *y* would quite naturally come to denote the sound /-ī/.

<sup>21</sup> Assuming that word-medial vowel letters were occasionally used in Sefire is the easiest explanation of this form and receives additional support from scribal practice at Tell Fekheriye, cf. Gzella 2004: 322 n. 60.

‘Alla plaster texts from Transjordan, which dates from about 800 B.C., exhibits early cursive forms of {t} and {q}, with open circles, and the joining of the three vertical bars of {h} to a single stroke. Such local shapes were eventually replaced by a reasonably unified cursive chancery style during the Achaemenid period all over the territory of the Persian Empire. Some texts like the Tell Fekheriye inscription use vertical word dividers, but this practice was never generalized.

### 3. PHONOLOGY

Due to the inherent deficiencies of its largely consonantal writing system, the phonology of Old Aramaic has to be reconstructed on the basis of internal and external evidence. *Matres lectionis*, when used, provide important clues for identifying long vowels; additional information can be gleaned from transcriptions into other languages (in addition to the Uruk incantation text, much of the evidence consists of personal names in syllabic cuneiform, which may nonetheless reflect an older stage of the language), later vocalized traditions (chiefly the Tiberian pointing of Biblical Aramaic and reliable vocalized manuscripts of Targumic Aramaic and Classical Syriac), and comparative data from other Semitic languages. Despite the uncertainties of historical reconstruction, this practice yields a more adequate understanding of the language than simply employing the vocalization of Biblical Aramaic or Syriac, which postdates the epigraphic texts by more than a thousand years.

#### 3.1 Consonants

The 22 letters of the West Semitic alphabetic script represent at least 27 consonantal phonemes (that is, phonetic units that can convey a distinction in meaning) in the oldest textual witnesses: the voiced and unvoiced laryngeals /ʔ/ (IPA /ʔ/) and /h/, the pharyngeal fricatives /ʕ/ (IPA /ʕ/) and /ħ/ (IPA /ħ/), the velars /g/ and /k/, the sibilants /z/ and /s/, the dentals /d/ and /t/, the interdentalals /ð/ (as in English ‘*this*’; written with {z}) and /θ/ (as in English ‘*thin*’; usually written with {š}, in Tell Fekheriye with {s}), the bilabials /b/ and /p/; further the palatovelar /š/ (IPA /ʃ/, as in English ‘*ship*’), the lateral /ś/ (normally written with {š} and only exceptionally with {s}), and a reflex of the Proto-Semitic voiced velar or uvular affricate \*/š/ (written with {q}); the “emphatic” counterparts of the unvoiced velar, sibilant, dental, and interdental, i.e., /q/, /š/, /t/, and /θ/ (written with {s}); finally the lateral resonant /l/ and the dental trill /r/,

the nasals /n/ (dental) and /m/ (bilabial), and the glides (semi-vowels) /y/ (palatal) and /w/ (bilabial). The stops /b/, /g/, /d/, /k/, /p/, and /t/ were, as far as one can tell, still unaspirated plosives in all positions;<sup>22</sup> the pronunciation of the “emphatics” (which may once have been glottal ejectives), the lateral /š/ and the Aramaic reflex of \*/š/, however, are controversial. At least the latter seems to have been close to /q/, if indeed the choice for the grapheme {q} results from a similar pronunciation; consequently, it is at times understood as a voiced emphatic fricative.<sup>23</sup> Some scholars also suppose that earlier Aramaic still preserved the distinction between Proto-Semitic /ħ/ and /ḫ/ (IPA /x/), both written with {ḫ}, on the one hand and between /ʕ/ and /ğ/ (IPA /ɣ/), written with {ʕ}, on the other,<sup>24</sup> but this is more difficult to demonstrate. Aramaic phonemes without a corresponding grapheme were spelled with the letter designating the respective sound correspondence in Canaanite (as with the interdental) or the most similar sound (as, presumably, with the reflex of \*/š/; the same applies to {s} for /θ/, which is closer to /s/ than to /š/, in Tell Fekheriye, at a greater distance from the Phoenician sphere of influence). All consonants could be lengthened (“geminated”), but it would seem that even lengthened consonants were only articulated once, like *mamma*, *fatto*, *spesso*, etc., in Italian.

At some stage after the Old Aramaic period, the merger of the interdentals with the corresponding dentals (/ð/ > /d/, /θ/ > /t/, /ʔ/ > /t/) and the slightly later merger of the reflex of \*/š/ with /ʕ/ had been completed.<sup>25</sup> Yet orthography often lagged behind these phonetic developments, hence historical spellings like {z} for old /ð/, then pronounced like /d/, lingered on in a few high-frequency words such as the demonstrative pronouns (*znh* /ðenā/ > /denā/ ‘this [m.sg.]’) and the relative marker (*zy* /ðī/ > /dī/), especially in formal orthography (as opposed to sub-standard *dnh* and *dy*). In part, these mergers may have been underway in the last stages of Old Aramaic. The reason for this hypothesis is that at least the Bukan inscription (KAI 320), which dates from ca. 700 B.C. and was discovered in the western part of present-day Iran, oscillates between traditional {š} for /θ/ in *šwrh* /θawrā/ ‘cow’ (line 5) and {t} for the same etymological sound in *tnn* \*/θanān/ > /tanān/ ‘smoke’ (line 8). A chronological gap of

<sup>22</sup> Beyer 1984: 125–128.

<sup>23</sup> See Beyer 2004: 45f, 51.

<sup>24</sup> Beyer 1984: 101f.

<sup>25</sup> Beyer 1984: 100 and id. 2004: 51.

some size (decades or even centuries) nonetheless separates a change in pronunciation from the according modification of spelling. Unfortunately, there is no conclusive evidence for this phenomenon in the Syrian varieties of Old Aramaic or for Sam'alian.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.2 Vowels

The Proto-Semitic short vocalic phonemes \*/a/, \*/i/, and \*/u/, as well as their long counterparts \*/ā/, \*/ī/, and \*/ū/, each have reflexes in Old Aramaic. Transcriptions and later vocalizations indicate that original short \*/i/ was realized as [e] and that original short \*/u/ was realized as [o] in pronunciation. It is quite feasible to assume, though impossible to prove beyond a doubt, that this was already the case for the earliest attestations of Aramaic. Yet it seems a matter of definition whether [e] and [o] were allophones of the phonemes /i/ and /u/ in Aramaic, or whether the etymological Semitic phonemes \*/i/ and \*/u/ shifted to /e/ and /o/ at some stage of the language. Unfortunately, much relevant information about allophones and other features of pronunciation is irrevocably lost. In addition to that, the phoneme /ē/ (a long open *e* like German [ä:]), which cannot be reconstructed for Proto-Semitic, appears in various 1st-millennium Northwest Semitic languages and presumably results from stressed long word-final /-ī/. Its quality can be established on the basis of later Hebrew and Aramaic vocalizations; spellings with {h}, which is not used as a vowel letter for /-ī/, in early Aramaic, Moabite, and Hebrew inscriptions indicate that this change had taken place by the 9th century B.C. in at least some Syro-Palestinian idioms, even if its prehistory remains elusive. Older Aramaic was not yet affected by the later reduction of short unstressed vowels in open syllables. Likewise, the Proto-Semitic diphthongs \*/aw/ (written with {w}) and \*/ay/ (written with {y}) were still preserved; only later did they monophthongize to /ō/ and /ē/ (a long closed *e*), respectively,<sup>27</sup> which then led to the secondary use of {w} and {y} as vowel letters for /ō/ and /ē/.

<sup>26</sup> A possible instance in Sefire, *yrt* /yaret/ 'may he inherit' for expected \**yrš* /yareθ/ (KAI 222 C: 24–25), is ambiguous and can also be explained as an instance of dissimilation triggered by the following {š} for /š/ (cf. Degen 1969: 43).

<sup>27</sup> According to Beyer 1984: 116–120 and id. 2004: 55, this process was completed by 200–150 B.C., but occasional spellings of etymological \*/aw/ and \*/ay/ without a written reflex of the corresponding glide could also suggest that it was underway in some varieties of Aramaic at a much earlier date (cf. Folmer 2011: 134).



3.3 *Sound Changes*

Most surviving witnesses of Old Aramaic in Syria and elsewhere are the products of royal chancelleries. Due to a conservative, reasonably standardized, orthography and a linguistic register no doubt quite remote from the contemporary vernaculars, many phonetic changes of the actual, spoken, language go unnoticed. Regressive assimilation of /n/ to the immediately following consonant, to be sure, has been inherited from a previous stage of Northwest Semitic and is consistently reflected in writing, e.g., ʾt /ʾattā/ ‘you’ (< \*ʾanta/, KAI 224: 11, 20). Its preservation in the exceptional form *mhnḥt* /mahanḥet/ ‘he who brings down’ in the Tell Fekheriye inscription (KAI 309: 2; C-stem participle of the root *nḥt* ‘to descend’) may have been caused by the pharyngeal and should not be confused with the later orthographic or phonetic phenomenon of “degemination” in Official Aramaic.<sup>28</sup>

The /l/ in the roots *lqh* ‘to take’ and *slq* ‘to go up’ behaves similarly, at least from a synchronic point of view, hence *yqh* ‘he will take’ (KAI 222 B: 27), *tqh* ‘you will take’ (KAI 224: 2), and *ysq* ‘it comes onto’ (KAI 224: 14). Sam’alian, too, only has spellings without *l* in the “imperfect” of *lqh*. Occasionally, however, unassimilated forms of this root crop up without any noticeable functional difference, especially in Tell Fekheriye (*mlqh* in KAI 309: 10, *ylqh* in l. 17, *tlqh* in l. 18; the root *slq* does not occur in this text, neither do instances of /n/ in contact with another consonant except for the special case *mhnḥt*), but also in Sefire (KAI 222 B: 35, whereas the more regular form is used in l. 27 of the same text).<sup>29</sup> The limited amount of data makes it impossible to say whether this is a phonetic peculiarity, and thus perhaps a dialectal feature of an “eastern” variety of Syrian Aramaic, perhaps triggered or reinforced by Akkadian pronunciation, or merely a variant spelling.

Assimilation of dentals may have been more frequent in actual speech than the conservative orthography suggests (see the remark on metathesis of /t/ in the section on verbal stems below). Judging from the traditional pronunciation of Classical Syriac, for instance, one may assume that *rṣt*

<sup>28</sup> On degemination, cf. Beyer 1984: 89–95; Folmer 1995: 74–94; Gzella 2008: 96f.

<sup>29</sup> Degen 1969: 40 n. 38 discusses a few other proposals with reference to KAI 222 B: 35, but in light of the Tell Fekheriye text far-reaching grammatical explanations in earlier studies (such as a reflex of an entirely different verbal conjugation) have lost much of their plausibility.

/rāḥt/ 'I ran' (KAI 216: 8) sounded like [rātt].<sup>30</sup> There is also some evidence for the dissimilation of the first of two emphatics in the same word, the best example being *kys'* 'summer' (KAI 216: 19) instead of the expected \**qys'* from the original \*/qayḥ-/ (written *qyt* in later Aramaic). It mostly seems to target /q/ > /k/, but not consistently (cf. *llqtw* /lalqoṭū/ 'let them collect' in KAI 309: 22). However, the true extent of this phenomenon remains elusive, as dissimilated forms appear side by side with regular ones even in the same text (e.g., *ṣdq* 'justice' in KAI 216: 4–5).<sup>31</sup>

Other sound changes are rather difficult to pinpoint. There is general agreement that syllable-final /ʔ/ disappeared at some stage between Old Aramaic and Official Aramaic, thereby causing compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel if that vowel was short. As a consequence, (most) verbs originally ending in /-ʔ/ merged with those ending in /-ī/. The grapheme {ʔ} was often preserved in historical spelling, especially for what has become /-ā/ in the emphatic state, and eventually triggered the use of {ʔ} as a vowel letter for /-ā/ even in cases where that vowel did not originate from the loss of a glottal stop. Furthermore, the grapheme {ʔ} for an etymological glottal stop could drop out or be replaced by {h} (the normal means of indicating /-ā/) in the emphatic state in less formal orthography. Cuneiform transcriptions of personal names may imply that this process began in the second half of the 9th century B.C.; direct evidence from Aramaic, however, appears only gradually.<sup>32</sup> Aphaeresis of word-initial /ʔ/ in the numeral 'one' *ḥd* /ḥad/ (< \*/aḥad/), fem. *ḥdh*, by contrast, is common to all Aramaic languages from the outset, whereas prosthetic /ʔ/ (especially with sibilants) seems to be merely incidental (cf. *ʕm* /ʔešm/ in

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Brockelmann 1965: 18 (§§ 26–27), hence *pšytt'* 'the simple one (fem.)' of course has to be transcribed *pšittā*.

<sup>31</sup> Regressive dissimilation of two emphatics in Aramaic resembles Geers's Law in Akkadian. It appears to be more frequent in Mandaic (which was spoken on the territory of Babylonia and seems to exhibit other traits of Babylonian as well, such as phonetic degemination) than in other Aramaic varieties (Gzella 2008: 97 with n. 38). One may thus entertain the possibility of substrate influence of Akkadian pronunciation, but it is important to note that this dissimilation does not produce identical results in Akkadian and Aramaic (Kaufman 1974: 121f, who rejects the hypothesis of a contact-induced feature). See Folmer 1995: 94–101 for likewise sporadic evidence from later periods.

<sup>32</sup> Beyer 1984: 104–106 and id. 2004: 52f. The earliest possible example is *z* /ḏā/ (< \*/ḏā'/) 'this one (f.sg.)' in the pedestal inscription from Tell Halaf in Assyria (KAI 231) instead of the usual spelling *z'*. No uncontroversial examples of {h} for /-ā/ in the emphatic state are yet attested in the oldest Aramaic texts, although this became more common in later periods; the only possible case, *mlkh* in the graffito KAI 203 from Syria, can be explained differently (Degen 1969: 8 n. 40; e.g., 'his king' instead of 'the king').

KAI 222 C: 25 and 223 B: 7 but, if this is indeed the same word, *šm* /šem/ ‘name’ in 202 C: 2).

The loss of intervocalic /h/, which increasingly affected the “imperfect” of the causative stem during the Official Aramaic period, already seems to appear once in Sefire (*yskr* /yasker/ ‘he shall deliver’ in KAI 224: 3; see the discussion in the section on the verbal stems). The same phonetic feature underlies the non-standard forms *klm* and *klm* ‘all of them (fem. and masc.)’ in Tell Fekheriye (KAI 309: 3.4.5). Later varieties of Aramaic have *klhn* and *klhm*, but there is no comparative evidence for these forms in other Old Aramaic sub-corpora.

Vowel shifts are even more elusive. Cuneiform transcriptions of names seem to point to an occasional change of /a/ to /e/ before syllable-final /‘/, /h/, or /h/.<sup>33</sup> The extent of the dissimilation of /a/ to /e/ in the preformative vowel of the G-stem “imperfect” remains controversial for older Aramaic; hence it is difficult to say whether the Barth-Ginsberg Law, according to which \*/yaktab-/ regularly changed into \*/yiktab-/ in Canaanite and Ugaritic (and the /i/ vowel was subsequently generalized in the preformative in vocalized Hebrew and Syriac), was operative in the Aramaic varieties described here.<sup>34</sup> Stress is mostly on the final syllable, except for some pronouns and forms with certain suffixes and endings that exhibit penultimate stress; there seem to be no special forms for sentence-final intonation (“pause”); inherited word-final short vowels had disappeared by the time the first Aramaic texts emerged.

#### 4. MORPHOLOGY AND MORPHOSYNTAX

##### 4.1 *Pronouns*

As in other Semitic languages, the independent personal pronouns mark the subject in different types of nominal clauses (‘š *nh* *nh* ‘I am a humble man,’ KAI 202 A: 2; *h* *byt* *kys* ‘it was the summer mansion,’ KAI 216: 19) and can reinforce it (e.g., for highlighting a contrast) together with finite verbal forms, which also encode information on the person, number, and gender of the agent. The paradigm is incomplete for the oldest texts but

<sup>33</sup> Beyer 1984: 107.

<sup>34</sup> According to Beyer 1984: 108–112, this change began in the 5th century B.C., whereas Lipiński 1981: 192f assumes that it was already operative in Old Aramaic.

can be partially supplemented by evidence from the subsequent stage of Aramaic:

Person	Singular	Plural
1 masc./fem.	<i>ʾnh ʾanā/</i>	— (later: <i>ʾnhn(h) ʾanāhnā/</i> )
2 masc.	<i>ʾt ʾáttā/</i>	— (later: <i>ʾntm ʾattom/</i> )
2 fem.	— (later: <i>ʾnty ʾáttī/</i> )	—
3 masc.	<i>hʾ /hūʾ/ (&gt; hw /hū/)</i>	<i>hm(w) /hóm(ū)/</i>
3 fem.	<i>hʾ /hīʾ/ (&gt; hy /hī/)</i>	—

Samʿalian, by contrast, differs from all known varieties of Aramaic in that it consistently exhibits the “long” first-person singular personal pronoun *ʾnk*. Since it remains unclear whether this form has been inherited from an older stage of Northwest Semitic, which used both a long form *\*ʾanāku/* and a short form *\*ʾanā/* (these occur side by side in Ugaritic), or borrowed from Phoenician (with *\*ʾanāku/ > ʾanōkī/*),<sup>35</sup> its exact pronunciation cannot be determined. However, one instance of the *plene* spelling *ʾnky* (KAI 215: 19) indicates that the final vowel of this pronoun has shifted to /ī/, which appears to be a typical feature of Canaanite<sup>36</sup> and thus supports the idea of a Phoenician loan (Phoenician being the most obvious candidate for Canaanite influences in this region). The second-person masculine singular form is always spelled without a final vowel letter in Old and Official Aramaic, presumably because unstressed word-final /-ā/ was normally written defectively. In addition to the independent personal pronouns, suffixes could be added to nouns and verbs in order to highlight a pronominal possessor or a pronominal direct object. These will be discussed below in the section on nouns.

A set of proximal demonstratives (‘this, these’) consists of *znh /ðenā/* (masc. singular, later *> /denā/*), *zʾ /ðāʾ/* (fem. singular, later *> /dā/*), and *ʾl ʾellē/* (KAI 202 A: 9.16; B: 8) or *ʾln ʾellēn/* (masc. and fem. plural). Variation in the Northwest Semitic demonstrative pronouns is reflected, on the micro level, in Old Aramaic and Samʿalian. The Tell Fekheriye inscription contains an example of the fem. singular *zʾ /ðāʾt/* (KAI 309: 15), otherwise unattested in Aramaic but with straightforward cognates in Hebrew and Moabite. Samʿalian, on the other hand, has the masc. singular form *zn*

<sup>35</sup> Gianto 1995; cf. Beyer 2004: 15 (“die phönizischen Wörter [sc. in Samʿalian] stammen aus der vorhergehenden Schriftsprache”).

<sup>36</sup> The /ī/ can be explained as a result of dissimilation of two back vowels, following the Canaanite shift of the preceding vowel /ā/ to /ō/, an analogy to the Canaanite first-person singular “perfect” ending /-tī/, or an assimilation to the Common Semitic first-person singular possessive suffix /-ī/.

(KAI 214: 1; Kuttamuwa l. 5), presumably a defective spelling for /ḏenā/, and a by-form *znn* /ḏenān/ (Kuttamuwa l. 9).<sup>37</sup> Defective spellings like *zn* and ʾ, as well as the much later by-form *dn* in Aramaic texts from Qumran, could entail that the stress was originally on the first syllable in these forms.<sup>38</sup> Proper distal counterparts ('that, those') are only attested for later periods,<sup>39</sup> whereas Old Aramaic, like Phoenician, Hebrew, and much of Official Aramaic, used the third-person independent pronouns for this purpose.

The common Aramaic relative marker *zy* /ḏī/ (later > /dī/, eventually spelled *dy*), by contrast, has evolved from a determinative-relative pronoun and preserves a fossilized genitive that no longer inflects.<sup>40</sup> It can introduce relative (KAI 214: 1) and, especially in combination with prepositions, other subordinate clauses (e.g., it marks a causal relationship in KAI 201: 4) or act as an analytical genitive marker. The latter function is but rarely attested in the oldest Aramaic texts, uncontested examples being *dmwt' zy hdy'sy* 'the image of Haddayisi' (KAI 309: 1) and *m'ny' zy bt hdd* 'the vessels belonging to the house of Hadad' (KAI 309: 16–17). Both occur in the Tell Fekheriye inscription and have perhaps been reinforced by Akkadian *ša* due to extensive bilingualism in that area.<sup>41</sup> This particle can also resume another antecedent, as in *mlk gzn wzy skn wzy 'zrn* 'the king of Gozan and the one of Sikan and the one of Azran' (KAI 309: 13).<sup>42</sup> In subsequent stages of Aramaic, however, analytical genitive marking increasingly competes with the construct state, especially for further qualifications such as materials. Together with the preposition /la-/ and a suffix, *zy* can form an independent possessive pronoun (*zy ly* 'what belongs to me', KAI 224: 20).

Despite the otherwise gender-based nominal and pronominal system, the two interrogatives *mn* /man/ 'who?' and *mh* /mā/ 'what?' distinguish

<sup>37</sup> The form *znn*, which is now first attested in the new Kuttamuwa stele, has a later parallel in *dnn*, which occurs frequently in the Aramaic legal papyri from Naḥal Ḥever (Beyer 2004: 380). However, there is a tendency in Aramaic to expand final long vowels in certain forms by /-n/ (Beyer 1984: 149), so one does not necessarily have to posit a direct relationship between both forms.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Beyer 1984: 555f.

<sup>39</sup> Evidence from Official Aramaic is conveniently summarized by Folmer 2011: 142.

<sup>40</sup> The alleged fem. singular variant *'zh* 'which' in Sam'alīan (KAI 215: 2) is debated and may be a ghost form (see Hoftijzer – Jongeling 1995: 61 for the reading *'lh* 'conspiracy'[?]).

<sup>41</sup> Kaufman 1982: 151. The title *šbt zy nrgl* 'the plague of Nergal' in the same text (KAI 309: 23) may be calqued directly from Akkadian and bears less weight for determining the function of *zy* in Aramaic.

<sup>42</sup> For examples from later periods, see Beyer 1984: 549.

between persons, or animates, and things, or inanimates. They may preserve traces of an erstwhile more prominent role of animacy in Semitic. No proper indefinite pronouns exist in Old Aramaic, but *ʾnš* /ʾenāš/ or *gbr* /gabr/, in the Kuttamuwa stele also *ʾš* /ʾiš/ (l. 7), all meaning ‘man’, can have generic, and presumably gender-neutral, nuances (‘person’) due to semantic bleaching, e.g., in the phrase *kl gbr zy* ‘everyone who’ (KAI 224: 1–2). A similar usage is attested for the numeral *ḥd* /ḥad/ ‘one’ in *mn byt ḥd mlkn rbrbn* ‘than the house of any of the great kings’ (KAI 216: 13–14). Its inanimate counterpart *m(n)dʿm* ‘something, anything’ only appears in Official Aramaic. These circumlocutions mirror the distinction between animate and inanimate in the interrogatives, arguably because gender is in most cases either unknown or irrelevant with interrogatives and indefinites. The interrogatives, too, can be used as indefinites: *kl mh* ‘anything’ (KAI 216: 15).

#### 4.2 Nouns

Nouns follow the usual root-and-pattern system of derivation,<sup>43</sup> which is so typical for Semitic languages, and inflect for gender (masculine, feminine), number (singular, plural, and vestiges of the dual), and state (absolute, construct, emphatic). Morphological case marking collapsed around 1000 B.C. in Northwest Semitic. The feminine plural absolute ending /-ān/, patterned after its masculine counterpart as opposed to common Semitic \*/-āt-/, which is still preserved in Samʿalian (cf. *msgrt*/masgirāt/ ‘prisons’ in KAI 215: 4.8), belongs to the typical features of Aramaic, as does the emphatic (or “determinative”) state. Although direct evidence is lacking, one may assume that Old Aramaic agrees with other Northwest Semitic languages in using a bisyllabic base /qVtal-/ (i.e., with an additional /a/ between the second and the third root consonant) for the noun patterns *qatl*, *qitl*, and *qutl* besides adding the customary plural endings. Forms confidently to be reconstructed on the basis of later evidence from Official Aramaic are given in parentheses but they are as yet unattested in the oldest Aramaic texts:

<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, the etymological patterns are not specified in the synopsis given by Degen 1969: 44–50, which is arranged according to the consonantal spellings and hence does not reveal the pronunciation of these words in light of later transcriptions and vocalizations. Much of the relevant information, however, can be found in Beyer 1984: 503–728.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
masc. abs.	/-Ø/	(-yn /-ayn/)	-n <sup>44</sup> /-īn/
masc. cstr.	/-Ø/	-y /-ay/	-y /-ay/
masc. emph.	-ʾ / -āʾ / (> /-ā/)	—	-yʾ /-ayyāʾ / (> /-ayyā/)
fem. abs.	-h /-ā / (< /-(a)t/) <sup>45</sup>	(-tyn /-tayn/)	-n /-ān/ <sup>46</sup>
fem. cstr.	-t /-at/	-ty /-tay/	-t /-āt/
fem. emph.	-tʾ /-tāʾ / (> /-tā/)	—	-tʾ /-ātāʾ / (> /-ātā/)

The gender of a noun in Semitic can be known from its agreement with adjectives and verbs; not all nouns that behave like feminines in concord have the corresponding ending though: unmarked feminines include *nbš* /nabš/ ‘self’ (KAI 222 B: 39) and many place names; judging from later and comparative evidence, body parts that naturally come in pairs, like *yd* /yad/ ‘hand’, are also feminine, but direct evidence from the earliest texts is lacking. Sometimes singular and plural take opposite gender endings, e.g., *mlh* /mellā/ ‘word’, plural *mln* /mellīn/ (KAI 224: 2), or *šnh* /šanā/ ‘year’, plural *šnn* /šanīn/ (KAI 222 A: 27). A few nouns have different bases in singular and plural (some of them by means of expansion or reduplication), e.g., *ʾb* /ʾab/ ‘father’, cstr. plural *ʾbhy* /ʾabahay/ ‘fathers of’; *br* /bar/ ‘son’,<sup>47</sup> cstr. plural /banay/ ‘sons of’ (KAI 222 A: 2 and elsewhere); *by(t)* /bay(t)/ ‘house’,<sup>48</sup> cstr. plural *bty* /bāttay/ (< \*/bayatay/?) ‘houses of’ (KAI 202 B: 9); *rb* /rabb/ ‘great’, plural *rbrbn* /rabrabīn/ ‘great ones’ (KAI 216: 10 and elsewhere). At times this coincides with distinct gender marking, as in the cstr. plural *nšy* /nešay/ ‘women of’ (KAI 222 A: 41; but the absolute plural *nšwn* /nešawān/ with the corresponding feminine

<sup>44</sup> The Tell Fekheriye inscription has some instances of a plene spelling {-yn} with this ending (e.g., *ʾhyn* /ʾelāhīn/ ‘gods’ in KAI 309: 4 or *šʾyn* /šaʾārīn/ ‘barley’ in l. 19, but *šʾrn* in l. 22), although defective spelling of the absolute masc. plural remains dominant even in Official Aramaic.

<sup>45</sup> A remnant of the older ending /-(a)t/ seems to survive in *šʾt* /šaʾt/ ‘sheep’ (KAI 222 A: 21; otherwise spelled *šʾh* in KAI 215: 6, 9), but the context is broken. Another alleged example, *mrmt* ‘treachery’ (KAI 224: 22), by contrast, could be better analyzed as an absolute fem. plural (see Hoftijzer – Jongeling 1995: 694, s.v.).

<sup>46</sup> Exceptionally, a vestige of older \*/-āt-/ may have been preserved in *mln lhyt* ‘evil words’ (KAI 224: 2), perhaps because this was a formulaic expression.

<sup>47</sup> The vowel differs in cuneiform transcriptions and may originate from an indistinct central vowel due to syllabic /r/ (unless these spellings reflect different words).

<sup>48</sup> It remains unclear whether *by* in *by tb* ‘a fine house’ (KAI 216:16) is an early attestation of the shift \*/bayt/ > /bay/ of the absolute form of this word in Aramaic (so, among others, Beyer 1984: 530) or a so-called “sandhi writing” for expected *byt tb* due to assimilation of dentals in a stress-unit beyond word-boundaries (Degen 1969: 43). However, the only clear example for sandhi writing is the personal name *brkb* /Bar-Rākeb/ in KAI 215: 19 instead of the usual *brkkb*. Comparable instances appear, again with names or filiations, in the earliest Phoenician inscriptions (KAI 6: 1; 7: 3), hence this phenomenon may have been inherited from there.

ending appears in Tell Fekheriye, KAI 309: 21.22)<sup>49</sup> for the singular /'ettā/ 'woman', which is unattested in the earliest phase of Aramaic. Some nouns without overt plural marking but that, according to the context, must refer to more than one entity (e.g., *nhr klm* 'all the rivers' in KAI 309: 4 or *mt kln* 'all the lands' in KAI 309: 3.5), have been analyzed either as collectives (like "army") or as remnants of an "internal plural" formed by means of a different vowel sequence.<sup>50</sup> Following a common tendency in Semitic, the dual ceases to be productive but survives in paired body parts and, supposedly, the numeral '2' for which there is, however, no evidence in this corpus.

In contradistinction to gender and number, state is a dimension peculiar to Semitic. The "absolute" state (or "unbound form") acts as the unmarked form; with the emphatic state gradually turning into a marker of definiteness, that is, contextual identifiability (thus serving like a post-positive definite article, though the origin of the morpheme /-ā'/ remains controversial), the absolute came to signal indefiniteness and is especially used with the quantifier *kl* /koll/ 'all' (*kl gbr* 'everybody', KAI 224: 1), many adverbial and numerical constructions (*'d 'lm* 'forever', KAI 224: 25; *šb' šnn* 'for seven years', KAI 222 A: 27 etc.), and predicative adjectives (*wšdq 'nh* 'and I am loyal', KAI 217: 5). This process took place during the Old Aramaic period and forms part of a common tendency of Northwest Semitic to acquire morphological definite marking at the beginning of the 1st millennium B.C. It can also be observed in the corpus under review here. The lack of attestations for the emphatic state in Sam'alian, even with demonstrative pronouns and therefore in contextually clearly definite noun phrases (e.g., *nšb zn* 'this stele' in KAI 214: 1; 215: 1.20; Kuttamuwa l. 5),<sup>51</sup> thus conserves a more archaic developmental stage of Semitic. Moreover, except for *qlqlt* 'the garbage heaps' (KAI 309: 22), the few relevant examples in the Tell Fekheriye text occur either together with a demonstrative pronoun (KAI 309: 15), as the antecedent of a relative clause (KAI 309: 1), or in a genitive construction with a proper name (KAI 309: 16–17), whereas other nouns are marked as definite by a possessive suffix or by a genitive relationship with a proper name, or simply remain unmarked (e.g., *'lh rḥmn* /'elāh raḥmān/ 'a/the gracious god' in KAI 309: 5 or *mr' rb* /māre' rabb/ 'a/the great lord' in KAI 309: 6). And even

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *s'wn* /θa'awān/ 'ewes' in KAI 309: 20 but *š'n* /θa'ān/ in KAI 222 A: 23 (Sefire).

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Lipiński 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Nebe 2010: 328.



in the Sefire inscriptions, which exhibit a somewhat more widespread use of the emphatic state for definiteness marking, the majority of instances are still construction-bound in that they appear before a demonstrative or the relative marker.<sup>52</sup>

The “construct” state (or “bound form”), on the other hand, establishes a stress unit with the noun that immediately follows it and thus expresses a genitive relationship. Chains of more than one construct noun are also possible, but a construct noun modifying more than one non-construct element is generally avoided.<sup>53</sup> If the last element of a construct phrase is formally definite (i.e., a proper name, a suffixed noun, or a noun in the emphatic state), the entire phrase counts as definite. Due to the bound character of a construct phrase, the inherited fem. singular and plural endings \*/-at/ and \*/-āt/ have been preserved. Constructs constitute the usual form of rendering a genitive relationship in Old Aramaic. However, the functional overlap of the emerging analytical expression with the relative marker *zy* /ðī/ as a *nota genitivi*, which only plays a greater role in later forms of Aramaic, appears already in the parallelism between *dmwt' zy hdys'y* ‘the image of Haddayis’i’ (KAI 309: 1) and *šlm hdys'y* ‘the statue of Haddayis’i’ (KAI 309: 12) in Tell Fekheriye.<sup>54</sup>

While Aramaic agrees with other Northwest Semitic languages attested after 1000 B.C. in that the morpheme /-ay/, formally similar (and perhaps identical) to the dual, serves as the construct ending for the masc. plural, the retention of more archaic construct forms constitutes the distinctive hallmark of Sam’alian. For prior to the breakdown of inflectional case marking, Northwest Semitic in the 2nd millennium B.C. distinguished, in the masc. plural, between a nominative ending \*/-ūma/ (with “mimation”) or \*/-ūna/ (with “nunation”) and a corresponding genitive-accusative ending \*/-īma/ or \*/-īna/. The construct forms, on the other hand, simply ended in the long case vowel without /-ma/ or /-na/, respectively. This was still the situation in Ugaritic. After the loss of short unstressed word-final vowels, the genitive-accusative form (presumably being the more

<sup>52</sup> Lambdin 1971: 318f. This pattern thus resembles the use of the emerging definite article in Phoenician; see Gzella 2006a.

<sup>53</sup> The alleged exception *gwgl šmyn w'rq* ‘the irrigation-master of heaven and earth’ (KAI 309: 2) in Tell Fekheriye is presumably a calque based on the corresponding divine title in Akkadian, which has two consecutive genitives (*gú-gal šamê u eršeti*, line 1 of the Akkadian version).

<sup>54</sup> The use of *zy* in the former expression right in the opening sentence may have been influenced by the standard West Semitic format of dedicatory inscriptions (cf. KAI 202 A: 1).

frequent one, as it covered several distinct semantic roles, such as the possessor and the patient) was generalized, hence /-īn/ in Aramaic (and Moabite) and \*/-īm/ in Hebrew and Phoenician.

Contrary to other Northwest Semitic idioms of the same period, however, the majority of the Sam'alian corpus seems to exhibit a different ending for the old nominative /-ū/ and the old genitive-accusative /-ī/ in both the construct and the absolute states of the masc. plural. Hence the surviving texts clearly distinguish between *ʾlhw* /'elāhū/ 'the gods' (KAI 214: 2, subject) and *b'bn̄y* /ba-'abānī/ 'with stones' (KAI 214: 31, with the old genitive ending after a preposition) in the absolute. All unambiguous construct forms, by contrast, have the former genitive ending due to syntactical reasons, as in *bywm̄y* /ba-yawmī/ 'in the days of' (KAI 215: 10). In analogy with the absolute, a defective spelling like *ʾlh y'dy* 'the gods of Yādiya' (KAI 215: 2, subject of a transitive verb) should be thought to reflect a nominative /'elāhū/, but this is difficult to verify.<sup>55</sup> However that may be, the old construct state appears to have been extended to the absolute state of the masc. plural at the expense of the etymological forms with nunation or mimation.<sup>56</sup> When the chancellery language of Sam'al shifted from Sam'alian to an Old Aramaic variety more similar to that used in central Syria, customary formulaic expressions were adapted: contrast Sam'alian *bm̄ṣ't mlky* 'amidst of kings' (KAI 215: 10) with Old Aramaic *bm̄ṣ't mlkn* (KAI 216: 9–10). The new Kuttamuwa inscription possibly reflects an intermediate stage. On the one hand, it features lexical peculiarities of Sam'alian, as opposed to Aramaic, like *ʾnk* 'I' or the object marker *wt*, and lacks the emphatic state. On the other hand, masc. plural absolute forms seem to have the ending /-īn/ according to the expression *ywmn bywmn* /yawmīn la-yawmīn/ 'year by year' (l. 10) and perhaps also the epithet *hdd krmn* /Hadad karamīn/ 'Hadad of the vineyards'.<sup>57</sup> If that interpretation is correct, the Kuttamuwa text illustrates the gradual transition from Sam'alian to Old Aramaic.<sup>58</sup>

Certain differences of inflection can be observed with other noun patterns throughout Aramaic. At some point in time, nisbe adjectives in /-āy/, as in many gentilics, replaced the emphatic masc. plural /-ayyā'/'

<sup>55</sup> It is of course not altogether impossible that the formal distinction between nominative and genitive-accusative had already been leveled in the construct state.

<sup>56</sup> Unless one supposes that the inherited /m/ or /n/ of the absolute form disappeared due to nasalization.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Pardee 2009a: 58, 65 and Nebe 2010: 328f.

<sup>58</sup> See also Nebe 2010: 330.

(> /-ayyā/) by /-ē/, supposedly an Assyrian form used for euphonic reasons (i.e., in order to avoid the cumbersome ending /-āyayyā).<sup>59</sup> The latter became the dominant form in later Eastern Aramaic,<sup>60</sup> but its frequency in Old Aramaic cannot be confidently assessed. Feminines ending in \*/-āt/, \*/-īt/, and \*/-ūt/<sup>61</sup> generally lost the /-t/ in the absolute singular and plural but preserved the long vowel of the stem (e.g., *rʿy* /reʿī/ ‘pasture’ and *mšqy* /mašqī/ ‘watering places’ in KAI 309:2.3).<sup>62</sup> In the plural, however, these long vowels would be expected to triphthongize before vocalic endings, hence, absolute /-awān/, construct /-awāt/, emphatic /-awātāʾ/ > /-awātā/ for \*/-āt/; /-iyān/, /-iyāt/, /-iyātāʾ/ > /-iyātā/ for \*/-īt/; and /-uwān/, /-uwāt/, /-uwātāʾ/ > /-uwātā/ for \*/-ūt/. Yet the situation in Old Aramaic largely has to be reconstructed in light of later evidence. Similar principles would then apply to nouns ending in \*/-ī/ > /-ē/ (e.g., *ʿrbh* /ʿarbē/ ‘locust’ in KAI 222 A: 27 and participles as well as adjectives of verbal roots in /-ī/ like, supposedly, *ʿnh* /ʿanē/ ‘humble’ in KAI 202 A: 2): absolute and construct masc. singular /-ē/, emphatic /-iyāʾ/ > /-iyā/; absolute plural /-ayn/, construct /-ay/, emphatic /-ayyāʾ/ > /-ayyā/; absolute fem. singular /-iyā/, construct /-iyat/, emphatic /-ītāʾ/ > /-ītā/; absolute plural /-iyān/, construct /-iyāt/, emphatic /-iyātāʾ/ > /-iyātā/.<sup>63</sup> These should be distinguished from the small group of nouns in \*/-y/ (like *šby* /ṣabī/ < \*/ṣaby/ ‘gazelle’ in KAI 222 A: 33).<sup>64</sup> This difference seems to be related to the dual nature of the glide /y/, which combines properties of vowels and consonants.

Pronominal suffixes can be attached to prepositions and the construct state of nouns in order to render a genitive relationship with a pronominal possessor. Depending on whether the construct form of a noun ends

<sup>59</sup> Kaufman 1974: 127f and Beyer 2004: 50.

<sup>60</sup> Gzella 2008: 100.

<sup>61</sup> Beyer 1984: 454–456.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Kaufman 1982: 164. Beyer 1984: 27, by contrast, seems to suppose that {y} here atypically renders /-ē/, but the former explanation is easier.

<sup>63</sup> Beyer 1984: 456–458.

<sup>64</sup> Sometimes nouns ending in \*/-y/ can merge with those in \*/-ī/, hence *šdh* ‘owl’ (KAI 222 A: 33), which is presumably to be read /šadē/ although it belongs to the same class as \*/ṣaby/. The same then applies to *gdh* /gadē/ ‘goat’ (KAI 223 A: 2) from \*/gady/. Comparative evidence (e.g., the Hebrew plural *kēlīm* ‘vessels’ from \*/kily/ or \*/kaly/ as opposed to the expected *gdāyim* ‘goats’) shows that such crossovers are less surprising than Degen 1969: 27 believes. An influence of the large group in \*/-ī/ on the few similar nouns in \*/-y/ is especially likely. There is no need to assume (with, e.g., Fitzmyer 1995: 90 and 126) an ending /-ay/ for nouns written with {y} and a change of /-ay/ to /-ē/ for those written with {h}. Monophthongization of \*/ay/ occurs by closing the mouth and thus invariably leads to a “closed” ē, whereas {h} as a vowel letter is only attested for an “open” ē.

in a consonant (most singulars and the fem. plural) or a vowel (masc. plural, the dual, and some vocalic singular bases), these suffixes undergo certain changes so that, from a synchronic point of view, two different sets of suffixes can be distinguished. A short linking vowel intervenes between a consonantal noun base and a suffix beginning in a consonant. In all likelihood, this vowel is a remnant of the original case ending. When morphological case marking disappeared in Northwest Semitic around 1000 B.C., the corresponding vowel lost its grammatical function. Later vocalized traditions of Aramaic suggest that it had the same quality as the final vowel of the respective suffix, which is also assumed in the following reconstruction, but this cannot be verified for older stages of the language. Once again, Official Aramaic evidence fills in some gaps in the paradigm:

Suffix	After consonants (sg./f.pl.) ("singular suffixes")	After vowels (m.pl./dual) ("plural suffixes")
3 masc. sg.	-h /-eh/	-wh /-áw-hī/ (later -why)
3 fem. sg.	-h /-ah/	-yh /-áy-hā/
2 masc. sg.	-k /-ákā/	-yk /-áy-kā/
2 fem. sg.	(later -ky /-ékī/)	(later -yky /-áy-kī/)
1 sg.	-y /-ī/	-y /-ayy/
3 masc. pl.	-hm /-ohūm/	-yhm /-ay-hūm/
3 fem. pl.	-hn /-ehenn/	—
2 masc. pl.	-km /-okūm/	-ykm /ay-kūm/
2 fem. pl.	(later -kn /-ekenn/)	(later -ykn /-ay-kenn/)
1 pl.	-n /-ánā/	(later -yn /-áy-nā/)

The reason for the dissimilation of the construct ending /-ay/ before the third-person masc. singular "plural" suffix is debated.<sup>65</sup> Of the few Semitic nouns whose singular construct state ends in a (long) vowel, the suffixed form *'bwh* /'abūhī/ 'his father', according to Aramaic spelling, occurs in Sam'alīan (KAI 215: 2).<sup>66</sup>

### 4.3 Verbal Conjugations

The intersecting semantic notions of tense, aspect, and modality are expressed by inflectional categories. Tense denotes the location of an event or a state in time in relation to some reference point, distinguishing between past and present-future in the older stages of Aramaic; aspect

<sup>65</sup> See, for instance, Brockelmann <sup>10</sup>1965: 49f (§83).

<sup>66</sup> As opposed to the defective spelling *'bh* without a word-medial vowel letter according to local custom in KAI 214: 29; 215: 1, 3, 7.

refers to the “internal” viewpoint of a situation as completed or in progress regardless of its location on the time line; and modality can encode nuances of possibility, obligation, or doubt.<sup>67</sup> The boundaries between them are not always sharp, since, for example, future tense overlaps with modality (for the idea of uncertainty governs both), the present is by definition ongoing, and past events are often presented as completed. The “perfect” (or “suffix conjugation”) and two basic variants of the “imperfect” (or “prefix conjugation”) constitute the backbone of the verbal system in Old Aramaic and Sam’alian. In these finite conjugations, affirmatives alone (for the “perfect”) or a set of pre- and affirmatives (for the “imperfect”) mark distinctions of person, number, and, except for the first person, gender. The following forms of the “perfect” for sound verbal roots like *ktb* ‘to write’ in the unmarked stem are attested or, if absent from the corpus due to its focus on narratives about kings and their deeds (which allows but limited room for female agents), can be reconstructed with reasonable confidence on the basis of the more varied Official Aramaic material (in parentheses):

Person	Singular	Plural
3 masc.	<i>ktb</i> /katab-Ø/	<i>ktbw</i> /katab-ū/
3 fem.	<i>ktbt</i> /katab-at/	— (presumably /katab-ā/?) <sup>68</sup>
2 masc.	<i>ktbt</i> /katáb-tā/	<i>ktbtm</i> /katab-tūm/ (later <i>-t(w)n</i> /-tūn/)
2 fem.	( <i>ktbty</i> /katáb-tī/)	( <i>ktbtn</i> /katab-tenn/)
1 masc./fem.	<i>ktbt</i> /katab-t/	<i>ktbn</i> /katáb-nā/

Defective spelling of affirmatives presumably ending in /-ā/ may have been triggered by penultimate stress. The historical final vowel of the first-person singular ending \*/-tu/ (> /-tī/ in Canaanite) had been lost in Aramaic already at the beginning of the textual record, supposedly because the quantity of this vowel was not stable. Sam’alian agrees with the rest of Aramaic here.<sup>69</sup> The base vowel in the second syllable of the “perfect” stem is lexical; most verbs referring to events have /a/, whereas /e/ (< \*/i/) often occurs with stative verbs and still points to the origin of this form in a conjugated adjective. Evidence from later vocalized traditions,

<sup>67</sup> For a discussion of the theoretical implications of tense, aspect, and modality, see Gzella 2004: 57–110.

<sup>68</sup> In Official Aramaic, this form has merged with its masculine counterpart, although a proper feminine form, as in many other Semitic languages, reappears in later Aramaic varieties. The situation in Old Aramaic remains thus unclear. Cf. Gzella 2008: 93f.

<sup>69</sup> E.g., KAI 214: 1, 14; 215: 5; Kuttamuwa l. 1, 2. The alleged spelling *šmty* ‘I have erected’ in KAI 215: 20 instead of the conventional reading *šmt* (as in Kuttamuwa l. 2) is by no means certain (see Nebe 2010: 319).

however, does not necessarily match the situation in Old Aramaic. The “perfect” with dynamic verbs usually refers to past events, but it is controversial whether the form as such anchors an event in time (past tense) or simply marks it as completed (perfective aspect) regardless of its position on the time line. Various types of past events occur, such as *wqm* /*my* /*wa-qām* ‘*emmī*/ ‘and he arose together with me (= to my help)’ (KAI 202 A: 3, punctual and completed in the past) or *mh ktbt* /*mā katabt*/ ‘what I have written down’ (KAI 222 C: 1–2, resultative with present relevance). Other nuances, such as performatives, are not attested in the Old Aramaic inscriptions from Syria and in Sam’alian, even though their existence can be assumed on the basis of similar usages in Official Aramaic. With subordinate clauses, the “perfect” expresses an event anterior to the one indicated by the verb in the main clause, e.g., *zy nzzr lh* /*ḏī naḏar leh*/ ‘who (= because he) had made a vow to him’ (KAI 201: 4).<sup>70</sup> Like the “long imperfect,” it can also appear in the protasis or apodosis of a conditional clause; this particular usage extends beyond past-tense reference. Stative verbs in the “perfect,” by contrast, express timeless states, while the “perfect” of *hwī* ‘to be’ acts as a past-tense marker (cf. KAI 215: 2).

The “imperfect,” on the other hand, comprises two historically distinct conjugations, here labeled “long” and “short” form, each with its own functional range. (No traces of the old “subjunctive” survive in Aramaic.) They were once distinguished by a final /-u/ in the long form where the short one has a zero ending, but the disappearance of short unstressed word-final vowels leveled the morphological difference in most persons with sound roots.<sup>71</sup> Due to the presence or absence of the final /-n/ in certain forms, a number of instances can still be distinguished in writing (though the “short imperfect” began to vanish already in Official Aramaic):

Person	‘Long form’	‘Short form’
3 masc. sg.	<i>yktb</i> / <i>ya-ktob-Ø</i> /	<i>yktb</i> / <i>ya-ktob-Ø</i> /
3 fem. sg.	<i>ktb</i> / <i>ta-ktob-Ø</i> /	<i>ktb</i> / <i>ta-ktob-Ø</i> /
2 masc. sg.	<i>ktb</i> / <i>ta-ktob-Ø</i> /	<i>ktb</i> / <i>ta-ktob-Ø</i> /
2 fem. sg.	(later <i>ktb(y)n</i> / <i>ta-ktob-īn</i> /)	(later <i>ktby</i> / <i>ta-ktob-ī</i> /)
1 sg.	<i>'ktb</i> / <i>'a-ktob-Ø</i> /	<i>'ktb</i> / <i>'a-ktob-Ø</i> /
3 masc. pl.	<i>yktbn</i> / <i>ya-ktob-ūn</i> /	<i>yktbw</i> / <i>ya-ktob-ū</i> /
3 fem. pl.	<i>yktbn</i> / <i>ya-ktob-(ā)n</i> / <sup>72</sup>	<i>yktbn</i> / <i>ya-ktob-n(ā)</i> /

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Gzella 2004: 159–161.

<sup>71</sup> See Gzella 2004: 310–326.

<sup>72</sup> Later evidence points to an affirmative /-ān/ in the third-person fem. plural, no doubt patterned after the masculine. It is debated whether Old Aramaic preserved the

2 masc. pl.	<i>tktbn</i> /ta-ktob-ūn/	<i>tktbw</i> /ta-ktob-ū/
2 fem. pl.	(unattested)	(unattested)
1 pl.	(later <i>nktb</i> /na-ktob-Ø/)	(later <i>nktb</i> /na-ktob-Ø/)

In addition, Old Aramaic verbs ending in a long vowel (/ī/) preserve a difference between both conjugations even with forms of the “long imperfect” not expanded by /-n/. Hence the “short imperfect” is *thwy* /tahway/ ‘may she be’ (KAI 222 A: 25, from *hwī*)<sup>73</sup> as opposed to the “long imperfect” *yhwh* /yahwē/ (< \*yahwī/) ‘he will be’ (KAI 223 A: 4). *Plene* and defective spellings for the corresponding forms of hollow roots in the Tell Fekheriye inscription, if they do not result from coincidence, appear to point to a similar distinction, i.e., a “short imperfect” *lsm* /lašim/ ‘may he erect’ (KAI 309: 11; see below for the preformative /l-/ in Tell Fekheriye), but a “long imperfect” *yšym* /yašim/ ‘he will erect’ (KAI 309: 12).<sup>74</sup> The vowel of the preformatives cannot be securely established for Old and Official Aramaic; the paradigm given here is based on the inherited forms /ya-/ , /ta-/ , /ʔa-/ , and /na-/ , but the /a/ was eventually replaced by /e/ at some stage.<sup>75</sup> As with the “perfect”, the vowel of the “imperfect” base is lexical. Most transitive verbs have /o/ (< \*/u/).

The “short imperfect” covers various nuances of deontic modality, that is, obligative (commands), optative (wishes), and permissive (permissions), hence the widespread term “jussive”. It requires the negation ʔ /ʔal/. In the Tell Fekheriye inscription, non-negated forms of the “short imperfect” invariably occur with the proclitic asseverative particle /la-/ after which the original preformative consonant /y-/ seems to have disappeared, whereas negated forms follow the usual pattern. However, only third-person forms are attested, e.g., *wlzcʿ wʔl yḥšd* /wa-lazraʿ wa-ʔal yaḥšad/ ‘and let him sow but not harvest’ (KAI 309: 18–19), and the nature of the underlying phonetic process (presumably \*/la-yaktob/ > /laktob/ due to elision of intervocalic /y/? ) is not fully known. This feature seems

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etymological form \*/-n(ā)/ (Beyer 1984: 147) or had already shifted it to /-ān/. For /-n(ā)/ as the ending of the fem. plural “short imperfects” in Old Aramaic, see Huehnergard 1987.

<sup>73</sup> According to later vocalizations, however, /-ay/ has subsequently become /-ē/ in such forms. Other scholars assume that {y} stands for /i/ (< \*/tahwiyl/, with a different base vowel).

<sup>74</sup> Since no non-jussive “imperfect” forms of the plural or the second-person fem. singular appear in Tell Fekheriye, this is the only possible evidence for a morphological distinction between “short” and “long imperfect” in this Aramaic variety.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. the remark on the Barth-Ginsberg Law in the section on phonology. The first clear direct attestation of the preformative vowel /e/ in Aramaic seems to be the spelling *ḥppwq* /leppwq/ ‘may he go out!’ in a papyrus from Dura Europos from ca. 200 A.D. (Beyer 1984: 110).

to foreshadow the consistent use of /l-/ (secondarily shifting to /n-/ in, e.g., Classical Syriac) in the preformatives of the third-person “imperfects” in later Eastern Aramaic.<sup>76</sup> Since it also occurs with formulaic expressions that in other varieties have the usual /y-/ preformative,<sup>77</sup> the /l-/ in Tell Fekheriye seems to constitute a dialectal trait of that particular region. Similar “short imperfects” with a prefixed *l-* /la-/ (perhaps shifted to /le-/ there?)<sup>78</sup> appear, albeit inconsistently, in Sam’alian but do not lead to syncope of the original preformative. One may tentatively conclude that the use of /la-/ was obligatory in Tell Fekheriye (where it produced a new form of the third-person “short imperfect”) but optional in Sam’alian.<sup>79</sup>

While the “short imperfect” is thus strongly marked for deontic modality, the functional range of the “long imperfect” seems more elusive. Basically, it includes the related notions of present-future (or non-past), ongoing situations (imperfective aspect), and types of epistemic modality such as certainty, doubt, or ability. These are often difficult to distinguish, consider examples like *’bd lhm* /’a’bad lahūm/ ‘I will do to them’ (KAI 224: 3; future tense or intention) or *yšlhn ’lhn* /yašlahūn ’elāhīn/ ‘the gods will send’ (KAI 222 A: 30; future tense or assertion). With the root *hwī* ‘to be’, however, this form marks the future tense (cf. KAI 223 A: 4). The interpretation of the few “imperfects” referring to past events (e.g., KAI 202 A: 11.15 in the corpus discussed here) is debated.<sup>80</sup> “Long imperfects” take the negation /lā/, which is attached directly to the prefix and spelled *l-* in Sefire as well as in some other varieties of Old Aramaic: *wlyšm’ mh* /wa-lā-yašma’ ‘ammeh/ ‘and his people do not obey’ (KAI 223 B: 3).

The imperative is identical to the respective second person of the “short imperfect” without its preformative. The word-initial consonant cluster of the base /ktob-/ may have been resolved by a non-systematic helping vowel in pronunciation. No feminine forms are attested in the oldest stage of Aramaic and in Sam’alian. Like the “short imperfect”, to which it is historically related, it mostly expresses various shades of deontic modality,

<sup>76</sup> See Gzella 2008: 103. Cf. Brockelmann <sup>10</sup>1965: 84 (§172).

<sup>77</sup> That is, the Sefire stelae and the Bukan inscription; see Folmer 2011: 146.

<sup>78</sup> Following a suggestion by Dion 1974: 124.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Huehnergard 1983: 589f.

<sup>80</sup> If these morphologically ambiguous forms are “short imperfects”, one might wish to ascribe them to Canaanite influence, since the use of the “short imperfect” as a narrative preterite similar to Hebrew *wayyiqtol* seems unusual for Aramaic (Gzella 2004: 322–324). Alternatively, they can be explained as “long” forms serving as a kind of historical present. At least the latter usage is clearly attested in early Aramaic (see Gzella 2005: 404f on KAI 233: 16).



i.e., obligations, wishes, and permissions, but it remains confined to the second person. Imperatives cannot occur with negations; instead, the second person of the “short imperfect” after *ʾl ʾal/* takes its place.

Suffixes could be attached to finite verbs in order to mark a pronominal direct object. Except for the first-person singular *-ny /-nī/* ‘me’, the forms of the object suffixes presumably correspond to those of the possessive suffixes with nouns in the construct state (see above), although only a few are actually attested. Forms of the “perfect” ending in a consonant most probably took a linking vowel, hence *hmlkny /hamlekānī/* (C-stem) ‘he made me king’ (KAI 202 A: 3). Suffixed “imperfects” with an *n* intervening between the verb and the suffix are customarily interpreted as “long” forms plus a remnant of the old “energetic” ending */-an/* or */-anna/* (> */-enna/*), whereas no such *n* appears to have been used with suffixed forms of the “short imperfect” and the imperative, e.g., *ʾl tʿšqny /ʾal taʿšaqnī/* ‘you shall not oppress me’ (KAI 224: 20). Perhaps the “energetic” in */-an/* (without a linking vowel before the suffix) was originally confined to forms of the “imperfect” without affirmatives. The */-n/* of the “energetic” ending assimilated to suffixes beginning with */k/*, e.g. *ʾhšlk /ʾaḥṣṣelákkā/* (D-stem) ‘I will save you’ (KAI 202 A: 14, < *\*/-án-kā/*). Those forms ending in */-n/*, by contrast, may have taken the long variant of the “energetic” in */-anna/* (*/-enna/*) and replaced its final */-a/* by the linking vowel of the suffix,<sup>81</sup> but the situation is unclear for Old Aramaic.<sup>82</sup>

Besides the finite conjugations, Aramaic also disposes of several verbal nouns. The active participle corresponds to the pattern *ktb /kāteb/* and inflects like a noun. Construct and emphatic state forms only occur with participles acting as substantives; when used as predicative adjectives, by contrast, they regularly appear in the absolute state. The hymnic description of Hadad at the beginning of the Tell Fekheriye text furnishes many examples (KAI 309: 1–6). Only in later forms of Aramaic has the participle been integrated into the verbal system as a present tense or continuous form.<sup>83</sup> Infinitives, on the other hand, follow a variety of noun patterns in Old Aramaic. The inscriptions from Syria and Samʿal have an

<sup>81</sup> See Beyer 1984: 474–478.

<sup>82</sup> Hence it cannot be said with certainty whether a form like *wyqtlnh* ‘and he will kill him’ (KAI 222 B: 27) has to be vocalized */wa-yaqtolánhī/* (energetic */-an/* without linking vowel) or */wa-yaqtolenneh/*. In later stages of Aramaic, the former often has *plene* spelling (i.e., *-nhy*, see the examples in Beyer 1984: 477), yet no such distinction occurs in the oldest Aramaic texts.

<sup>83</sup> Gzella 2004: 194–203.

archaic form without an /m-/ prefix, lost in later Aramaic,<sup>84</sup> but the Tell Fekheriye text consistently uses a by-form based on the pattern /mak-tab/, which subsequently became the dominant form in Aramaic: *wlmšm' tšlwth wmlqḥ 'mrt pmh /wa-la-mašma' tašluteh wa-la-malqaḥ 'emrat pūmeh/* 'and in order to hear his prayer and to accept the word of his mouth' (KAI 309: 9–10, featuring the infinitives of *šm'* 'to hear' and *lqḥ* 'to take'). Both are mostly preceded by the preposition /la-/ (less frequently /ba-/ and /men/) and mark purpose or, occasionally, object clauses. Infinitives can be construed verbally in the absolute state with a direct object or nominally in the construct state forming a genitive relationship with a following noun.<sup>85</sup> Contrary to Official Aramaic, Old Aramaic also has a so-called "infinitive absolute", presumably identical to the common Semitic infinitive pattern /katāb/, but it is confined to paronomastic constructions with a subsequent finite form of the same root in order to reinforce the truth of a proposition.<sup>86</sup>

#### 4.4 Verbal Stems

Situation type (factive and causative) as well as diathesis (active and medio-passive) are expressed by a number of derivational categories, or verbal stems, which underlie the finite conjugations and verbal nouns. Their exact semantic nuance differs by root, and not all verbal stems are equally productive. Still, some general tendencies vis-à-vis the unmarked stem ("G-stem") can be outlined. The D-stem is characterized by a lengthened middle root consonant and expresses plurality or, with intransitive verbs, factitivity. The C-stem, by contrast, exhibits a prefix /ha-/, which later shifted to /ʔa-/, and often renders a causative nuance. The G-, D-, and C-stems each have a medio-passive variant with a /-t-/ prefix (Gt, Dt, Ct), which could swap position with a root-initial sibilant.<sup>87</sup> This metathesis did not happen consistently, though, not even in the same text: [*yš*]tḥt 'may it be destroyed' (KAI 222 A: 32, Dt-stem from *šḥt*), but *ytšm'* 'may it be heard' (KAI 222 A: 29, Gt-stem of *šm'*).<sup>88</sup> If later Aramaic evidence proves to be of any significance, the /t/ partially assimilated to /z/ and /š/

<sup>84</sup> A fossilized form *l'mr* /lēmar/ 'saying' survives in Official Aramaic but was subsequently lost as well (Gzella 2008: 97–99).

<sup>85</sup> See Degen 1969: 117.

<sup>86</sup> The examples can be found in Degen 1969: 116f; cf. Folmer 2011: 148.

<sup>87</sup> Most Gt, Dt, and Ct forms cannot be distinguished in unvocalized texts but must be identified on the basis of the corresponding active counterparts and vocalized traditions.

<sup>88</sup> A similar variation is attested in later Aramaic as well, see Folmer 2003.

(\* /tz/ > /zd/, \*/tʃ/ > /ʃt/). In addition to that, the three active stems also dispose of an apophonic passive (Gp, Dp, Cp) featuring the same consonantal skeleton as the respective active variant but a different vowel sequence. It is not always easy to determine the exact nuance of the t-stems as opposed to the apophonic passives, but the former often have a reflexive nuance.<sup>89</sup> Due to the limited textual corpus, the paradigm contains many lacunae, but some forms can be reconstructed with reasonable confidence on the basis of other Old Aramaic varieties, Official Aramaic, and vocalized Biblical Aramaic:<sup>90</sup>

	“Perfect”	“Imperfect”	Imperative	Participle	Infinitive
G	/katab/	/yaktob/	/ktob/	/kāteb/	/maktab/, /ktab/
Gp	/katīb/	/yoktab/	—	/katīb/	—
Gt	/ʔetkateb/	/yetkateb/(?)	/ʔetkateb/	/metkateb/(?)	/ʔetkatābā/
D	/katteb/	/yakatteb/	/katteb/	/makatteb/	/kattābā/
Dp	(unattested)	(unattested)	—	/makattab/	—
Dt	/ʔetkattab/ <sup>91</sup>	/yetkattab/(?)	/ʔetkattab/	/metkattab/(?)	(unattested)
C	/hakteb/	/ya(ha)kteb/	/hakteb/	/ma(ha)kteb/	/haktābā/
Cp	/hokteb/	(unattested)	—	/ma(ha)ktab/	—
Ct	/ʔethakteb/ <sup>92</sup>	(unattested)	(unattested)	(unattested)	(unattested)

Contrary to some offshoots of Old Aramaic attested around 500 B.C. and later Western Aramaic as well as Syriac, the infinitives of the derived stems in the majority of Old and Official Aramaic witnesses lack an /m-/ prefix. The Tell Fekheriye inscription also contains a number of forms that can be understood either as D-stem infinitives without the feminine ending /-ā/ or as masculine nouns belong to a different pattern (*hyy*, *kbr*, *šlm*, KAI 309: 7–8).<sup>93</sup> Another peculiarity is the Gt-“imperfect” *ʔygtzr* /ʔal yeg-tazer/ ‘may it not cease’ (KAI 309: 23; an agentless middle of the root *gzt* ‘to cut’ with the meaning ‘to be cut loose’, cf. Dan 2: 34) with an infix,

<sup>89</sup> Following the loss of the apophonic passives in Aramaic at the end of the 1st millennium B.C., however, the t-stems become more clearly marked for passive diathesis at the expense of their reflexive meaning. For a general outline of the passive system in Semitic and its historical development, see Gzella 2009.

<sup>90</sup> See Folmer 2011: 149–151 for a succinct but comprehensive outline of the situation in Old and Official Aramaic.

<sup>91</sup> The form *htnʔbw* /hetnaʔabū/ (presumably a Dt-“perfect” from *nʔb*: Degen 1969: 67; Hoftijzer – Jongeling 1995: 710f) ‘they were envious’ (KAI 216: 14) with /h-/ instead of /ʔ-/ and a few similar cases from other Aramaic corpora may be (graphic?) hypercorrections patterned after the C-stem “perfect,” just as in the Hebrew Dt-stem (Gzella 2009: 305 with n. 30).

<sup>92</sup> Later /ʔetʔakteb/ > (as in Syriac, with assimilation of the medial /ʔ/) /ʔettakteb/.

<sup>93</sup> Folmer 2011: 149.

instead of a prefixed, /-t-/. This form, exceptional in Aramaic, may be a vestige of an older stage of Semitic in which the /-t-/ was originally an infix.<sup>94</sup> The loss of intervocalic /-h-/, which presumably triggered or reinforced the later shift of the causative prefix /ha-/ to /'a-/, seems to underlie the non-standard form of the “imperfect” *yskr* /yasker/ (instead of *yhskr* /yahasker/ earlier in the same line) ‘may he deliver’ (KAI 224: 3) in Sfire.<sup>95</sup>

Unlike all known varieties of Aramaic, Sam’alian has allegedly preserved a reflex of the Proto-Semitic N-stem. The N-stem reduces transitivity with fientive verbs and thus acts as a medio-passive there, whereas it expresses a fientive nuance (which often seems to coincide with an ingressive situation type highlighting a change of state) with stative verbs.<sup>96</sup> Its form in 1st-millennium B.C. Northwest Semitic can be reconstructed as follows (assuming that /e/ is the reflex of \*/i/):

	“Perfect”	“Imperfect”	Imperative	Participle	Infinitive
N	/naktab/	/yekkateb/ <sup>97</sup>	/'ekateb/	/naktab/	/naktāb/

The historical significance of this feature depends on one’s assumptions about the position of Sam’alian within Semitic. Scholars who associate the local idiom of ancient Zincirli with a variety of the Northwest Semitic branch preceding the split into Canaanite and Aramaic, view the N-stem as a retention from an earlier developmental stage of the language. Those who basically subsume Sam’alian under Aramaic, conversely, would rather classify the relevant examples as borrowings from Phoenician, which has preserved a productive N-stem. One should at any rate emphasize that evidence for an N-stem in Sam’alian is very feeble indeed: it is restricted to the alleged and partially reconstructed participle *nḥ[š]b* /naḥšab/ ‘esteemed’ from the root *ḥšb* ‘to reckon’ in KAI 215: 10. If this reading can

<sup>94</sup> Alternatively, one could think of an Akkadian influence, but the usual tendency of infixes to turn into prefixes (rather than the other way round) would argue in favor of an archaism in this most ancient Aramaic text. Cf. Gzella 2009: 302. As a consequence, the purported metathesis of /t/ with a root-initial sibilant may actually be a remnant of an older infixation that resisted the shift from infix to prefix. Inconsistent evidence for this phenomenon in Sfire (see the remark on the t-stems) could also be adduced in support of this idea but the distribution of forms with and without metathesis in Old Aramaic remains unknown.

<sup>95</sup> See Beyer 1984: 148 and Fitzmyer 21995: 145. Even if this is a scribal mistake (cf. Degen 1969: 19 n. 79) rather than a purposefully innovative spelling, it may have been caused by a phonetic change that was already underway in contemporary pronunciation.

<sup>96</sup> Gzella 2009 provides a functional analysis and bibliographical references.

<sup>97</sup> From \*/yinkatib-/ with assimilation of /n/; this also applies to the imperative \*/inkatib/.

indeed be accepted,<sup>98</sup> the word in question may simply be a lexical loan. Nothing points to a functional opposition between a productive N-stem and other medio-passive categories in Sam'alian.

#### 4.5 *Irregular Verbs*

Phonetic peculiarities of various classes of verbal roots cause a number of deviations from the sound paradigm. Evidence from later Aramaic provides some clues for the situation in the corpus under review here, but once again, the limited amount of material leaves many questions unanswered.<sup>99</sup>

- 1) Verbs with root-initial /n/ and *lqh* 'to take': In later Aramaic, these roots normally assimilate /n/ and /l/ to the following consonant in the "imperfect" and infinitive. As a consequence, the imperative is formed on a biradical base (i.e., /qaḥ/ 'take!'). Non-assimilated forms of *lqh* also occur, especially in Tell Fekheriye, hence the form of the imperative in Old Aramaic remains unclear. A more detailed discussion of this phenomenon can be found in the section on phonology.
- 2) Verbs with root-initial /y/ are generally thought to drop the /y/ in the "imperfect" (as in Classical Arabic) and subsequently lengthen the second root consonant instead, but the origin of this compensatory lengthening is difficult to pinpoint before the 6th century B.C.<sup>100</sup> Hence it is hard to say whether *yšb* 'he sits' (KAI 224: 17, from *yšb*) is still vocalized as /yaθeb/ or already as /yaθθeb/.<sup>101</sup> The imperative, at any rate, is based on the second and third root consonants, i.e., *šbw* /θebū/ 'dwell!' (KAI 224: 7). In the C-stem, the original root-initial \*/w/ (which has shifted to /y/ in Northwest Semitic) reappears: *hwšbny* /hawθebānī/ 'he placed me' (KAI 216: 5) from \**wšb* as opposed to *yhynqn* /yahayneqn(ā)/ 'may they suckle' (KAI 222 A: 22 and elsewhere) from \**ynq*.
- 3) Verbs with a long ("geminate") second root consonant lengthen the first root consonant in forms with preformatives or prefixes ending in a vowel: *ʕl* /ʕālel/ 'entering' (KAI 222 A: 6, participle from *ʕl*) but *yʕl*

<sup>98</sup> Hoftijzer – Jongeling 1995: 410 have summarized other proposals.

<sup>99</sup> See especially Folmer 2011: 151–157 for a balanced survey of the evidence.

<sup>100</sup> Beyer 1984: 149f.

<sup>101</sup> Note that a form like *yētab* 'it pleases' in Biblical Aramaic (Ezra 7: 18) may also preserve a reflex of the root consonant /y/ if it indeed derives from \*/yaytab/. No such forms are attested in the epigraphic corpus of Old and Official Aramaic, though.

/ya“ol/ ‘he enters’ (KAI 222 B: 35, “imperfect”). D-stem forms inflect like sound roots; perhaps the same applies to the Gt and Dt stems, but evidence is lacking.

- 4) Verbs with a long vowel between the initial and the final root consonant (“hollow roots”) preserve this vowel in the G-stem “imperfect,” otherwise the corresponding long vowel of the sound verb appears: *qm* /qām/ ‘he rose’ (KAI 202 A: 3, from *qūm*) but *ymwt* /yamūt/ ‘he dies’ (KAI 224: 16, from *mūt*). Presumably, this vowel was shortened in the final syllable of the “short imperfect,” as the difference between *lšm* /lašim/ ‘may he erect’ (KAI 309: 11, from *šim*) and *yšym* /yašim/ ‘he will erect’ (KAI 309: 12) in Tell Fekheriye suggests (see the corresponding remark in the section on verbal conjugations). However, later vocalizations do not indicate that the vowel of the “perfect” became short before consonantal affirmatives, in contradistinction to Canaanite and Classical Arabic, hence a form like *wršt* ‘and I ran’ (KAI 216: 8, from *rūš*) presumably has to be vocalized /wa-rāšt/. The G-stem active participle and the entire D-stem of most verbs behave like sound roots in later Aramaic, but the situation cannot be assessed for the earliest attested stages. It is not impossible that some verbs replaced the D-stem by another pattern based on reduplication of the final root consonant (\* /qawmem/ in the “perfect” for *qūm*).<sup>102</sup>
- 5) Verbs with a root-final /ī/ seem to preserve this long vowel in all “perfect” and imperative forms (perhaps shifting it to /ay/ with /ī/ and to /aw/ with /ū/ of the affirmatives, as in later Aramaic varieties).<sup>103</sup> In the “long imperfect,” the participle, and the G-stem infinitive, however, word-final /-ī/ changes into /-ē/, whereas the “short imperfect” has /-ay/, hence the distinction between *thwy* /tahway/ ‘may she be’ (KAI 222 A: 25, from *hwī*) and *yhwh* /yahwē/ (< \* /yahwī/) ‘he will be’ (KAI 223 A: 4), later lost in Aramaic (see the discussion above).<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> The “perfect” *knn* ‘he set up’ from *kūn* in Tell Fekheriye (KAI 309: 10) and the corresponding “short imperfect” in the following line, however, could also be parsed as D-stem forms of a variant geminate root *knn* (cf. Beyer 2004: 332, assuming that the so-called “lengthening stem” with the expected “perfect” /kānen/ for the root *kūn* emerged, but in much later stages of Aramaic).

<sup>103</sup> Beyer 1984: 489, but cf. Nebe 2010: 319 on the spelling *qnt* ‘I have acquired’ in the Kuttamuwa inscription (l. 1), which seems to point to /qanīt/ rather than /qanayt/, since the latter would normally have been written *qnyt*.

<sup>104</sup> A form *yhy* of unclear significance occurs in the Kuttamuwa inscription (l. 7; see Pardee 2009a: 68). The syntactic environment (protasis of a conditional construction) suggests a “long imperfect” (Nebe 2010: 325, 329–330), in which case this would be a defective spelling of a root *hyi* ‘to be’, otherwise unattested in Aramaic and Sam’alian (see section 6,

Many verbs have a “perfect” in /-ā/ (/ay-/ before consonantal affirmatives, /-āt/ in the third-person fem. singular, /-aw/ in the third-person plural). When suffixes are attached, the final long vowels of such forms presumably dissolve into diphthongs before the linking vowel (e.g., as in Official Aramaic *hḥw̄yn* /haḥwiyánā/ ‘he informed us’, C-stem of *ḥw̄t*). It is unclear whether the merger of verbs with final /ʔ/ and those with final /ī/, following the incipient loss of syllable-final /ʔ/,<sup>105</sup> was already underway in Old Aramaic; the consistent spelling of the root *nś* ‘to lift up’ with {ʔ} would argue against this hypothesis.

#### 4.6 Prepositions and Particles

The three proclitic prepositions *b* /ba-/, *l* /la-/, and *k* /ka-/ (with leveling of the /a/ vowel in Aramaic) are the most common devices for marking spatial, temporal, or logical relations; other prepositions include *ḥlp* /ḥalp/ ‘instead of’, *mn* /men/ (without assimilation of /n/) ‘from’, in comparative expressions ‘than’, *d* /‘ad/ ‘until’ (also used as a conjunction in KAI 224: 6), *m* /‘emm/ ‘together with’, *qdm* /qodām/ ‘before’ (spatial). Singular suffixes can be attached to them. The prepositions *ʔ* /ʔel/ ‘to’ (later largely replaced by *ʔ* /‘al/), *byn* /bayn/ ‘between’, and *ʔ* /‘al/ ‘above, against’, by contrast, take plural suffixes. Combinations of prepositions or of a preposition and a noun can cluster into compound expressions.

Coordinating conjunctions like *w* /wa-/ and less frequent *p* /pa-/ ‘and’ as well as disjunctive *ʔw* /ʔaw/ ‘or’ connect main clauses; subordinating conjunctions introduce clauses that are logically dependent, e.g., *hn* /hen/ ‘if’, *kzy* /ka-ḏī/ ‘when’, or *ky* /kī/ ‘because’. The Aramaic existence marker *\*ʔīḥay* /‘there is’ occurs in its negated form with what seems to be a third-person singular masc. suffix, i.e., *lyšh* /layḥeh/ ‘there is/was not’ (KAI 216: 16). Together with the “short imperfect,” the negation *ʔ* /‘al/ serves as a vetitive, otherwise *ʔ* /lā/ is used; /lā/ together with the “long imperfect” can also express general prohibitions. In Sefire, it appears as a proclitic form *l* written together with the “imperfect.”<sup>106</sup> Frequent adverbs include *ʔyk* /ʔayk/ ‘how?’ (often followed by the relative marker *zy* /ḏī/), *ʔn* /ʔān/ ‘where?’, *kn* /ken/ ‘so’, and *kʔ* /ka‘at/ ‘now’. Definite (and thus contextually

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below); defective writing of word-final /ē/ also occurs at least in the plural demonstrative *ʔ* ‘these’ in Old Aramaic (see above). The “short imperfect” *yšwy* ‘may he apportion’ in the same text (l. 12), however, conforms to expectations.

<sup>105</sup> See Folmer 1995: 222–236.

<sup>106</sup> So, too, in a later text from Syria (KAI 226: 4, 8 with the “imperfect,” l. 6 with the “perfect”).

salient) direct objects can be introduced by the particle *ʔt* /ʔiyyāt/ in Aramaic in western Syria or its by-form *w* /wāt/ in Samʿalian, but object marking does not seem to be compulsory.<sup>107</sup> The precative particle *lw* /lū/, which occurs sometimes in Official Aramaic, is already attested in Samʿalian. Its asseverative counterpart *l* /la-/ seems to be used with the “imperfect” in Tell Fekheriye and Samʿalian (see the discussion above), perhaps also, though more freely, in the personal name *ʔdnbrm* (‘Indeed, the lord is exalted’, KAI 203) and at the beginning of the dedication *llʔbdbʔt* (‘Indeed, for ‘Abd-baʔalat’, KAI 204).

## 5. SYNTAX

The most frequent word order pattern in Old Aramaic is VSO for verbal clauses and, if indeed such a general distinction can be made, Subject-Predicate for nominal clauses. Due to internal developments and presumably also because of contact with Akkadian and Old Persian, however, the situation seems less clear for Official Aramaic. Proleptic pronouns, which later become a characteristic feature of Aramaic, are rarely used in the earliest stages; possessive constructions like *brh zy* PN ‘his son, the one of PN’ = ‘PN’s son’, where a suffixed head noun is linked to a modifier by means of the relative marker *zy*, first seem to occur between the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century B.C. This may point to a more fundamental, and possibly contact-induced, change of clause patterns in Aramaic after the period under review here. Double subordination is avoided in favor of parataxis.<sup>108</sup> Agreement usually appears to be straightforward, but, as in other older Semitic languages, the numerals from three to ten take the opposite gender to the counted noun (e.g., *šbʕ bnth* ‘his seven daughters’, KAI 222 A: 24).<sup>109</sup>

## 6. LEXICON

Besides a common stock of lexical items inherited from previous stages of Semitic, the inscriptions from central Syria, Tell Fekheriye, and Zincirli all contain a number of words distinctive of the Aramaic language group:

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Degen 1969: 95–97.

<sup>108</sup> See Gzella 2004: 160.

<sup>109</sup> See Degen 1969: 104f. Very few numerals are attested in Old Aramaic.



e.g., *ʾnš* /enāš/ ‘man, person’, *yhb* ‘to give’, *mr* /māre/ ‘lord’, *bd* ‘to make’, and *qdm* /qodām/ ‘in front of’. Tell Fekheriye and the texts from western Syria also share some other Aramaic lexemes, such as *gʾr* ‘to cut’. The “imperfect” of the root *yhb* ‘to give’ has not yet been replaced, as in later Aramaic, by the corresponding form of *ntn* (cf. *thb* /tahab/ ‘you give’ in KAI 222 B: 38).

However, the earliest witnesses of Aramaic already exhibit considerable diversity. This also affects variation in lexical items. A case in point are the demonstratives, which cannot be traced back to common Northwest Semitic ancestors: while *znh* /ðenā/ and *zʾ* /ðāʾ/ are the regular forms in Old Aramaic, the Kuttamuwa inscription from Samʿal uses a masc. singular *znn* /ðenān/ as well as /ðenā/ (spelled defectively as *zn*), and the Tell Fekheriye text contains a fem. singular *zʾt* /ðāʾt/. The latter also has the atypical absolute fem. plural *nšwn* /nešawān/ ‘women’ instead of the expected, but unattested, /nešīn/, which apparently underlies the well-known construct *nšy* /nešay/,<sup>110</sup> as well as *sʾwn* /θaʾawān/ ‘ewes’ as opposed to *šʾn* /θaʾān/. In addition, Samʿalian uses the object marker *wt* /wāt/, which seems to be cognate to the Western Aramaic form (ʾ)yt /ʾiy) yāt/, whereas the Tell Fekheriye inscription, in accordance with Official and later Eastern Aramaic (where the proclitic preposition *l* serves as a *nota obiecti*), does not show traces of such a device.<sup>111</sup>

Lexical loans in all three different sub-corpora, finally, mirror the respective language situations. The first-person singular independent pronoun *ʾnk* in Samʿalian may come from Phoenician, the old prestige language of the region (if it is not to be explained as a retention of the Proto-Semitic form \*/ʾanāku/, which is lost in Aramaic). Another example may be *mt* /mett/ ‘truly’(?), but etymology and meaning are debated.<sup>112</sup> The same applies to *šr* ‘enemy’(?), with a possible Canaanite sound correspondence of the original \*/š/.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, the Kuttamuwa inscription seems to contain an instance (though a problematic one) of the root *hyī* ‘to be’

<sup>110</sup> The plural /nešawān/ or /nešuwān/ in Aramaic would normally presuppose an etymological singular in \*/-āt/ or \*/-ūt/ with a purported abstract meaning “womenfolk”, hence the form in /-wān/ could possibly denote a plural of paucity (but cf. the broken plural *nīswān* in Arabic).

<sup>111</sup> For a more extensive discussion, see Gzella 2013.

<sup>112</sup> See Hoftijzer – Jongeling 1995: 707f for various proposals, to which add Beyer 2004: 15, who also thinks of a possible connection with Ugaritic *ʾimt* and *mt* ‘certainly’. This word is not attested in Phoenician, but since Ugaritic has a number of lexical correspondences with Phoenician, a borrowing into Samʿalian via that route seems quite feasible.

<sup>113</sup> Nebe 2010: 322.

instead of the usual Aramaic and Sam'alian form *hwī*.<sup>114</sup> Individual words could also have been borrowed from indigenous (Anatolian?) idioms.<sup>115</sup> Extensive Aramaic-Assyrian bilingualism in the eastern part of the speech area, by contrast, has led to many Akkadian lexemes in the Tell Fekheriye stele (e.g., *'dqwr* /'adaqūr/ 'ritual container', *gwgl* /gūgal/ 'irrigation master', *mt* /māt/ 'land', and perhaps *šbt* /šibt/ 'plague') and other contact-induced phenomena such as the incidental "enclitic *mem*" in *šmym* 'my name'. Further borrowings from Akkadian, such as *krs*' /korse'/ 'throne', are also attested in western Syria.

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<sup>114</sup> Pardee 2009a: 68; Nebe 2010: 325. This is especially interesting since the known varieties of Phoenician use the root *kūn* for 'to be', even though *hyī* occurs in other Canaanite languages like Hebrew and Moabite. In addition to that, a shift from /w/ to /y/ or vice versa can be easily explained on phonetic grounds (see the variation between the object markers (')*yt* and *wt*). As a consequence, the root *hyī* in the Kuttamuwa inscription does not necessarily constitute a Phoenician loan; its origin remains open to further discussion.

Alternatively, *yhy* could be parsed as a "short imperfect" of the usual root *hwī* in Aramaic and Sam'alian, with omission of the medial /w/, as sometimes happens in later Western Aramaic (for examples, see Beyer 1984: 560; id. 2004: 383), but the syntactic environment presupposes a "long imperfect": cf. note 104, above.

<sup>115</sup> Nebe 2010: 315 cites two religious terms in the Ördekburnu inscription that may have been borrowed from Luwian. Anatolian names also feature in the Sam'alian onomasticon.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### LITERATURE

Paolo Merlo

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The corpus of ancient Aramaic texts is rather limited and cannot be compared with other Ancient Near Eastern examples, such as the Akkadian or Egyptian ones. Strictly speaking, no literary work has yet come to light within the corpus of Old Aramaic inscriptions from Syria except for the poorly preserved and fragmented inscription from Tell Deir ‘Alla. It is nevertheless possible to discover some literary features in Old Aramaic inscriptions of other genres, such as royal inscriptions, stelae, letters, or international treaties. In this chapter some literary aspects and stylistic devices of these ancient Aramaic texts shall be reviewed.

#### 2. TERMINOLOGY

“Old Aramaic” usually refers to the earliest phase of the Aramaic language.<sup>1</sup> The texts pertaining to this period date from the origin of the language in the 9th century B.C. to the rise of the Babylonian empire in the 6th century B.C. While the starting date is self-evident (it marks the earliest possible evidence of Aramaic), some problems arise when determining the lower chronological limit. Some scholars set the beginning of “Official Aramaic” with the spread of the Assyrian empire around 700 B.C. (J.A. Fitzmyer), others place the lower limit of the Old Aramaic language at the collapse of the Assyrian Empire (St. A. Kaufman), and still others consider the texts from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian period to be a new phase of Old Aramaic (V. Hug). The scholars following the latter theory divide the Old Aramaic corpus into two main groups: the earlier Old Aramaic inscriptions (i.e., the texts of the independent Aramaean cities), and the later Old Aramaic inscriptions (i.e., the texts produced

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, cf. H. Gzella's contribution in this volume.

during the Assyrian and Babylonian rule over these regions). For the sake of comprehensiveness, the latter theory will be followed in this chapter.

### 3. OVERVIEW ON HISTORY AND LITERARY GENRES

The first mentions of Aramaeans come from some Assyrian annalistic texts of Tiglath-Pileser I dated at the end of the 12th century B.C.<sup>2</sup> The Aramaeans began at that time to form many independent city-states in northern Mesopotamia and Syria.

The oldest inscriptions ascribed to Aramaean kings date back to the 9th century B.C., but these texts still make use of the Phoenician script and language.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of the 9th century B.C. the oldest Aramaic inscriptions emerged in northern Mesopotamia (Tell Halaf: KAI 231; Tell Fekheriyeh: KAI 309), Syria (Melqart stele: KAI 201), and northern Palestine (Tel Dan: KAI 310). Even though all these texts belong to the type of monumental inscriptions, each exemplifies a more specific literary genre such as votive inscriptions or dedications (KAI 201; 231; 309) and a royal victory inscription (KAI 310).

In the course of the 8th century B.C., many other Aramaic inscriptions were written that present clear literary outlines, due also to their length. The main texts of this period are the royal inscriptions from Zincirli and ancient Sam'al (KAI 214–218),<sup>4</sup> the Zakkur stele from the Syrian kingdom of Hamath (KAI 202), the monumental Sefire treaty inscriptions (KAI 222–224),<sup>5</sup> some funerary inscriptions from the cities of Neirab (KAI 225–226), the Kuttamuwa inscription from Zincirli,<sup>6</sup> and the two fragments of the Bukan memorial stele found in Iran (KAI 320).

The Assyrian domination of the Ancient Near East during the late 8th and 7th centuries B.C. led to both a considerable standardization and widespread knowledge of the Aramaic language throughout the Ancient Near East. Unfortunately, the extant Aramaic texts from the Assyrian period (ca. 7th century B.C.) are rather brief and lack significant literary features. They mainly consist of administrative texts or notes written on clay tablets,<sup>7</sup> an epistolary text known as the Ashur ostrakon (KAI 233),

<sup>2</sup> RIMA 2 A.0.87.4:34; cf. Grayson 1991: 43.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the Kulamuwa inscription KAI 24.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Tropper 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer 21995.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Pardee 2009a and id. 2009b.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Fales 1986; Röllig 2002a; id. 2002b.

an inscribed decree about fugitives or agents (KAI 317), some inscribed weights, and some brief records.

Aramaic texts continued to be produced in the Neo-Babylonian period (late 7th and 6th centuries B.C.), but for this period as well we have only a few poorly preserved texts. The main Aramaic text of this period is the fragmentary 6th-century-B.C. letter of Adon, King of Ekron, to the Pharaoh (KAI 266), which was discovered in Saqqarah.

At the end of the 6th century B.C., the Achaemenid imperial administration began to use Aramaic as the official language of the western part of the Persian Empire. This stage of the Aramaic language is outside the chronological (and geographical) limits of this book, but it is important to mention here a single major literary text: the story of Aḥiqar and the proverbs collection. The oldest version of this well-known text is attested on a 5th-century-B.C. papyrus found at Elephantine, a Judaeo-Aramaean military colony in Egypt (TAD C 1.1), but its language provides some hints that the original story probably dates back to the 6th and 7th centuries B.C. Additionally, the close Aramaic-Assyrian connections of the story give evidence of a Syrian background. The literary tradition of the Aḥiqar story (somewhat later) and of the proverbs (somewhat earlier) should therefore be placed into the Syrian cultural milieu of the 7th century B.C.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. HISTORICAL NARRATIVE IN ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS

The corpus of Old Aramaic royal inscriptions has been primarily studied either from a linguistic perspective or in order to reconstruct historical events. A pure historical or linguistic analysis is not the only valid hermeneutic approach, because these old texts also present some literary characteristics consisting of various narrative patterns and stylistic phrases. In other words, it is possible to shift the focus of the analysis from the historical or linguistic level to the literary one, since many of these inscriptions show clear literary patterns.<sup>9</sup> In this chapter some literary clichés<sup>10</sup> incorporated in the ancient Aramaic royal inscriptions will be examined.

<sup>8</sup> So Contini 2005: 16f, 40f; Niehr 2007: 11, and others. Parpola 2005: 106 suggests an Assyrian background.

<sup>9</sup> A similar literary approach applied mainly to the Assyrian royal inscriptions has been put forward since 1970 by the "Italian school" of Mario Liverani ("our attention is no more centered on the events, but on how they are narrated": Liverani 1973: 179). On this approach, cf. also Fales 1981.

<sup>10</sup> For more comprehensive analyses, cf. Tawil 1974; Parker 1997; id. 1999; Röllig 2004; Green 2010.

#### 4.1 *The Ideal King: Pious, Victorious, Just, and a Builder*

The first literary pattern of the royal inscriptions is the stereotypical description of the king. Ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions always praise the king, his piety, righteousness, and virtues, so that the real figure of the king is regularly replaced by a fictional representation presenting an ideal image to the reader.

In order to justify a king's sovereignty many ancient royal inscriptions say that the gods grant their divine assistance to the pious king "standing beside" him, or "granting the legitimate scepter" to him, among other expressions.<sup>11</sup> The opening section of the Panamuwa inscription also corresponds to this literary pattern, stating that "the gods Hadad and El . . . stood beside me . . . and gave the scepter of domination into my hands" (KAI 214: 2–3). Zakkur, King of Hamath, in the memorial section of his inscription, also presents himself as a king chosen by the gods, making use of the same themes: "Ba'alšamayin stood beside me and made me king" (KAI 202 A: 3). Similar expressions, in reverse order, are found in the (anonymous) Tel Dan inscription: "Hadad made me king . . . and Hadad went before me . . ." (KAI 310: 4–5).

Another ideological account used to justify a king's sovereignty is a description of kingship as the divine reward for the king's pious behavior. This narrative pattern is clearly attested in the Bar-Rakkab inscription: "Because of . . . my own righteousness, my Lord Rakkab'el . . . seated me upon my father's throne" (KAI 216: 4–7).

The figure of the king as just and a builder is best found in the Bar-Rakkab inscription (KAI 216). This inscription first presents the king Bar-Rakkab as a loyal servant of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III and then describes his building of the new royal palace. In the first part of this inscription we find the literary motif of the king's (and his father's) loyalty to the Assyrian sovereign, with stereotypical expressions found also in some other fragmentary inscriptions of Bar-Rakkab.<sup>12</sup>

The last section of this inscription uses many hyperboles to depict the royal palace such as "I made it better than the palace of any great kings" (lines 12–13) or "there was no beautiful palace for my fathers, the kings of Sam'al" (lines 16–17). Despite these magniloquent expressions of praise,

<sup>11</sup> Akkadian and other examples in Tawil 1974: 44–46.

<sup>12</sup> "Because of the loyalty (*šdq*) of my father and because of my own loyalty (*šdqy*), my lord Rakkab'el and my lord Tiglath-Pileser seated me upon my father's throne" (KAI 216: 4–7; cf. also KAI 217: 3–5; 219: 4–5).

no details of the palace of Bar-Rakkab are mentioned and hence we can reasonably presume that all these statements are mainly a literary composition. Because many other Ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions present the king as a builder with similar expressions, it is probable that the authors of these inscriptions are using a well-known literary motif.

Another literary motif often included in royal inscriptions is the king as “just” and “compassionate”. Although it is not possible to find it in royal inscriptions written in Aramaic, this literary pattern is present in the Zin-cirli inscription of the Aramaean king Kulamuwa, written in the Phoenician language (“I was a father to them, I was a mother to them, and I was a brother to them”; KAI 24: 10–11).<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.2 *The Enemy*

Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions portray the king’s enemies with stereotypically negative features: they violate oaths, sin, lack good judgment, rebel, and are wicked, hostile, and false, among other negative qualities.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, no ancient Aramaic royal inscription includes a long description of a king’s enemies. Even though we can suppose that Aramaic inscriptions would share a similar ideology as the Assyrian inscriptions, only the inscriptions of the kings Zakkur and Panamuwa refer to hostile military actions. In these inscriptions the enemy is not only a historical reality, but also provides a narrative function: because he is always huge and hostile, his defeat garners honor and glory to the inscription’s author.

The Zakkur inscription describes the defense against a coalition of many Syrian kings who besieged Hazrak. The Zakkur inscription’s description of the large Syrian coalition (at least sixteen kings) meets this literary standard by making use of hyperbole, stating that the enemy kings “put up a rampart higher than the wall of Hazrak” and that they “dug a trench deeper than its moat” (KAI 202: 9–10).

In the Panamuwa inscription the usurper is called a “stone of destruction” (KAI 215: 7), a derogatory phrase that contrasts with the usual building activities of the ideal good king.

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<sup>13</sup> These idiomatic phrases are very similar to those found on the Azitiwadda’s inscription from Karatepe: “Ba’al made me a father and a mother to the Danunians. . . .” (KAI 26 A: 3–4) and on the bilingual inscription from Çineköy: “all the house of Assur became for me like a father and like a mother” (Tekoğlu—Lemaire 2000: 994, lines 8–9). On this literary motif in the Ugaritic and Hebrew texts, cf. Whitelam 1979: 17–37.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Fales 1982 and Zaccagnini 1982.



### 4.3 *The Account of a Battle*

Among the Old Aramaic inscriptions, only the fragmentary inscription discovered at Tel Dan (KAI 310) includes a brief account of a military campaign. Though heavily damaged, the remains of lines 3–9 preserve some interesting details.<sup>15</sup>

After recording a previous unfair attack by a hostile enemy (cf. 3.3 below), the unnamed author of this inscription (perhaps King Hazael) relates the divine intervention that enthroned him and helped him conquer his enemies: “Hadad made me king . . . and Hadad went before me . . . and I killed [seven]ty kings. . . .” (KAI 310: 4–6). In this account the narrator makes use of some literary commonplaces such as the intervention of the national god marching ahead of the king in battle, and the hyperbole of slaying “seventy” hostile kings.

### 4.4 *The Just War*

According to Ancient Near Eastern religious ideology, war should only be carried out to re-establish justice and order if they had been disrupted by an unfair king. At the beginning of the Tel Dan stele inscription (KAI 310), the king who wrote the inscription (perhaps Hazael) refers to a former treaty (violated?) by an unnamed king of Israel who carried out a military attack against a country ruled by his father. After the god Hadad had made him king, he could send out a military expedition to restore the previous situation. The story of this battle meets the literary pattern of the “just war” because the enemy, the king of Israel, sinned by violating a previous oath and performing an unjust attack against “the land of my father” (line 4).<sup>16</sup> This story also demonstrates a clear propagandistic function, justifying the military attack of the Aramaean king against Dan.

### 4.5 *The Miraculous Deliverance from a Siege*

In his inscription (KAI 202), Zakkur, King of Hamath, tells us how Ba'alšamayin put him on the throne and how the god saved him from an attack by a coalition of seventeen rulers of his vicinity led by the king

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<sup>15</sup> On the literary nature of this account, cf. Parker 1997: 58f. On conquest narratives in the Ancient Near East, cf. Younger 1990.

<sup>16</sup> In the Moabite Mesha inscription, too, the enemy (i.e., the Israelite king) is accused of having engaged in a hostile occupation: “Omri oppressed Moab for many days . . . and his son succeeded him, and he also said: I will oppress Moab” (KAI 181: 5–6).

of Damascus. Being most likely a usurper, Zakkur makes no mention of any ancestor kings (unlike KAI 310, cf. *infra* 4.6), but revealing himself nonetheless as a king chosen by god (“Ba‘alšamayin stood beside me and made me king,” line 3).<sup>17</sup> Immediately after recording his ascension to the throne, he remembers his victory against a powerful alliance of many rulers. The credit of this victory is given not to the king or his army, but to the god Ba‘alšamayin, who had promised the victory to Zakkur with words of assurance (“do not be afraid” line 13) and accordingly “delivered” him from all his enemies (line 14).<sup>18</sup> As indicated by the literary and ideological patterns of this inscription, Zakkur’s victory should be apparent to the reader, because it had already stated that he ascended the throne with the support of the god Ba‘alšamayin.

#### 4.6 *The (Inferior) Past Contrasted with the (Superior) Present*

Many ancient royal inscriptions affirm a deep contrast between the present and the past. In ancient Aramaic royal inscriptions it is possible to find the same chronological cliché. According to this literary convention, the past is marked by negative connotations such as disorder, oppression, ruin, fear, the gods’ anger (cf. KAI 24: 2–6; 26 A: 4–5; 181: 5–9). In contrast, the present is marked by positive connotations such as victory, reconstruction, order, military conquest, and general well-being (cf. KAI 24: 4–5, 9–13; 181: 7–21).

As far as ancient Aramaic royal inscriptions are concerned, the inscriptions from the southern Anatolian kingdom of Sam’al (Zincirli) appear as important witnesses.<sup>19</sup> In lines 8–11 of the so called Hadad inscription (KAI 214), King Panamuwa remembers his ascension to his father’s throne, granted by the god Hadad, then states that he removed “sword and slander” (*ḥrb wšn*) from his father’s house, whereas in his days the inhabitants of Yādiya could “eat and drink” (line 9). As a consequence of this time of reconstructed peace, Panamuwa builds fortresses, and—with the divine help of the deities—succeeds in creating a general period of “abundance

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the Tel Dan inscription: “Hadad made me king . . . and Hadad went before me . . .” (KAI 310: 4–5).

<sup>18</sup> In this respect, Zakkur’s delivery narrative shares similar features with some Assyrian inscriptions of Esarhaddon. For example, in the prophetic text SAA IX 1.1 the goddess Ištar of Arbela encourages Esarhaddon with the words “Fear not!” and reassures him saying, “I will go before you and behind you” (cf. Parpola 1997: 4f). Similar literary conventions can be found in the Moabite stele of Mesha (KAI 181). On the formulaic expression “Fear not!”, cf. Nissinen 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Tropper 1993 and Hamilton 1998.

and greatness” (lines 10–11). In these lines the (superior) present time is referred to as “in my days” (*bymy*: lines 9–10), a typical expression<sup>20</sup> better interpreted as a mark of a “narrative” time rather than a reference to an accurate historical period.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, the first part of the poorly preserved Panamuwa II inscription (KAI 215) describes the chaotic events before Panamuwa’s ascension to his throne (lines 2–5) and the economic crisis that broke out during the years preceding his reign (line 6). The author of this inscription uses the literary topos of high prices<sup>22</sup> to describe low agricultural production and the resulting famine: “a *prs*-measure (of barley) stood at a (silver) shekel. . . .” (line 6). Only after King Panamuwa had risen, with the help of the Assyrians, “over the house of his father” (line 7), could the land of Yādiya reverse the previous crisis so that “there was an abundance of wheat and barley and sheep and cattle in his days (*bywmyh*)” (line 9).

On a narrative and ideological level, it is possible to distinguish two opposing epochs in these two inscriptions: the reign of the present king (“in my days”), described as a time of abundance, a high quality of life, and order, and the period of the previous king’s reign, which is usually portrayed as bad, no matter what the historical reality might have been.

This ideological twofold periodization of time appears also in a brief narrative preserved in the Aramaic treaty inscription of Sefire (KAI 224: 23–26). In this passage we read that the territory of Tal’ayim, which had belonged to the house of the King of Kitikka, had passed to another person because the gods had struck down the dynasty, but now—in the present time of the narrative—the gods had “restored” (*šbt*) the territory to the king and his sons forever.<sup>23</sup>

A different example of opposition between previous and present eras is provided by the Bar-Rakkab building inscription (KAI 216). While the previous inscriptions contrast the previous “bad” time with the present “good” one, Bar-Rakkab contrasts a “good” past with the “best” present. This inscription describes the building (or restoration) of the palace,

<sup>20</sup> The use of the expression “my days” to point to the wealthy period of one’s reign also occurs in Zincirli’s inscription written in Phoenician (KAI 24: 12), in the Karatepe inscription (KAI 26 A: 5), and in the Mesha inscription (KAI 181: 9).

<sup>21</sup> Green 2010: 186–188.

<sup>22</sup> The same literary topos is known from the Bible (2 Kgs 6: 25) and other Ancient Near Eastern texts; cf. Greenfield 1991b.

<sup>23</sup> The Mesha inscription shows the same temporal structure: King Mesha says that, during the past years, the hostile king Omri oppressed Moab and conquered the land of Madeba, but “in my days” the god Kamosh “returned” it (KAI 181: 4–9).

saying that he “made it better than the palace of any great kings” and that the previous kings of Sam’al have never had a house so magnificent (lines 12–17). The stress of this narrative is therefore not on the previous “ordinary” time (cf. line 12), but rather on the present “excellent” one (lines 12 and 15). Even if the palace of Bar-Rakkab was a modest structure, on the narrative level it had to be presented as the most magnificent of all time.<sup>24</sup>

## 5. ELEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

### 5.1 *Dedications to the Gods*

The simplest, and earliest, example of an Aramaic dedication is found on the inscription engraved on a votive stele with a representation of the god Melqart offered by Bar-Hadad, king of Arpad (KAI 201). The text<sup>25</sup> includes only the more essential literary elements: name of the gift, name of the donor (with patronymic and royal titles), verb of dedication, name of the god to whom the gift is dedicated, and motivation.<sup>26</sup> After these essential elements, dedications often include a request for a blessing. The dedicatory inscriptions are usually written in the third person, because their function is primarily to honor the deity to whom the object is dedicated.

The stele’s inscription of Zakkur (KAI 202), now preserved in fragments, presents peculiar features because the only typical elements of the dedication genre are the first line and its conclusion. The first line of the inscription (“Stele that Zakkur, King of Hamath and Lu’aš, set up for Iluwer [his Lord]”) follows the standard pattern of the dedication genre: name of the gift (“stele”), name of the donor (“Zakkur,” with his royal titles), and name of the god (“Iluwer,” with his divine titles). The inscription’s conclusion, with its request for a blessing, only partially preserved, corresponds to the first line, forming a sort of *inclusion* with the same religious flavor: “May the name of Zakkur and the name [of his dynasty last forever].” The second line of the Zakkur inscription changes abruptly to the first person and, according to the memorial inscriptional genre, uses the personal pronoun “I”

<sup>24</sup> Similar narrative motifs can be found in the building accounts of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III: “(I made . . .) larger than the former palaces of my ancestors” (Tadmor – Yamada 2011: 47 rev. 19’).

<sup>25</sup> “The stele that Bar-Hadad, the son of Attarsumki, the son of Adrame, set up for his lord Melqart, to whom he made a vow and who heard to his voice” (KAI 201). Cf. for this stele, also section 3.1 in H. Niehr’s contribution on religion in this volume.

<sup>26</sup> For similar archaic dedication texts, cf. the old Phoenician inscriptions KAI 4; 5; 6; 7.

in an emphatic initial position (“I am Zakkur, King of Hamath and Lu‘aš. . . .” KAI 202 A: 2; cf. also KAI 214). This line is to be considered as a new introduction to the central body of the inscription (perhaps a text taken from a previous inscription)<sup>27</sup> concerning military matters and the king’s building activities.

An opening formula similar to the dedicatory literary form is found in the inscription of King Panamuwa II (KAI 215): “Stele that Bar-Rakkab set up for his father, for Panamuwa, son of Bar-Šur, King of Yādiya . . . the year of [his dea]th.” The necessary changes in the formula derived from the fact that the monument was erected by Bar-Rakkab on his father’s behalf, after Panamuwa’s death during a military campaign (cf. line 16). The opening line of the inscription lacks the name of the god to whom it is dedicated, but at the end of the inscription (line 22) we find the customary request for the divine blessing of the gods (“may Hadad and El and Rakkab’el, Lord of the dynasty, and Šamaš and all the gods of Yādiya [have favor. . . .]”).

The bilingual Assyrian-Aramaic inscription on the basalt statue from Tell Fekheriye (KAI 309)<sup>28</sup> is also a dedicatory inscription. This dedication to the god Hadad is carved on a statue of a standing male figure in Assyrian style representing Haddayis’i, governor of Gozan. The opening formula of the inscription follows the usual pattern: “Image of Haddayis’i, which he has set up before Hadad of Sikani.” The distinctiveness of this inscription is that the name of the god is immediately followed by a long list of epithets, such as “regulator of the waters of heaven and earth,” deriving from the usual Assyrian inventory of divine appellations. After this first dedication, probably translated from an Akkadian original text, a second dedicatory phrase is found together with a lengthy request for a blessing for the life of the donor and his well-being. This request uses some customary expressions such as “(may) his days be long . . . to increase his years . . . (may) his descendants flourish. . . .”<sup>29</sup> The inscription closes with many curses against anyone who violates his statue (cf. below 5.4).

<sup>27</sup> So Parker 1997: 108.

<sup>28</sup> For the Akkadian version of the inscription, cf. RIMA 2 A.O. 101.2004.

<sup>29</sup> The request for a long life is a very common element in many royal dedicatory inscriptions; cf. KAI 7: 5–6: “May the Mistress of Byblos prolong the days of Shipitba’al and his years over Byblos”; KAI 26 A: 4–6: “May Ba’al Krnryš and all the gods of the city give to Azitiwadda length of days, and many years . . .”; and KAI 286: 4–5: “(May she) prolong his days. . . .” Cf. also the biblical royal Ps 21: 5.

## 5.2 *Funerary Inscriptions*

Funerary inscriptions were usually written on monumental stelae or on coffins. The main surviving ancient Aramaic funerary inscriptions are the two Neirab stelae inscriptions (KAI 225–226),<sup>30</sup> and the Kuttamuwa inscription from Zincirli.<sup>31</sup> These funerary inscriptions have a structure that conforms to some literary conventions. All these inscriptions share similar formal structures,<sup>32</sup> although the epitaphs of Si'gabbar (KAI 226) and of Kuttamuwa have a longer text.

*Naming.* At the very beginning of the inscriptions, with great emphasis, there is the name of the (dead) person (“Si'gabbar . . .”, or “I am Kuttamuwa . . .”) followed by his official qualification (“priest of Šahr” or “servant of Panamuwa”). The importance of the personal name should not be underestimated as it can be considered a substitute for the person himself.<sup>33</sup>

*Place.* After the name, the dead person is mentioned together with his specific resting place, the grave or the stele: “this is his figure and his grave” (KAI 225: 3–4), or, with a slight variation “[I] commissioned for myself this stele . . .” (Kuttamuwa). The inscriptions of Si'gabbar and Kuttamuwa add some information about the grave. The common statement that “they did not place any silver or copper with me” in the grave (KAI 226: 6–7) serves to protect it from possible plunderers.<sup>34</sup>

*Biographical information.* Only Si'gabbar's inscription adds a short biographical note about his long life, with two phrases that use very common expressions: “(Šahr) established a good name (*šmny šm ṭb*) for me and prolonged my days (*wh'rk ywmy*). On the day I died . . . with my eyes I was looking at children of the fourth (generation) (*b'yny mhzh 'nh bny rb*)” (KAI 226: 3–5). These three statements are standard literary motifs, and they find a close correspondence in the Neo-Babylonian “autobiography” of Adda-Guppi,<sup>35</sup> the mother of Nabonidus: “(Sin) elevated my head and established for me a good name (*šuma ṭāba . . . iškunanni*) in the land . . . . Long days, years of well-being he multiplied for me (*umē*

<sup>30</sup> On these inscriptions, cf. section 3.6 in H. Niehr's contribution on religion in this volume.

<sup>31</sup> Pardee 2009a and id. 2009b. Notwithstanding the fact that Kuttamuwa is “still living” (line 2), his inscription shares all the elements of a funerary inscription.

<sup>32</sup> On the literary structure of Northwest Semitic funerary inscriptions, see Müller 1975; Bonatz 2000a: 66–75; Röllig 2004.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Radner 2005: 19–25.

<sup>34</sup> For similar statements, cf. KAI 13: 4–5; 14: 5; 191 B: 1–2.

<sup>35</sup> Tawil 1974: 65 already noted these literary correspondences. Two copies of the text of the Adad-Guppi stele survive; cf. the edition in Schaudig 2001: 500–513.

*arkūti... uššipamma*) . . . My descendants (lit.: sons of the son of the son of the son of the son) to the fourth generation from me I have healthy seen . . . .”<sup>36</sup>

*Mortuary rites.* The Kuttamuwa inscription is the only one that presents a full description of the cultic rites performed in the mortuary chamber, inviting one of his sons to perform some religious offerings to honor the gods and the “soul” (*nbs*) of the dead. This section does not belong to the fixed structure of the funerary inscriptions.

*Curses (and blessings).* Both Neirab inscriptions end with some curses against possible plunderers of the grave. These curses consist of a secondary conditional phrase (“Whoever you are who do . . .”) followed by a jussive principal phrase that is the real curse (“may Šahr and Nikkal . . . do so”). Only the inscription of Sin-zera-ibni (KAI 225) closes with a blessing for him who preserves the stele and the grave.

### 5.3 *Thanksgiving*

The stele erected by Zakkur, King of Hamath, exhibits some basic elements of thanksgiving psalms.<sup>37</sup> The first phrase of this inscription (KAI 202), a dedication to the god Iluwer, begins with the usual naming of the gift, the donor, and the god to whom the stele is offered (cf. 5.1, above). Zakkur’s statement about the god Ba‘alšamayin granting him his kingship (lines 2–3) comes after the mentioned dedication, followed by Zakkur’s description of his present dangerous situation: a powerful alliance of hostile rulers is threatening his life (lines 4–10). Realizing this great danger, Zakkur “raised his hands” in prayer to Ba‘alšamayin, who provided words of reassurance (“Fear not!”; line 13)<sup>38</sup> and “delivered” him from all his enemies (lines 14–16).<sup>39</sup> In this inscription Zakkur acknowledges the god Ba‘alšamayin as his savior and benevolent protector.

### 5.4 *Curses*

In both funerary inscriptions and treaties it is customary to find curses, and sometimes requests for blessings. In funerary or memorial inscriptions, curses are usually threats to ensure that nobody will alter the text

<sup>36</sup> Schaudig 2001: 506, 511f n. 3.2, lines 24–25, 33–34.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Greenfield 1972.

<sup>38</sup> This is a well-known biblical and Ancient Near Eastern prophetic formula; cf. Nissinen 2003.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Zobel 1971.

of an inscription or open the grave, while in treaties they are threats to ensure that nobody will break the stipulations. The language of the curses is often figurative and sometimes stereotypical, invoking the power of the gods to punish every disloyal act.

The main source for curses in Old Aramaic literature is the text of the Sefire treaties (KAI 222–224).<sup>40</sup> The treaties begin with the mention of the two kings, Bar-Gayah and Mati'el, who are concluding the pact. Then follow seven other sections: a list of gods who are witnesses to the pact;<sup>41</sup> a long series of curses against Mati'el and his offspring should they violate the treaty; some curses associated with magical rituals; a re-presentation of the two parties; the real stipulations of the covenant; some very fragmentary text of blessings; and the final curses against those who would efface the words of the treaty.<sup>42</sup> The section with the highest literary content is the list of curses, which has some affinities and parallels with the curses included in the Tell Fekheriye inscription (KAI 309). Some scholars have pointed out some stylistic affinities with Neo-Assyrian treaty tablets of the 1st millennium B.C. as well, and between some curses contained in the book of Deuteronomy.<sup>43</sup>

According to D. R. Hillers, the Sefire curses show four main conventional schemes: 1. the divine curses, in which the god(s) are asked to bring evil on the man who violates the treaty (“may Hadad pour [over it] every sort of evil . . .”); 2. the simple malediction, in which destruction is foreseen without mentioning god (“For seven years may the locust devour, and for seven years may the worm eat . . .”)—many scholars join these first two forms into one regardless of whether there is a mention of a god or not<sup>44</sup>; 3. the *simile* curses, i.e., curses with accompanying magical acts that involve comparison (“just as this wax is burned by fire, so may Arpad be burned . . .”); 4. the so-called *futility* curses, with a protasis, which describe a vital activity and negative apodosis to frustrate the mentioned activity (“should seven rams cover a ewe, and may she not conceive; should seven

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer 21995.

<sup>41</sup> The god list of the Sefire treaties is arranged according to Neo-Assyrian conventions: the list comes straight after the opening section; it mentions first the god Ashur, then the Babylonian-Assyrian gods, followed by the gods of the subdued land; it ends with a general formulation (“all the gods of . . .”).

<sup>42</sup> The Zakkur and the Neirab inscriptions also close with a curse against anyone who tries to efface the stele.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Hillers 1964; Fales 1990; Koch 2008: 52–78.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Koch 2008: 62.



nurses anoint their breasts and nurse a young boy, and may he not have his fill . . .”).<sup>45</sup>

The Tell Fekheriye inscription also includes some *futility* curses that make clear the literary theme of eating without being filled: “should one hundred cows suckle a lamb, but it may not be satisfied; should one hundred women suckle a child, but it may not be satisfied . . .” (KAI 309: 20–21).

Another example of this literary form comes from the fragments of the ca.-700-B.C. Bukan stele found in Iran. The extant lines contain only the curses uttered against those who would take away the stele: “Whoever will remove this stele . . . may seven cows nurse one calf, but may it not be sated; may seven women bake in one oven, but may they not fill it . . .” (KAI 320: 5–8).

### 5.5 *Prophetic Stories*

The 8th-century-B.C. Bala‘am plaster inscription (KAI 312)<sup>46</sup> from Tell Deir ‘Alla—a settlement on the eastern side of the Jordan Valley near the river Zerqa—seems to be a copy of a true literary text. Unfortunately, the inscription is very damaged and it is not possible to read much of it. Moreover, scholars disagree about the sequence of the many fragments of the inscription. Although it is not possible to grasp accurately the whole content of this inscription, the heading is very elucidatory: “Script of [Bala‘am, son of Be]or, seer of gods.” The inscription relates how Bala‘am is visited by the gods during a night vision. The gods tell Bala‘am that they gathered and decided to order a goddess (probably the sun goddess) to cover the heavens with darkness and give up light from the earth as punishment. The next morning Bala‘am arises weeping, and tells the divine message to his countrymen. One could suppose that in the last part of the inscription, whose translation remains mostly obscure, Bala‘am would save his land from that calamity.

The literary character of the Tell Deir ‘Alla inscriptions is underscored by the existence of a similar literary tradition in the biblical book of Numbers (Num 22–24).<sup>47</sup> The biblical Bala‘am and the homonymous figure from Tell Deir ‘Alla share many literary outlines: both come from Aram (Num 22: 7), both obtain a night vision from the god (Num 22: 8, 9, 20),

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Hillers 1964.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Hoftijzer – van der Kooij 1976 and iid. 1991.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Levine 2000: 137–275.

both arise the next morning (Num 22: 13. 21) and report the divine message to their visitors (Num 22: 9). Further, both traditions mention a vision coming from the gods El and Šadday: in the Tell Deir ‘Alla inscription the gods are mentioned separately, and Šadday appears in plural form (ʾl line 2; *šdyn* line 6), whereas in the biblical tradition they are both in singular form (“the oracle of one who hears the utterances of El, who sees the vision of Šadday”, Num 24: 4). This literary character is further indicated by the use of some conventional expressions that are reminiscent of biblical phrases and motifs.<sup>48</sup>

## 6. WISDOM LITERATURE

The only example of Old Aramaic wisdom literature is the literary work entitled “Words of Aḥiqar,” namely the story of Aḥiqar and the collection of his proverbs.

Even though the earliest-known Aḥiqar manuscript was uncovered in Upper Egypt and dates back only to the 5th century B.C. (TAD C 1.1), it is presented here because there is unanimous agreement among scholars that the Aḥiqar tradition arises from the ancient Syrian culture. Actually, in the military colony of Elephantine there were not only Aramaic-speaking Judaeans, but also Aramaeans whose original roots were Aramaic. These Aramaean people brought their own literary traditions with them to Egypt, so that an Aramaic, and also Assyrian, cultural influence on their literary writings appears very likely.<sup>49</sup>

The Aḥiqar scroll consists of fragments of fourteen columns, the sequence of which is uncertain.<sup>50</sup> B. Porten and A. Yardeni present the most plausible hypothesis in their recent edition of the text.<sup>51</sup> According to this sequence, the whole story of Aḥiqar precedes the collection of proverbs. While the language of the Aḥiqar story can be placed in the 7th

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Weippert 1991: 164–178 and Levine 2000: 267–271.

<sup>49</sup> Weigl 2010: 677–688 supports a multivalent origin of Aḥiqar’s literary traditions based on a north Mesopotamian Aramaic core.

<sup>50</sup> B. Porten and A. Yardeni in TAD C 1.1 order the fragments according to their supposed arrangement of the Aḥiqar scroll’s palimpsest. According to their reconstruction, the proverbs follow the whole story of Aḥiqar. I. Kottsieper, on the basis of some material observations, rather suggests that the story of Aḥiqar forms a frame around the proverbs; cf. Kottsieper 1990.

<sup>51</sup> Porten – Yardeni 1986 and Yardeni 1994 are followed by Contini 2005; Niehr 2007; Weigl 2010. For the hypothesis of Kottsieper, cf. the previous note.

and 6th centuries B.C.,<sup>52</sup> the language of the proverbs seems older and can be dated around the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. It is therefore better to deal with these two parts of the work separately.

The story of Aḥiqar introduces the main character as a sage court counselor, who served the Assyrian kings Senacherib and Esarhaddon. The childless Aḥiqar adopted and educated Nadin, his nephew. Aḥiqar, having grown old, presented Nadin to the Assyrian king as his successor. Nadin won the king's favor, but unexpectedly plotted against his adoptive father and slandered Aḥiqar. The king, persuaded by Nadin, sent one of his officers, Nabusumiskun, to kill Aḥiqar, but the officer spared Aḥiqar as a reward for having been rescued by him some time earlier. He killed a eunuch instead of Aḥiqar, so the latter was believed to be dead. According to later versions of the story, sometime later, during a crisis, Esarhaddon needed Aḥiqar's counsel, so Nabusumiskun brought him alive to the king. Aḥiqar managed to save the kingdom and consequently Esarhaddon realized that Aḥiqar had been defamed by Nadin. Finally, Esarhaddon punished Nadin and restored Aḥiqar.

This composition is a didactic wisdom story<sup>53</sup> with moral instructions (Aḥiqar is saved by good deeds he committed a long time before and by his wisdom) and with some literary patterns that are typical of the folk and wisdom tales (i.e., a falsely accused minister restored by his wisdom; a hidden old man saving the nation; the fall and restoration of the main character; and the apparent death of the leader).

The collection of proverbs<sup>54</sup>—none of the extant column is fully intact—shows a composite inventory of literary figures that find various comparisons in wisdom literature of the neighboring cultures (Old Testament, Egypt, Mesopotamia).

From a literary point of view,<sup>55</sup> the main literary forms are *instructions* or *admonitions*: “My son, do not damn the day until you see the night” (no. 2), or “[do not multiply] wealth, and do not lead your heart astray” (no. 51); *riddles*: “What is stronger than a braying ass . . . ?” (no. 84); *numerical sayings*: “two things are good, and a third, which is pleasing to Šamaš: one who drinks the wine and pours it out as libation, one who masters wisdom [and guards it], and one who will hear a thing and will not tell it”

<sup>52</sup> The writing is from the 5th century B.C.

<sup>53</sup> “Weisheitliche Lehrerzählung,” cf. Müller 1977–1978.

<sup>54</sup> Numbering of the proverbs follows Porten – Yardeni 1986 in TAD C.1; for other numberings, cf. TAD C: XV–XVI; and the synopsis in Weigl 2010: 851–860.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Watson 1994: 72–86; Kottsieper 2009: 415–422; Weigl 2010: 543–636.

(no. 95); *animal fables*: “the leopard met the goat and she was naked; the leopard answered and said to the goat: ‘Come and let me cover you with my skin.’ The goat [replied] and said to the leopard: ‘Why should I do (so), my lord? Do not take my hide from me!’ For (as they say): ‘[The leopard] will not greet a gazelle except to suck its blood” (no. 80); *comparisons*: “A man who chops wood in the dark and does not see, is like a thief who breaks into a house and is caught” (no. 83), or “[Ho]w can wood strive with fire, meat with knife, (or) a man with a king?” (no. 10); *aphorisms*: “I have carried sand and loaded salt, but nothing is heavier than a str[anger]” (no. 74).

From a thematic point of view, many sayings concern *retribution*: “El will twist the mouth of the treacherous and tear out the tongue . . .” (no. 72), or “[Whoever] does not exalt the name of his father or the name of his mother, may Šamaš not shine [on him] for he is an evil man” (no. 52); but also *diligence*: “[Keep the wo]rd of the king; if (something) is commanded to you, it is a burning fire: Hurry, do it!” (no. 9); *obedience to duties*: “[Ho]w can wood strive with fire, meat with knife, (or) a man with a king?” (no. 10), or “If your master entrusts you with water, [do not] drink . . . , [then he will (?)] leave gold in your hands” (no. 99); *education*: “Spare not your son from the rod, otherwise you will not be able to save hi[m from . . . ]” (no. 86); *modesty*: “Let the rich not say, ‘In my riches I am glorious” (no. 112); and many other usual wisdom topics.

From a semantic perspective, the proverbs show various rhetorical figures such as *puns* (e.g., “there is no lion in the sea, therefore the sea-monster (?) [qp’] is called sea-lion [lb’]”<sup>56</sup> (no. 79); *word pairs*: “a stroke for a slave-boy, a rebuke for a slave-girl . . .” (no. 92); *antithetical chiasmus*: “for man’s favor is in his truthfulness, but his hatefulness is the lying of his lips” (no. 47); or *antithetical parallelism*: “Do not be (too) sweet, lest they swallow you; do not be (too) bitter [lest they spit you out]” (nos. 63–64).

<sup>56</sup> Aramaic *lb’* recalls the Akkadian word *labbu* “lion”.



## CHAPTER SIX

### RELIGION

Herbert Niehr

#### 1. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

A systematic approach to presenting the religion of the Aramaeans of Syria is not immediately apparent. The epigraphic and archaeological material from Upper Mesopotamia, northern and eastern Syria, southern Anatolia, and central and southern Syria is as disparate as the regions and periods from which our source material originates. Therefore, an approach based on regional geographic aspects has been chosen to present the religion of the Aramaeans, thus giving justice to the individuality of the sources. In this approach, Syria is divided into three regions: the area between the Tigris and Euphrates, the area between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, and the southwest area east of the Lebanon (cf. the map in the frontispiece).

The religion of the Aramaeans of Syria belongs to the larger sphere of West Semitic religions. They are characterized by the fact that a weather-god heads the panthea, due to the importance of rain-fed agriculture in Syria and Palestine. In the case of the Aramaic pantheon it is the god Hadad. There never was a pan-Aramaean religion, however, any more than there was an overall Aramaean kingdom. Rather, there are many different local panthea, which, depending on their location in Syria, were exposed to different influences. Assyro-Babylonian, Luwian, and Phoenician influences are all apparent in the Aramaean culture in Syria.

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<sup>1</sup> Following my overview of the religion of the Aramaeans of Syria (cf. Niehr 2010a) I had the opportunity to present the main features of my work over the course of four guest lectures at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* in Paris in March 2012. For this invitation as well as the pleasant working conditions in the *Bibliothèque des Études Ouest Sémitiques* of the *Collège de France* I would like to thank my colleagues Pierre Bordreuil, André Lemaire, Maria-Grazia Masetti Rouault, Hedwige Rouillard-Bonraisin, and Thomas Römer. In Tübingen I want to thank Alexandra Gath for revising the German version and Jessica Baldwin for the English translation.

The religion of the Aramaeans of Syria must be examined from various perspectives. These perspectives focus on: (1) the pantheon; (2) the monarchy as an intermediary between the divine and the human world; (3) the temples as the seat of deities and the cults as devotions to the deities; (4) prophecy and divination; (5) magic as a means to explore the divine will; and (6) the realm of funeral and mortuary cult.

Sources for the reconstruction of the religion include Aramaic written and iconographic sources, archaeological finds and features, as well as Assyrian, Babylonian, Phoenician, and Hebrew written sources. Another important resource for the history of religion, only mentioned here, is the prosopography of personal names with its theophoric elements and content of their constituent verbs, respectively nouns and adjectives.<sup>2</sup>

There is considerable difference in the level of information available for the religions of the various Aramaean kingdoms of Syria. Archaeological finds and features as well as written sources are present in different degrees of completeness. As for secondary literature on the religion of the Aramaean kingdoms of Syria, the reader may be referred to a number of important overviews.<sup>3</sup>

The chronological scope of the following presentation has at its core the time of the Aramaean kingdoms of Syria (ca. 1000–720 B.C.). Due to the incomplete source material this time frame must be extended at some points. However, Emesa, Palmyra, Hatra, and other sites will not be included, because the written and archaeological evidence is significantly more recent than the sources from the Aramaean kingdoms of Syria. Nevertheless, they should not be overlooked in that they preserve significant relics of the Aramaean religion.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. BETWEEN THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES

The Aramaean kingdoms providing the most source material on the Aramaean religion in the region between the Tigris and Euphrates are Bit Bahġiani, with the cities Guzana (Tell Halaf) and Sikani (Tell Fekheriye); Bit

<sup>2</sup> On Aramaean personal names, cf. Lipiński 1975a; id. 1994; Fales 1977; id. 1978; id. 1991; Zadok 1978; Maraqtan 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Dupont-Sommer 1949: 106–117; Hoftijzer 1968; Gese 1970: 216–229; Greenfield 1987; Xella 1994: 242–251; id. 2007: 69–94; Teixidor 1995: 369–377; Haider – Hutter – Kreuzer 1996: 101–127; Niehr 1998: 148–194; id. 2010a; Lipiński 2000a: 599–640; Martínez Borobio 2008.

<sup>4</sup> See section 5 and J. F. Healey's contribution in this volume.

Adini, with the cities Til Barsib (Tell Aḥmar) and Hadattu (Arslan Tash); and Baliḥ (also known as Ḥuzirina), with the city Harran.

### 2.1 *Deities and Panthea*

At Guzana (Tell Halaf), the capital of the kingdom of Bit Baḥiani,<sup>5</sup> the façade of the Western Palace built by King Kapara gives some insight into the pantheon of this city. Three statues of deities were positioned in the entranceway of this palace.<sup>6</sup> At the center was a weather-god standing on a bull, his characteristic. This deity can be identified as Addu or Hadad in Aramaic. The goddess at his left, standing on a lion, may be identified as Šala, his *paredros*. She may have been equated with a local Ištar in Tell Halaf. The statue of a young god standing on a lion to the right of Addu/Hadad defies a convincing interpretation.

The Assyrian inscriptions and texts from Guzana,<sup>7</sup> though, tell little about the pantheon. The divine names found in these texts cannot readily be transferred to the pantheon of Guzana. The identification of the weather-god Addu/Hadad is definite. His position as weather-god is, for example, emphasized by a ritual concerning fields. In this ritual, performed in cases of drought, the people should weep and pray, cleanse the country and fields, and offer up burnt offerings.<sup>8</sup> This deity also held a function in the legal system since trials took place in his temple and oaths were taken before his statue.<sup>9</sup> The Aramaic texts from Ma'allanate, located southwest of Guzana, show the importance of the Hadad temple of Guzana for the economy and jurisprudence of that region in the 7th century B.C.<sup>10</sup>

The mention of the god Enmešarra in an inscription by the scribe Kam-maki from Guzana is surprising. This deity has probably been adapted in his function as an underworld deity.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> On the kingdom of Bit Baḥiani and the city Guzana (Tell Halaf), cf. Dion 1997: 38–52; Lipiński 2000a: 119–133; Niehr 2010a: 213–229; and the contributions in Baghdo – Martin – Novák – Orthmann 2009; iid. 2012; Cholidis – Martin 2010; Cholidis – Martin 2011.

<sup>6</sup> On the issue of their installation, cf. the account of the archaeological context and the discussion in Cholidis – Martin 2010: 113–117, 346–354. On the palace's destruction, cf. Schaudig 2011.

<sup>7</sup> The inscriptions are edited in Meissner 1933 = 1967; Weidner 1940 = 1967; Ungnad 1940 = 1967; Sader 1987: 11–14; Schwemer 2001: 615f; Fuchs – Röllig 2012: 211.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Schwemer 2001: 617f.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lipiński 1994: 217–233 and Schwemer 2001: 616f.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Lipiński 2010: 120–122, 144, 150, 154f.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Röllig 2003: 422, 424.



The various relief panels of Kapara's palace (pl. VIIa–c) allow further insight into the city's pantheon. Of the original 194 panels 120 survive today.<sup>12</sup> One panel depicts a deity wearing a horned headdress and carrying a curved club and a mace (no. 89). This is the weather-god. A solar deity also plays a significant role, as the deity is equipped with an offering table (no. 2) and appears together with a monarch on another panel (no. 171). Additionally, composite creatures also appear, such as sphinxes and in one case a scorpion-man, distinguished by their horned headdresses as deities.

A key text for understanding the religion of the Khabur River region is an Aramaic-Assyrian bilingual text written on a votive statue from the neighboring Sikani (Tell Fekheriye).<sup>13</sup> It was found in 1979 and dates to between 850 and 800 B.C. The statue is two meters in height, including its base, and is made of grey basalt. Even though the style is clearly adapted to resemble Assyrian votive statues, the statue is firmly based in the artistic tradition of Kapara's time.<sup>14</sup> It was found in the southern part of the upper city of Tell Fekheriye, where a sanctuary of the weather-god is presumed to be located. The Aramaic text on the votive statue reads in translation as follows:<sup>15</sup>

(1) The statue of Haddayis'i, which he has set up before Hadad of Sikani, (2) regulator of the waters of heaven and earth, who rains down abundance, who gives pasture and (3) watering-places to all lands, who gives rest and vessels of food (4) to all the gods, his brothers, regulator of all rivers, who enriches (5) all lands, the merciful god to whom it is good to pray, who dwells (6) Sikani. To the great god, his<sup>16</sup> lord, Haddayis'i, King of Guzana, son (7) of Sasnuri, King of Guzana, set up and gave (the statue) to him, so that his soul may live, and his days be long, and (8) to increase his years, and so that his house may flourish, and his descendants may flourish, and (9) his people may flourish, and to remove illness from him, and for making his prayer heard, and for (10) accepting the words of his mouth. Now (11) whoever afterward, when it is in disrepair, re-erects it, may he put my name on it, but whoever erases my name from it (12) and puts his name, may Hadad, the hero, be his adversary. The statue of Haddayis'i, (13) King of

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Orthmann 2002: 57–89, 103–127 and Cholidis – Martin 2010: 69–195. I follow the numbering of the small panels in Cholidis – Martin 2010: 156–174.

<sup>13</sup> On Sikani (Tell Fekheriye), cf. the information in Bonatz – Bartl – Gilbert – Jaus 2008 and Niehr 2010a: 223f.

<sup>14</sup> On the statue, cf. Abou-Assaf 1981; Orthmann 2002: 93f; Kühne 2009: 48f with figs. 2–3. For further classification, see Magen 1986: 40–45.

<sup>15</sup> The essential edition of this text is Abou-Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982; the English translation largely follows Millard 2000a. Cf. also Lipiński 1994: 48–72.

<sup>16</sup> Because of the Assyrian *Vorlage* the Aramaic text must be read as *mr' (h)*.

Guzana and of Sikani and of Azran. For continuing<sup>17</sup> his throne, (14) and for the length of his life and so that his word might be (15) pleasing to gods and to people, this image he made better than before. In the presence of Hadad (16), who dwells in Sikani, the lord of the Khabur, he has set up his statue. Whoever removes my name from the furnishings (17) of the house of Hadad, my lord: May my lord Hadad not accept his food and water (18) from his hand. May my lady Šuwala not accept food and water from his hand. When he (19) sows, may he not reap, and when he sows a thousand (measures) of barley, may he take (only) a fraction from it. (20) Should one hundred ewes suckle a lamb, may it not be satisfied. Should one hundred cows suckle (21) a calf, may it not be satisfied. Should one hundred women suckle a child, may it not be satisfied. (22) Should one hundred women bake bread in an oven, may they not fill it. May his men glean barley from a refuse pit to eat. (23) May plague, the rod of Nergal, not be cut off from his land. (KAI 309)

Of the two inscriptions on the statues it is clear that the Assyrian version is the older one. It originates from a lost votive statue from Guzana (Tell Halaf) and is referred to in line 7. The text had been transferred onto the votive statue from Sikani (Tell Fekheriye) and been extended by an Aramaic inscription. Likewise, the statue is an “improved” version of the older one (KAI 309: 15; line 23 in the Assyrian text).<sup>18</sup>

Deities mentioned by name in this inscription include Hadad (KAI 309: 1, 5–6, 12, 15–17), Šuwala (line 18), and Nergal (line 23), as well as “all the gods” collectively (line 4; cf. lines 14–15).

This inscription quite obviously presents Hadad as the weather-god and he thus assumes the highest position as a deity. He has taken on theological aspects of the Mesopotamian weather-god Addu, conspicuously visible in the epithets “Regulator of the Waters of Heaven and Earth” and “Regulator of the Waters of all Rivers,” thus cementing the fact that the Assyrian version influenced the theology of the Aramaic version. Hadad is also found in his regional manifestation as “Hadad (of) Sikani” (lines 1, 5–6, 15–16). Thus, the city of Sikani seems to have been a special cult center for Hadad in the kingdom of Bit Bahjani. In the older Assyrian version Hadad is located in Guzana (line 7; cf. also lines 24–25 of the Assyrian version). In line 16 Hadad is additionally named “Lord of the Khabur River,” thus subordinating the Khabur region to “Hadad of Sikani.” As the weather-god he is responsible for the waters of the heavens and the earth;

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Dietrich – Loretz 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Regarding philological questions, questions on the origin and editorial history of the inscription, cf. Abou-Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982; Fales 1983; id. 2011b: 563f; Gropp – Lewis 1985; Lipiński 1994: 19–81; Leonhard 1995; Schwiderski 2003.

he procures pastures, victuals, and offerings for all the deities; and he lets all countries be bountiful (lines 1–5). Hadad's warlike traits are expressed in his epithet *gbr* "Hero" (line 12; cf. *qardu* "warlike, heroic" in line 18 of the Assyrian version).

Hadad of Guzana, the Aramaean weather-god, dominated the Jazira region as Hadad of Aleppo did for the region between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean.<sup>19</sup> The god Hadad, mentioned parallel to the god Ḫaldi (KAI 320) in an inscription on a stele from Bukan southeast of Lake Urmia dating to the 8th century B.C., might be the weather-god of Guzana. The closely related textual equivalents in the curses of the inscriptions of Tell Fekheriye and Bukan bear this out.<sup>20</sup>

The goddess Šuwala is attested in Anatolia, northern Syria, and northern Mesopotamia from the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.<sup>21</sup> She is a chthonic goddess and appears often in connection with Nergal, the god of the underworld, such as in Tell Fekheriye, where she is named "Mistress" of the statue's donor as Hadad is named his "Lord". Thus, she apparently is the *paredros* of Hadad and resembles the goddess Šala, who appears in northern Syria as *paredros* to the deities Addu, Kumarbi, and Dagan from Old Babylonian times onward.<sup>22</sup>

The third deity mentioned by name in the inscription is Nergal (line 23). He is the god of all ills, and the weather-god's curses threaten pestilence as the scourge of Nergal and his *paredros*.

The deities named collectively in line 4 are the remaining deities of the Sikani pantheon. As they are divine beings, they are called "brothers" of Hadad. The distinction in rank between them and Hadad is expressed by the fact that Hadad, the highest deity, distributes the offerings to them.

Continuing with the kingdom of Baliḫ (or also Ḫuzirina),<sup>23</sup> one finds at the top of the Harran<sup>24</sup> pantheon the lunar deity Sin. His cult is attested in Mari from the 18th century B.C. and in Mittani from the 14th century B.C. Researchers are still divided on the origins of this cult. One opinion

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Fales 2011: 233.

<sup>20</sup> On the inscription, cf. Lemaire 1998a; id. 1998b; Fales 2003; id. 2011b: 565. On the curses, see section 2.2.

<sup>21</sup> On the goddess Šuwala, cf. Lipiński 2009b.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Feliu 2003: 288–293; Schwemer 2008a: 147–149; id. 2008b.

<sup>23</sup> On the kingdom of Baliḫ, cf. the details in Lipiński 2000a: 121–123, 127–130, 132 and Niehr 2010a: 229–234.

<sup>24</sup> On Harran, cf. the details in Niehr 2010a: 229f; on the cult of Harran, cf. especially Cramer 1986: 642f; Tubach 1986: 129–175; Beaulieu 1989: 43–65; Green 1992; d'Agostino 1994; Gündüz 1994; Lipiński 1994: 171–192; Holloway 1995; Theuer 2000: 323–369; Niehr 2010a: 230–232.

is that the cult came from southern Mesopotamia, possibly from Ur, and migrated from there to Harran. Another holds that the Sin cult of Harran was originally native to the region and contact between Ur and Harran existed only at a later point. The latter seems to be the most plausible concept since lunar cults are traced independently of each other in many places in the Ancient Near East.

During the 1st millennium B.C. the Aramaeans adopted the cult of the moon-god of Harran and identified him with the West Semitic lunar deity Šaḥr/Šahr.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the moon-god of Harran appears in various inscriptions as “Lord of Harran”<sup>26</sup> or as the theophoric element in personal names, such as Siʿgabbar and Sin-zera-ibni in Neirab.<sup>27</sup>

The great popularity of the moon-god of Harran can hardly be underestimated. This is reflected not only in a plethora of personal names with the theophoric element Šaḥr/Šahr, respectively Siʿ or Sin, but also in the distribution of the lunar deity cult throughout Syria.

In Semitic cultures the moon-god was generally assigned four spheres of action.<sup>28</sup> In the first, the moon-god provided the nomads and their herds with orientation during the night. The second is the sphere of divination. This is also why the moon-god was often called on to witness an oath or contract. In the third sphere, the moon in its different phases offered a determining factor to measure time, which is where the word for “month” originates. Lastly, the moon-god was responsible for the fertility of the herds and humans. The last two aspects are connected in so far as the moon-god gave an indication of the fertility cycle of the herds. This led to a close connection between the moon-god and the weather-god, as both deities retained a bull as a symbol of fertility or could be represented by a bull. This close link between the two deities can be seen on an iconographic level, such as on the stele from Betsaida (pl. XLIII).<sup>29</sup> Likewise, the divine name ‘Aglibol (“young bull of Bol”) attested much later in Palmyra still points to this link.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the crescent moon,

<sup>25</sup> On the etymology of the divine name Šaḥr/Šahr, cf. Krebernik 1993–1997: 364, who refers to the Syrian word *sahrā* (“moon”). Less likely is the interpretation “the vigilant” favored by Green 1992: 39 and Theuer 2000: 368 n. 222.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Lemaire 2001b: 15, 20, the inscriptions from Arslan Tash (see section 2.5), and an inscription of King Bar-Rakkab of Samʿal (see KAI 218 in section 3.1).

<sup>27</sup> On Neirab, see sections 3.1 and 3.6. For personal names containing the element *sin*, cf. Lipiński 1994: 174–181 and Zadok 1995a.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. on the following especially Theuer 2000 and Novák 2001.

<sup>29</sup> See section 4.3.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Tubach 2006: 200–206.

which is perceived as recumbent in the Orient, and the horns of a bull are viewed as one and the same, and thus blend into each other in iconography.

Alongside the moon-god is his wife, the goddess Nikkal, who bore the title of “Mother of the Gods.” Sin and Nikkal as the divine parents were the overlords of the Harran pantheon. Their children were the sun-god Šamaš and the goddess Ištar, the star of Venus. The god of light or fire, Nusku, served as vizier and was considered their son. On the stelae of Nabonidus the connection between Šamaš and Nusku is even closer. They speak of “Šamaš, whose name is Nusku.”<sup>31</sup>

In 1999, an approximately three-meter-tall statue of the weather-god was found in Til Barsib/Masuwari (Tell Aḥmar)<sup>32</sup> in the former kingdom of Bit Adini.<sup>33</sup> The weather-god is standing on a young bull and is carrying a battle axe in his right hand and a thunderbolt in his left. He is wearing a horned headdress with the lock of hair typical for a hero and his face is bearded. The god is dressed in a kilt and pointed shoes. Above him is a winged solar disk or a lunar symbol. The stele itself is dated to around 900 B.C. An inscription in Hieroglyphic Luwian (TELL AHMAR 6) is inscribed on three sides of the stele. The inscription highlights the special relationship between the weather-god and the king and, in this respect, is comparable to the Aramaic royal inscriptions of Hamath (KAI 202) and Dan (KAI 310).<sup>34</sup>

In this inscription the weather-god is invoked as “Weather-god of the Army” or “Heavenly Weather-god.” This suggests relationships to both the warlike weather-god of Aleppo and the god Ba’alšamayin, although both connections require further clarification.

In addition to this newly found stele more stelae were found in Til Barsib that either match the iconography of the new stele or differ from it in several details.

Corresponding in every detail is stele B from Til Barsib, also housed in Aleppo (pl. X).<sup>35</sup> It is debatable whether the weather-god brandishes an

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Schaudig 2001: 499.

<sup>32</sup> On Til Barsib (Tell Aḥmar), cf. the details in Niehr 2010a: 235f, additionally Bunnens 2009. The Luwian inscriptions of Til Barsib can be found in Hawkins 2000: 224–245 and in Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: 11–31.

<sup>33</sup> On the kingdom of Bit Adini, cf. the details in Dion 1997: 86–98; Lipiński 2000a: 163–193; Niehr 2010a: 234–242.

<sup>34</sup> See sections 3.1 and 4.1.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: 111, 156 fig. 56.

axe or not. The stele's inscription mentions the death of King Hamiyata (TELL AHMAR 1)<sup>36</sup> and it is dated to about 900 B.C.

Stele A from Til Barsib, now in the Louvre, differs from the newly found one.<sup>37</sup> Stele A is damaged, so it is not possible to determine if it ever depicted a bull, a winged solar disk or lunar symbol, or relief bands at the lower section. The inscription mentions King Hamiyata (TELL AHMAR 2)<sup>38</sup> and is dated around 900 B.C. This stele matches one from the Elie Borowski collection,<sup>39</sup> also with an inscription of King Hamiyata (BOROWSKI 3).<sup>40</sup>

The common element of all stelae is the representation of the weather-god as "smiting god", a stance known since the Late Bronze Age.<sup>41</sup>

Inscriptions in Aramaic, Assyrian, and Hieroglyphic Luwian from Til Barsib and Hadattu (Arslan Tash) mention in addition to the weather-god the god Ashur, the goddess Ištar of Arbela, the moon-god of Harran, a solar deity, the goddess Kubaba, as well as the gods Anu and Enlil. A lack of sources does not allow us to determine whether all these deities were incorporated into the Aramaean cults of this region, or to what extent.<sup>42</sup>

Lastly, the two amulet tablets found in Arslan Tash must be mentioned. Their inscriptions mention the deities Sasam, Ashur, the highest god of the pantheon, Ba'al, the wife of Horon, the wife of Ba'al Qdš, as well as several demons.<sup>43</sup> All these deities of Assyrian, Anatolian, and Aramaean origin clearly show the cultural medley that was present in Bit Adini.

Another important find complex for the reconstruction of the Aramaean pantheon in Bit Adini is the collection of proverbs in the Aramaic *Aḥiqar* novel.<sup>44</sup> This collection documents the advanced Aramaization of Til Barsib (Tell Aḥmar). The convergence of Hurrian-Luwian and Mesopotamian wisdom tradition in these proverbs is crucial for the localization of the collection's source. It most likely originated from the region of Bit Adini, especially its capital city Til Barsib. This fits with the fact that the Assyrians made Til Barsib an Assyrian administrative center. Aramaeans were

<sup>36</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 239–243.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: III, 157 fig. 58.

<sup>38</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 227–230.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: 112, 157 fig. 59.

<sup>40</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 230f.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. the catalogue in Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: 156–172 figs. 109–122.

<sup>42</sup> On the inscriptions, see Green – Hausleiter 2001; Galter 2004b; id. 2007; Röllig 2009.

<sup>43</sup> See section 2.5.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. most recently Grelot 2001; Contini – Grottanelli 2005; Niehr 2007; Weigl 2010.

able to rise through the ranks and hold high positions within the Assyrian administration, as did Aḥiqar, in the later Aḥiqar novel at the court of King Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), and Ashurbanipal (680–669 B.C.).<sup>45</sup>

With regard to the religious indications in the proverbs of the Aramaean Aḥiqar,<sup>46</sup> it has been repeatedly claimed that Hadad, as the chief god of the Aramaean pantheon of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, is not mentioned in the surviving proverbs. However, this is a superficial judgment, as the “Lord of the Holy Ones” in Aḥ 6: 79 is the head of a divine circle of beings. If one looks at the inscriptions from Syria, Hadad leads the pantheon of the Aramaean kingdoms. In contrast to the “gods”, the “Holy Ones” constitute the privy council of Hadad.

Another deity occurring frequently is the god El. In this context it must be emphasized that in Aramaic *ʾl* represents the divine name “El”, because the common noun for “god” is *ʾlh*. El is also attested in the Aramaean pantheon of Samʿal.<sup>47</sup> The proverb collection says about the god El that he is with the individual (Aḥ 6: 91), that he raises the petitioner as a righteous one (Aḥ 8: 109), and that he silences the slanderers (Aḥ 10: 156).

The third deity appearing in the proverbs is Šamaš. He appears herein as the god of justice, as he usually does in the Ancient Near East. Those who suffer injustice should submit their cases to Šamaš, who will obtain redress for the innocent (Aḥ 7: 107–108). Šamaš shall not appear to him who does not praise his father and mother, as he is a bad person (Aḥ 9: 138). The aspect of Šamaš as god of justice is also encountered in the relationship between master and servants (Aḥ 13: 197). Similarly, the beauty of the king is compared to Šamaš (Aḥ 6: 92). The proverbs tell that Šamaš loves the wine drinker who offers him libations, the wise as well as the discreet (Aḥ 12: 187–188).

Varying statements are given about the gods (*ʾlhn*) in general. “They will put good things on the palate of the one they love” (Aḥ 11: 163). “If evil comes from the mouths of people then the gods shall give rise to evil against the people” (Aḥ 11: 172). “Whoever shoots his arrow toward a just man must expect that the gods rush to the just man’s aid and turn the arrow against the shooter” (Aḥ 9: 126). “The shot against a righteous man is a sin against the gods” (Aḥ 9: 128). “The evil that men do does not originate from the gods” (Aḥ 9: 132–135).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Niehr 2007: 13f; id. 2010a: 238, and generally against a south Syrian localization of the proverbs, also Weigl 2001: 28f and id. 2010: 37–39.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. on the following Niehr 2007: 18–20.

<sup>47</sup> See section 3.1.

If one considers the pantheon to be mirrored in the proverbs, the following becomes clear. The god Hadad is at the head of the pantheon together with a circle of divine beings (*qdšn*; Aḥ 6: 79), El follows as a personal god, and Šamaš as the god of justice and order. There are also some unnamed deities.

## 2.2 *Kingship*

If the iconographic program of the orthostats in Guzana (Tell Halaf)<sup>48</sup> is read as royal ideology, it provides an insight into the concept of kingship in Bit Baḥiani at the time of Kapara and his successors.<sup>49</sup> The manifold subjects depicted in the relief panels range from hunting (e.g., nos. 17, 23, 45, 73) and wild animals (e.g., nos. 21, 34) to the depiction of legends such as the orchestra of animals (nos. 57, 92), nature, and war (no. 182). All these depictions underline the concept that the king holds power over nature, wild beasts, and his enemies. Another dimension to the understanding of such imagery and scenes opens against the background of then-contemporary Assyrian art. As S. M. Maul notes, “Den Jagden kam auch die Aufgabe zu, sichtbar und exemplarisch das grundsätzliche Vermögen des Königs zu offenbaren, alle wie immer gearteten bedrohlichen Kräfte besiegen und so das Land in Frieden und Ordnung halten zu können.”<sup>50</sup> The king of Guzana sees himself, like the Assyrian king,<sup>51</sup> as the “keeper of world order.”

The motifs of goats and stylized trees (e.g., nos. 40, 50, 65, 66) point to the fertility of the land. In addition, the sphere of demons and hybrid creatures (e.g., nos. 19, 43, 46, 48, 50, 77, 78) transcends the royal sphere toward the supernatural. The gods and demons, before whose renditions altars sometimes stood, protect the royal palace.

One thinks of the audience<sup>52</sup> for these images as the king and his family, courtiers and diplomats, as well as domestic and foreign visitors to the palace in which the orthostats were mounted.

From Sikani (Tell Fekheriye) comes the royal votive statue whose inscription has already been discussed. Kings often placed votive statues before the divine image in temples, to ensure that they were thus permanently

<sup>48</sup> See note 12.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Denel 2011 and section 2.3.

<sup>50</sup> Maul 2000: 24.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Maul 1999.

<sup>52</sup> On this question, see also Ataç 2010: 86–89 with regard to the Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs in Niniveh.



represented in prayer in the deity's presence.<sup>53</sup> The prayer to the god Hadad was described as good (KAI 309: 5) on the votive statue from Tell Fekheriye. Given as purpose for the placement of the statue are the length of days and years for the king and his dynasty, the absence of illness, and the esteem the king held in the eyes of the gods and his people. Contrasted to this is the curse of the weather-god and his *paredros* toward the enemies of the king (KAI 309: 6–10, 16–23).

The subject of the statue's votive inscription is an endowment of King Haddayis'i (KAI 309), corresponding to the invocation of the pantheon's high gods, as they were responsible for the welfare of the royal house. Furthermore, the curses in lines 16–23 are within the royal sphere, since "his people" (line 22) and "his country" (line 23) are mentioned as objects of the curse.<sup>54</sup>

The placement of a votive statue in Tell Fekheriye also points to the existence of a temple in the city as well as to the king having built said temple.

According to the proverbs of the Aḥiqar novel the king is as beautiful to look at as the sun-god (Aḥ 6: 92). Only the person whom the god El favors can last before the king (Aḥ 6: 91). The king's subjects are strenuously encouraged to be loyal to the king, otherwise the king shall be to them as fire is to wood or a knife is to meat (Aḥ 6: 88).<sup>55</sup>

### 2.3 *Temples and Cults*

The oldest evidence for the existence of a temple in Guzana (Tell Halaf) is provided by the relief panels labeled "temple of the weather-god," because they originally belonged to that temple. They were found in Kapara's palace, where they were mounted in a subordinate position. Perhaps the panels were only intended for such a temple and were repurposed for Kapara's palace before they could be installed. It is also possible that the temple of the weather-god was already derelict at the time of Kapara.<sup>56</sup>

The votive statue from Sikani (Tell Fekheriye) with its inscription (KAI 309) provides another indication for a temple in Guzana. The inscription's

<sup>53</sup> Cf. essentially Magen 1986: 40–45.

<sup>54</sup> Some notable close parallels to curses aimed at an enemy king from Tell Fekheriye (and in part also from Sefire) can be found in the Aramaic inscription from Bukan (KAI 320); cf. Lemaire 1998a: 22–27 and id. 1998b: 297f.

<sup>55</sup> On Aḥ 6: 84–88 and 6: 91–92, cf. Niehr 2007: 17 and Weigl 2010: 110–160; on the equivalents in Neo-Assyrian literature, cf. Parpola 2005: 102–104.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Cholidis – Martin 2010: 23, 27.

Akkadian part mentions the weather-god Hadad residing in Guzana (line 7). Behind this expression stands the Ancient Near Eastern theological notion of the temple as a residence of the gods, which was a prerequisite for establishing a votive statue before a deity.

There is archaeological evidence of offerings. Several altars were found in front of the façade of Kapara's palace. A central altar made of glazed bricks stood on the terrace before the divine statues of Addu/Hadad, Šala/Ištar, and a younger male deity. Other altars were placed in front of certain relief panels of the palace, for instance, an altar in front of the relief of two bull-men carrying the sun-god (no. 2). Remains of a sacrificial dove were found on this altar. Likewise, an altar stood before the relief of the weather-god (no. 13) and another before the sphinx figure to the left of the entrance. One panel (no. 171) even depicts a sacrificial scene in which a man with raised hands stands next to an offering table and a cultic pillar.

Regardless of all this, however, it cannot be concluded that Kapara's palace was a temple, just as it was not a residential palace either. Rather, the building has to be interpreted as a political-cultic center in the service of the monarchy and realm.

The object with the oldest known Aramaic inscription to date is not an altar. Palaeography dates the object to the end of the 10th or the beginning of the 9th century B.C. It is a pedestal with an inscription, whose first part reads: "This is the image of . . ." (KAI 231). Based on this understanding the object is the base of a statue, possibly a votive statue, which was placed before a deity in a temple in Guzana.<sup>57</sup>

The excavations in Tell Halaf have uncovered the so-called "city temple" in the western part of the city, which dates from the Assyrian period. Beneath this building are the remains of an older construction, identified as a temple for the weather-god, which dates to the time of Kapara.<sup>58</sup> The Assyrian city temple was also a temple for the weather-god. This is demonstrated by 8th- and 7th-century-B.C. texts dealing with judgments spoken by the weather-god. Such texts presuppose an appearance of judicial priests before the divine statue in the weather-god's temple; likewise, the economic texts highlight the economic function of the weather-god temple.

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<sup>57</sup> First edition in Friedrich 1940–1967; cf. now Dankwarth – Müller 1988 and Lipiński 1994: 15–18.

<sup>58</sup> Thus Müller 1950: 349f.

The votive statue from Sikani (Tell Fekheriye) reveals, because of its existence and especially because of its inscription (KAI 309), several aspects of the city's cult. First of all, it was said of the god Hadad that he resided in Sikani (KAI 309: 5–6). In the language of Ancient Near Eastern cults, this means that the god was present in the temple through his statue or cult symbol. According to the inscription, the weather-god appears as “Hadad of Sikani.” The main temple of the city was, therefore, dedicated to this god's cult. Furthermore, the inscription shows that the statue of Haddayis'i was placed before the god Hadad (KAI 309: 1, 15–16), representing the permanent presence of the votive statue's donor in the temple of Hadad.

Additionally, the inscriptions offer some insight into the cult. It was practiced by prayers (lines 5, 9–10) and the offering of sacrifices and libations (lines 17–19). The goddess Šuwala was also included in these practices (line 18). With these offerings Hadad, as the highest god of the pantheon, provided for the deities of Sikani who were subordinate to him (lines 3–4).

Even though the votive statue provides some evidence for the existence of a temple to the weather-god Hadad, the excavation of said temple is still pending. However, it is clear that the statue was found in the southern part of the upper city of Tell Fekheriye. Since the northern part of the upper city is occupied by a *hilani* building it is possible that the temple of the city's chief god, that is the temple of Hadad, was located in the south. The location where the statue was found favors this interpretation, as it is unlikely that it was removed far from the temple.<sup>59</sup>

Another noteworthy aspect regarding the statue is its damage. It had already been decapitated in ancient times. This type of damage is typical during hostile conquests, with the aim of making certain cults impossible. In this sense the “execution” of the statue can be tied to the Assyrian conquest of the city.

The first mention of the Sin temple in Harran is found in a letter from Mari (18th century B.C.). It mentions the conclusion of a treaty between the Benjamins and several kings of northern Syria conducted in the Sin temple of Harran (ARM XXVI 24: 10–15).<sup>60</sup> In the Šattiwazza treaty (second

<sup>59</sup> On the find spot of the statue, cf. the references in Abou-Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982: 2–4, and on the most recent excavation in Tell Fekheriye, cf. Bonatz – Bartl – Glibert – Jauss 2008.

<sup>60</sup> Text and translation in Durand 1988: 152f; cf. also Lipiński 1994: 172f.

half of the 14th century B.C.) the moon-god of Harran is mentioned (§ 19, line 54) together with several other Mittani deities.<sup>61</sup>

The oldest 1st-millennium mention of the Sin temple of Harran is a reference that it was built by Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.). In Assyrian sources the temple of the moon-god of Harran is known as É.Ī.Ī.Ī.Ī.Ī, Akkadian *šubat ħidāti*, both of which translate as “House Which Gives Joy.”<sup>62</sup>

This mention indicates that Harran already belonged to the Assyrian Empire at that time. The moon-god of Harran also appears in the curses of the treaty between Ashur-nirari V (753–746 B.C.) and Mati’el of Bit Agusi (SAA II, no. 2, IV: 4).<sup>63</sup> The 7th century marked a time of economic prosperity for Harran. This is reflected in the renovations made by King Ashurbanipal (669–627 B.C.), one of the few textually recorded details of the temple’s construction history.<sup>64</sup>

After the fall of the city of Ashur (629 B.C.), Harran temporarily superseded it as the capital city.<sup>65</sup> The last Neo-Assyrian king, Ashur-uballit II, was crowned in Harran in 611 B.C. and was able to remain in power there for only a short while: in 610 B.C. the city was overrun by the Medes and laid to waste. As a result the cult services in the Sin temple were disrupted.<sup>66</sup> Soon after his ascension to the throne, King Nabonidus (555–539 B.C.) applied himself to the restoration of the Sin temple.<sup>67</sup>

Four stelae of King Nabonidus, excavated at the site of the destroyed mosque in Altınbaşak in 1956, as well as other inscriptions found in 1985 and 1989, show that the temple of the moon-god Sin must have been in this area.<sup>68</sup>

A brief description of the temple is found in the verse account of Nabonidus: “He built its brickwork, formed its layout, its foundation he firmly established, raised its spires, let its façade gleam with plaster and asphalt, an impetuous wild bull he plac[e]d before it just like (in) Esangil.”<sup>69</sup> The plaster and asphalt elements mentioned are the orthostats made of limestone and basalt used as facing for the temple’s façade.

<sup>61</sup> CTH 51; cf. the translation in Wilhelm 2005: 113–121.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Postgate 1972–1975: 124 and Dion 1997: 49.

<sup>63</sup> Text in Parpola – Watanabe 1988: 8–13.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Gadd 1958: 72.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Lipiński 1994: 184 and Theuer 2000: 327.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Lipiński 1994: 190f and Theuer 2000: 328.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Gadd 1958: 74f; Beaulieu 1989: 104–115; Dandamayev 1998–2001: 9f.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Gadd 1958: 35–44; Postgate 1972–1975: 122f; Green 1992: 99; Lipiński 1994: 171f.

<sup>69</sup> Following Schaudig 2001: 574. Cf. also Nabonidus’s É.Ī.Ī.Ī.Ī cylinder in Schaudig 2001: 436–438 and, on the placement of the wild bull, 419 note 540.

The moon-god of Harran is mentioned multiple times as the recipient of gold, which was paid as fines<sup>70</sup> benefiting the temple treasury of Harran.

Babylonian descriptions convey an impression of how the cult image of the temple may have looked: the anthropomorphic figure of a man with flowing hair and outstretched right hand.<sup>71</sup>

Much more popular and widespread in the Ancient Near East, however, was the symbolic representation of the moon-god of Harran. This was the image of a recumbent crescent moon lying on a standard. In some cases the crescent moon encompassed a circular full moon. On the link between the standard and the crescent moon two tassels are suspended left and right. These tassels distinguish the representation of the moon-god of Harran from representations of other lunar deities. U. Seidl interpreted them as the pictorial representation of the word *riksu* (“contract, treaty”); since this noun is derived from *rakāsu* “to bind” it is an allusion to the role of the moon-god in swearing oaths and concluding contracts.<sup>72</sup>

The cult of the god of light or fire, Nusku, may have been conducted in the temple of Sin, with Nusku appearing as a *theos synnaos*, though there are sources that mention a separate temple to Nusku.<sup>73</sup>

#### 2.4 *Prophecy and Divination*

Both the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription TELL AHMAR 6 and the inscription on another stele (TELL AHMAR 5) attest to the phenomenon of prophecy in Bit Adini. This suggests a comparison with prophecy from Hamath and Tell Deir ‘Alla.<sup>74</sup> TELL AHMAR 5 refers to the message from someone who was inspired by the gods telling the king that he should establish the cult of the weather-god at the military camp (§§ 22–23).

#### 2.5 *Magic*

The two amulet tablets from the 7th century B.C. found in Hadattu (Arslan Tash) are usually discussed within the context of the Phoenician religion. However, due to the locality of the find and the special circumstances of

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Lemaire 2001b: 14f, 20.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Lee 1993.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Seidl 2000: 93f.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Streck 1998–2001d.

<sup>74</sup> Text and translation of TELL AHMAR 6 in Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: 11–31 and of TELL AHMAR 5 in Hawkins 2000: 231–234; cf. also the inscriptions from Hamath (see section 3.4) and from Tell Deir ‘Alla (see section 4.4).

their epigraphy the situation of these amulets is somewhat more complex. Both tablets were inscribed by an Aramaean scribe. This is indicated by the use of the Aramaic script, Aramaisms in the language, and regional peculiarities such as mention of the god Ashur, who does not appear in Phoenician inscriptions. Thus, an Aramaean scribe likely copied a *Vorlage* written in Phoenician and possibly even modified it. Moreover, the incantations were found in a city populated by Aramaeans and were therefore part of the Aramaean religion.

Tablet I (KAI 232) mentions the god Sasam as tutelary deity of the contract, Ashur, the chief deity of the pantheon, Ba'al, the wife of Horon, the wife of Ba'al Qdš, as well as two female demons called "the flyer" and "the strangler."<sup>75</sup>

The amulet tablet is perforated at the top presumably to hang it at the house entrance. On the obverse is the image of a winged sphinx ("the flyer") and below it a wolf ("the strangler") devouring a child. The reverse shows a striding god (Ba'al?) brandishing an axe in his right hand and fighting demons. When the amulet was suspended in the house entrance the two demons, the sphinx and the wolf, probably faced outward while the god faced inward into the house.

Tablet II's shorter but contextually more difficult inscription<sup>76</sup> mentions the god Ba'al and a demon Šyy. In terms of content the inscription is an incantation against the evil eye. The subject of the evil eye eating and drinking is already found in the Late Bronze Age in the Northwest Semitic region in an incantation from Ugarit (KTU 1.96).<sup>77</sup>

This tablet is also perforated so that it could be hung. On its reverse a human-shaped demon is in the process of devouring a man. This is a visualization of the demon with the large evil eye, mentioned in the inscription.

All in all, incantations are only sparsely documented within the Aramaean culture of Syria. This makes the philological edition of the amulet tablets from Arslan Tash all the more difficult.

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<sup>75</sup> First edited in du Mesnil du Buisson 1939a; cf. other editions, especially Caquot 1973; Donner – Röllig 3-51971–2002: 43–47; Röllig 1974: 17–28; id. 2000b; Gibson 1982: 82–88; Pardee 1998; Conklin 2003; Kutter 2008: 236–245; Berlejung 2010.

<sup>76</sup> First edited in Caquot – du Mesnil du Buisson 1971; cf. other editions, especially Röllig 1974: 28–36; Gibson 1982: 88–92; Pardee 1998.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Niehr 2008: 254 (with further literature).

## 2.6 *Funeral and Mortuary Cult*

Three building complexes in Guzana (Tell Halaf; cf. pl. XXX) will be discussed in connection with the mortuary cult. These are the two burial vaults north of Kapara's palace, the two mortuary cult complexes ("Grabkultanlagen") near the southern citadel gate, and the cult room ("Kult-raum") near the southern city gate.

The *southern burial vault* near Kapara's palace had a barrel vault and interior dimensions of 3.90 × 2.50 m with a crown height of 2.12 m.<sup>78</sup> The walls were 1.80 m thick. Access to the vault was via a gate in the narrow eastern side, which had been walled up after the burial. In the narrow western side there was a 20 × 30 cm niche with a depth of 25 cm, 18 cm above the floor. Its purpose is uncertain. Perhaps it once housed a statue of the deceased. Thirty-two centimeters above the threshold of the walled up entrance to the vault is a 2.40 m wide by 4 m long rammed-earth platform. This platform directly in front of the burial vault offered space to conduct the royal burial and ancestor worship rituals.

The burial vault had not been looted and yielded several finds. Foremost, the remains, which had been buried with the head to the east, various remnants of the deceased's garb such as a golden mouth covering, a plaque that was part of the headdress, golden appliqués on the sandals of the deceased, and three earrings. Additionally, there were grave goods made of silver, bronze, and ivory.

The *northern burial vault* on the palace terrace near the *hilani* building is larger than the southern vault.<sup>79</sup> It has a double burial vault containing two burial chambers separated by a central wall. The northern of the two chambers is 5.62 × 2.12 m, the southern one 5.62 × 2 m large. The thickness of the outer walls varies between 1.30 and 1.68 m. The interior height of the vault was at least 2 m. Access to the vault was through a door on the northwest corner. The southern chamber was only indirectly accessible though the northern chamber via a door in the central wall. Both chambers had already been looted by the time they were excavated. In the northern chamber the remains of a clay tub were spread on top of the rubble on the floor.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. on the following von Oppenheim 1931: 192–194; Langenegger 1950: 100–103; Voos 1986: 38–40; Orthmann 2001: 222f; id. 2002: 47–49.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. on the following von Oppenheim 1931: 193; Langenegger 1950: 103f; Voos 1986: 38–40; Orthmann 2001: 223f; id. 2002: 50.

The interments in this vault must be seen in connection with the palace and the royal mortuary cult even though there are neither textual material nor archaeological finds that would offer further clarification.

The two *mortuary cult complexes*<sup>80</sup> are distinguished from one another as northern and southern.

The *northern mortuary cult complex* consisted of a 3.65 × 2.20 m chapel with an entrance in the east. Visible from the entrance is a basalt statue placed in a niche in the west wall. This sitting statue (1.42 m high, 45 cm wide, 72 cm thick) represents an enthroned woman (pl. XVIII). She wears a crown on her head, which resembles the crown on the female figure of the double sitting statue from the sanctuary. The figure's lap is designed like a table, inviting the placement of offerings; the statue's hands rest on its knees, with the palm of its right hand facing upward, holding a cup.

Beneath the floor of this chapel and directly in front of the statue is a brick-lined grave shaft about 1 m deep. At its base was a clay vessel filled with cremation remains and grave goods made from gold, bronze, and ivory. Next to the clay vessel were four bronze cups, which also belonged to the grave goods in this shaft.

The *southern mortuary cult complex* was nearly square, although due to the high level of deterioration its exact dimensions cannot be determined. In this complex the statue of the deceased stood directly above the grave shaft. The statue (1.92 m high, 82 cm wide, 95 cm thick) also represents an enthroned female figure. The side-locks are especially noticeable as they are the only ones completely carved out of the stone slab. This figure's lap is even more table-like than the previous one's. Both feet rest on a stool and both hands on its knees, the right hand once more holding a cup. The block-like design of the figure can probably be attributed to an inexperienced hand and is therefore dated older than the previous smaller figure.

The 2-m-deep grave shaft was plastered with gypsum mortar and contained at its base a clay vessel with the cremation remains and grave goods. The opening of the vessel was covered with a bronze bowl. Placed next to the vessel were further grave goods made of clay and bronze, as well as a golden mouth covering and a tripod vessel.

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. on both mortuary cult complexes Langenegger 1950: 159–163; Voos 1986: 34–37; Bonatz 2000a: 154f; Orthmann 2002: 52f with figs. 29 and 30; Niehr 2006: 124–128; Martin 2010a.



The main characteristics of these two mortuary cult complexes are that the bodies were cremated prior to burial and that ancestor cult occurred in the burial chapels in front of the statue of the deceased and in the immediate vicinity of the tomb and its urn.

Whether the drainage systems discovered nearby are associated with the offerings to the dead or whether they are a later installation can no longer be determined.

The practice of ancestor cult in the two mortuary cult complexes is indicated by the bowls in the hands of both statues, the surfaces on the statues' laps to deposit offerings, and ash found in both buildings. With the cups in their right hands the statues stand in a long tradition of ancestor statues, which began with a cult standard from Ebla (ca. 2400–2300 B.C.),<sup>81</sup> as well as with statues from the royal tombs of Ebla (first quarter of the 2nd millennium B.C.)<sup>82</sup> and Qatna (18th–14th century B.C.)<sup>83</sup> and continued in Tell Halaf.

The mortuary cult complexes provide a clear picture of the threshold where ritual contact could be made between the living and the dead. Likewise, the sitting statues, representing deceased royal personages as suggested by the crown on the later statue, are in an obvious action context with the offering rituals conducted on or in front of these statues.

Another important observation is that both statues, as well as the rooms they are in, are orientated to the east, facing the sunrise. Unfortunately, we know nothing about the role of the solar deity in Guzana, except in juridical contexts. What further implications or consequences of the royal ancestor cult were connected with the sun-god cannot be determined due to a lack of written sources.<sup>84</sup>

Both mortuary cult complexes are located on the so-called mud brick massif, which is currently being reinvestigated. Meanwhile, it is clear that the discontinuation of the mortuary cult practices in these complexes did not happen under King Kapara but was due to the invading Assyrians.<sup>85</sup>

The third building complex associated with the mortuary cult is the *cult room* ("Kultraum")<sup>86</sup> located at a small square near the southern city

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Matthiae 2009.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Matthiae 1992.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Novák – Pfälzner – Elsen-Novák 2003: 156–162 and Pfälzner 2009.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. similar observations for Sam'al; see section 3.6.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. on the current state of research Martin – Fakhru 2009; Martin 2010a; Martin – Novák 2010: 14f; Martin – Fakhru – Heitmann 2012.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. on the cult room von Oppenheim 1931: 170–174; Müller 1950: 357–360; Naumann 1950: 394f; Orthmann 2001: 226; id. 2002: 53–55; Niehr 2006: 128–132; Martin 2010b: 221–230.

gate. A funerary relief was also found in the square. The excavators found a cella with an entrance to the east and three small adjoining rooms on the south side. The east entrance is a vestibule of  $4 \times 3$  m, which leads to the 4.50–4.80 m wide and 15 m deep cella. The adjoining rooms in the western half of the south side cella were accessible through the cella. Their interpretation by researchers as vestry, treasuries, or tombs is controversial, as none of these rooms was further excavated.<sup>87</sup>

On the side opposite of the entrance was a 40-cm-high pedestal of plastered mud bricks. The statue of a seated couple as well as several statuettes were located on top of this pedestal. To the left a separate pedestal protrudes into the room, upon which was a statue, on its own base, of a standing man. Particular mention should be made of the 50-cm-high brick course along the inner north wall. It is interpreted as a bench on which offerings could be placed.

The statue of a seated couple (80 cm high, 88 cm wide, 43 cm thick) is carved out of a single stone slab (pl. VIII). The couple is sitting on a bench. The man is wearing a garment with a thick rolled hem and no headdress. The woman, who is wearing crown and dress, resembles the later statue in the northern mortuary cult complex. She also wears two necklaces and a bronze choker with a crescent-shaped pendant.<sup>88</sup> The hands of both figures rest on their knees. Compared to the female statues from the northern and southern mortuary cult complexes, the cups held in the figures' right hands become smaller over time until it is completely absent in the statue of a seated couple. This lack of vessel can be explained neither by the assumption that the hands originally held only the stems of cups, which were later smashed, nor by the notion that the cups were placed on the closed fist for certain cultic rituals. It should be noted that a libation bowl was found in front of the altar, perhaps making superfluous libation vessels in the hands of the couple. The unnamed couple is in all probability a royal couple of Guzana, who were deified after their death.

Left of the pedestal with the statue of a seated couple was another pedestal, this one almost square, which held the statue of a standing man. This statue is 1 m tall and is anchored to a large and heavy basalt slab with a pin (pl. IX).

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<sup>87</sup> In the summer of 2007 W. Orthmann rediscovered the cult room; cf. Orthmann 2009 and *id.* 2011: 366–369.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Martin 2010b: 224 with fig. 552, 231.

Max von Oppenheim first interpreted the statue as a deity,<sup>89</sup> an idea partly adopted by later research. The fact that the figure is similar to the central figure of gods in the entrance to the *hilani* in Guzana favors this interpretation; both carry a sword and a curved club and are dressed similarly. Likewise, there is a certain similarity to the relief panel on the *hilani* building, which shows a weather-god with a curved club and mace (no. 13). Since the figure in the relief is wearing a horned headdress and is identified by the inscription as a weather-god, its interpretation as a god is certain. However, such a horned headdress is missing on the statue from the sanctuary. It is therefore not extreme to interpret the statue as being that of a king deified after his death. This interpretation is reinforced by the so-called cult room, as it is an urban mortuary cult chapel such as those found in Ugarit (“*sanctuaire aux rhytons*”), Carchemish (*hilani* building), and Sam'al (find spot of the Kuttamuwa stele). The character of this chapel as sanctuary for the royal cult is particularly visible in Ugarit. It is possible that the statue from the cult room depicts Baḥianu, the founder of Guzana's dynasty.

The figures of the enthroned couple stood upon a pedestal on which were, among others, stone statuettes, stone and metal figurines, as well as shells, beads, and mobiliary art.<sup>90</sup> The pedestal was immediately followed by the pedestal with the statue of the deified king. In front of the pedestal with the many figures was an altar, which showed the burned remains of sacrifices. In front of the altar was a slab of basalt with a slight indentation used to receive libations. Like the mortuary cult complexes the statues of the sanctuary face east, toward the rising sun.

Any interpretation of the complex must consider the parallel worship of the deified couple and the deified king, which is evident from their arrangement. Since both were placed on a pedestal, respectively a base and an altar and basalt slab were installed in front of this pedestal, it is evident that the same ritual worship was accorded to both statues. The cult of the dynasty's founder was joined by the cult of a deified royal couple as well as other ancestor statuettes of men and in some cases women.

Another sitting statue from the time after Kapara was found during construction work in the city area of Guzana in 1999. It is the fragmentary statue of Kammaki (45–55 cm tall, 37 cm wide, 31.5 cm thick), in whose

<sup>89</sup> Von Oppenheim 1931: 172.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. the detailed list in the finds journal, published in Cholidis – Martin 2010: 231–235.

right hand is a cup for receiving libations.<sup>91</sup> The head of the statue was not found. It is dated to the first half of the 8th century B.C. and thus represents the most recent example of this type of statue. Kammaki was probably a member of the royal family of Guzana.<sup>92</sup> By means of this statue he was able to have his descendants bear his position in remembrance and assure his claim to the appropriate ancestor cult.

Other sitting statues from the kingdom of Bit Baḫiani can only be summarized here.<sup>93</sup> These are statues not of members of the royal family, but only of members of the upper class, who emulated in many respects the customs of the royal family. One of these comes from Bozhöyük northeast of Guzana, three more from Girbel further to the northeast. These four sitting statues are in the Mardin Museum. Even though they were found in secondary contexts current scholarship assumes these statues fulfilled a function in the ancestor cult.

There is not much archaeological evidence of burials or mortuary cults of the Aramaeans in Sikani.<sup>94</sup> Instead, the inscription on the votive statue of Haddayis'ī found here proffers a clue. The inscription ends with the following curses, lines 16–18:

(16) Whoever removes my name from the furnishings (17) of the house of Hadad, my lord: May my lord Hadad not accept his food and water (18) from his hand. May my lady Šuwala not accept food and water from his hand. (KAI 309: 16–18)

It is important to note that bread and water are not offerings for the gods but are rather gifts for the deceased within the funerary cult representing the so-called *kispum*.<sup>95</sup> The inscription thus implies that a future ruler will conduct the ancestor cult under invocation of the deities Hadad and Šuwala. Common sacrifices to the god Hadad and the royal ancestors are also attested in Sam'al.<sup>96</sup>

If the deities refuse to accept the gifts, because the new king ordered a *damnatio memoriae* on his predecessor by erasing his name, then this

<sup>91</sup> Published in Röllig 2003.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Röllig 2003: 428; Niehr 2006: 132; Dornauer 2010: 64.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Schachner – Schachner – Karabulut 2002.

<sup>94</sup> For the inhumations in Tell Fekheriye cf. e.g., Pruß – Bagdo 2002: 321 and Bonatz – Bartl – Gilibert – Jauss 2008: 98–100, 109f, 113f.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Greenfield – Shaffer 1985: 51–53; van der Toorn 1996: 165f; Niehr 2010a: 228f.

<sup>96</sup> Cf., below, section 3.6.

leads to a rift between the ruler and the royal ancestors and is therefore disadvantageous for the new ruler.<sup>97</sup>

The curse on the one who erases the inscription is referred to not only in the inscription of Kammaki from Tell Halaf<sup>98</sup> but also in a Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription from Carchemisch:

If in future they shall pass down to (one) who shall . . . , and shall *overturn* these orthostats from (their) place(s), or shall erase my name, against him may Tarhunzas, Karhuhas and Kubaba litigate! From him may they not take up bread and libation! (KARKAMIŠ A 11a § 21–27)<sup>99</sup>

For a larger necropolis, one can point to the burials in Shiouq Fawqani, where cremation was notably practiced.<sup>100</sup>

### 3. FROM THE EUPHRATES TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

In this region the kingdoms of Bit Agusi, with the cities Arpad, ‘Ain Dara, Aleppo, Neirab, and Sefire; Bit Gabbari, with the cities Sam’al (Zincirli), Ördekburnu, and Tell Sifr; Unqi, with the city Kunulua; Hamath, with the cities Hamath and Hadrak (Tell Afis); and the kingdom of Kittika will be discussed.

#### 3.1 *Deities and Panthea*

There are several important literary sources for the pantheon of the kingdom Bit Agusi.<sup>101</sup>

First, there is the treaty between King Ashur-nirari V (753–746 B.C.) and King Mati’el of Arpad (SAA II no. 2)<sup>102</sup> from 754/753 B.C. Then there are three stelae inscribed with Aramaic texts recounting a treaty between King Bar-Gayah of Kittika and King Mati’el of Arpad from Sefire (KAI 222–224).<sup>103</sup> This treaty must have been concluded before 740 B.C. Neither treaty recites the entire pantheon of Bit Agusi, but both mention some of the most important deities.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. van der Toorn 1996: 116.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Röllig 2003: 422–424.

<sup>99</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 96.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Tenu 2009.

<sup>101</sup> On the kingdom of Bit Agusi, cf. Dion 1997: 113–136; Lipiński 2000a: 195–219; Niehr 2010a: 243–263; and Fales – Mazzoni 2009–2011.

<sup>102</sup> Text and translation in Parpola – Watanabe 1988: 8–13.

<sup>103</sup> Text and translation in Fitzmyer <sup>2</sup>1995.

The treaty between King Ashur-nirari V and King Mati'el of Arpad concludes with a list of Assyrian oath deities (SAA II no. 2 VI 6–17) and deities of Arpad (SAA II no. 2 VI 18–26). The oath deities of Arpad include Hadad of Aleppo, Palil, the Sebetti, Dagan and Muşuruna, Melqart and Ešmun, Kubaba and Karhuha, and Hadad and Ramman of Damascus. This list encompasses not only Aramaean deities but also deities of Anatolian, Assyrian, and Phoenician origin.

The treaty texts from Sefire list the oath deities of Kittika first<sup>104</sup> and then the oath deities of the kingdom of Arpad: Hadad of Aleppo and the Sebetti, El and Elyan, Heaven and Earth, Seabed and Springs, Day and Night (KAI 222: 10–12).

In both treaties Hadad of Aleppo leads the list of oath deities of Bit Agusi.<sup>105</sup> The weather-god of the old cult center Aleppo is mentioned by his Aramaic name, Hadad. This corresponds to the invocation of Hadad in his aspect of weather-god in KAI 222: 25–26, since he would have let maladies of all kinds and hail rain down upon Arpad in case of a breach of contract. In lines 38 and 39 of this text Hadad appears as the god of war and is supposed to break Mati'el's bow.

As in Assyria, the Aramaean deities of Sefire are also arranged in pairs. Hadad of Aleppo is joined by the Sebetti, i.e., the Seven or Pleiades. However, it is notable that the preposition *qdm* (“before”), which introduces each divine pair, also precedes the Pleiades. Hadad thus likely retained his supremacy and the Pleiades are associated with him as an astral power.

The next pair is El and Elyan. Of these, the god El is attested in the pantheon of Sam'al<sup>106</sup> while Elyan appears neither in the religion of the Aramaeans nor anywhere else and thus eludes detailed explanation. The connection to the god El Elyon from the Old Testament, however, is definite, as the two Aramaean deities fused to become one divine name for the god YHWH.<sup>107</sup>

The following divine pairs represent the cosmos (Heaven and Earth), the waters (Seabed and Springs), and time (Day and Night). This list of

<sup>104</sup> See below.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. the Esarhaddon treaty with its summary of Assyrian deities (SAA II no. 5 IV 8–9) and the beginning of the new paragraph in line 10. Contra to Voigt 1994: 65–67, who assumes the Sefire treaties were concluded on equal terms and thus assumes two lists of seven oath deities each. Also Fales 1990: 162. Inapplicable also Koch 2008: 60–68, according to whom the deities of Bit Agusi are only tangible in the closing phrases.

<sup>106</sup> See below.

<sup>107</sup> Gen 14: 18–20; cf. Zobel 1987–1989.

nature deities is a legacy from the list of oath deities in Hittite treaties.<sup>108</sup> The north Syrian Aramaeans adopted this legacy into the *Vorlagen* of their treaties.

A third major source for the deities worshipped in Bit Agusi is a votive inscription (KAI 201), written on the base of a stele dedicated to the god Melqart, found in Breğ. This text allows insight into the cult of a Phoenician deity in northern Syria. Breğ, located approximately 7 kilometers north of Aleppo, was not inhabited during the Iron Age. The Melqart stele was found in the remains of a Roman wall and was perhaps brought from the region around Aleppo to Breğ on the occasion of the site's construction.<sup>109</sup> The inscription reads:

(1) The stele which Bar-H(2)adad, the son of Attarsumki, the son of Adrame (3), set up for his lord Melqar(4)t, to whom he made a vow (5) and who heard (4) his voice.

The stele and its Old Aramaic inscription, dating to the second half of the 9th century B.C., show the Phoenician cultural influence in northern Syria. This influence is also visible in contemporary Sam'al (cf. KAI 24) and in Phoenician inscriptions later in Karatepe (cf. KAI 26). Melqart was actually the god of the city of Tyre in southern Lebanon, but he was also worshipped in northern Syria, as the treaty between Ashur-nirari V and Mati'el of Bit Agusi (SAA II no. 2) shows according to which Melqart appears in this region together with Eshmun.

One might imagine a colony of people from Tyre in this area around Aleppo who formed the basis for a cult of Melqart. Perhaps the god Melqart had a prominent sanctuary here, where King Bar-Hadad paid his respects when he was rescued from some danger mentioned in the inscription.

The image on the stele, today in the National Museum of Aleppo, represents the god facing left. In his right hand he holds an *ankh* symbol or a situla and in his left hand a fenestrated axe leaning on his shoulder. The bearded god is dressed in a kilt and wears a horned headdress.

A fourth source is a trilingual inscription from Incirli, which, from an epigraphic viewpoint, is very problematic. The Phoenician part of the text mentions the King of Arpad's sacrifice to the god Hadad (lines 11–12). It

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Haas 1994: 460–467.

<sup>109</sup> On the stele and its inscription, cf. Dunand 1939; Bordreuil – Teixidor 1983; Pitard 1988; Puech 1992; Lipiński 2000a: 215f; Niehr 2010a: 247f.

also appears to deal with the replacement of human sacrifice with an animal sacrifice (lines 11–15).<sup>110</sup>

Two other deities, Bethel and Anat-Bethel, from cultic centers in the kingdom of Bit Agusi should be mentioned. The god Bethel<sup>111</sup> is a deified sacred stone and is worshipped as an independent deity. The oldest evidence for the god Bethel and the goddess Anat-Bethel is found in the list of oath deities in the treaty between King Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.) and King Ba'al of Tyre from 675/674 B.C. (SAA II no. 5 IV 6).<sup>112</sup> However, the deities are older than this attestation, perhaps from the 8th century B.C. Both deities reappear in the list of oath deities in King Esarhaddon's succession treaty (SAA II no. 6 467 § 54A) in 672 B.C.<sup>113</sup> Beth Laha, about 30 km west of Aleppo, comes to mind when one thinks of the cultic city of Bethel. This city is possibly identical with the place Bethel (KAI 224: 34) mentioned in the treaties of Sefire, an identification also supported by the find of a clay tablet in Aramaic from Sefire (?). The tablet is a certificate of credit from 571/570 B.C., which contains several personal names with the theophoric element "Bethel" (KAI 227).

The goddess Anat-Bethel is the *paredros* of the god Bethel. She is known from Ugarit and other places from the Late Bronze Age. Her double name is grammatically a *status constructus* and expresses the affiliation the goddess Anat had with the god Bethel.

The subsequent history of this divine couple first leads from their north Syrian place of origin to Samerina. In Samerina YHWH was worshipped as the country's god at the same time that other imported Aramaean deities were also worshipped (2 Kgs 17: 29–33). The deities Bethel and Anat-Bethel, in particular, were brought into a close relationship with the country's god, YHWH. The Israelites identified Bethel with YHWH and against this background Anat-Bethel became the *paredros* of YHWH in the form of Anat-Yahu. The literary expression of this process is found in the Elephantine papyri from the 5th century B.C.<sup>114</sup> although the religio-historical connection of Bethel and Anat-Bethel with Yahu can be traced back to Samerina in the late 8th and early 7th centuries B.C.

<sup>110</sup> Textual reconstruction and translation in Kaufman 2007.

<sup>111</sup> On this god, cf. especially van der Toorn 1992: 83–85; id. 1997: 3–7; Röllig 1999b; Pfeiffer 2011.

<sup>112</sup> Text and translation in Parpola – Watanabe 1988: 24–27.

<sup>113</sup> Text and translation in Parpola – Watanabe 1988: 28–58; the deities' names are partly reconstructed; cf. *ibid.*, 49.

<sup>114</sup> On the mention of the goddesses Anat-Yahu and Anat-Bethel in Elephantine, cf. the attestations in Porten – Yardeni 1989: TAD B 7.3: 8; Porten – Yardeni 1993: C 3.15: 128.



The cult of the weather-god Addu of Aleppo dates back to the 3rd millennium B.C. and by Early Christian times had lost none of its standing. As Hadad of Guzana was the mighty weather-god of the Jazira, so Hadad of Aleppo was the most important weather-god of the countries between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean.<sup>115</sup>

Texts from Ebla, Mari, and Ugarit provide some insight into the characteristics of the weather-god of Aleppo, because they mention the weapons with which the weather-god fought the sea. These weapons were on display in the temple of the weather-god in Aleppo.<sup>116</sup> The most famous literary expression of this battle, which occurred along the northern part of Syria's Mediterranean coast, is found not only in a section of the Ba'al cycle from Ugarit (KTU 1.1–2), but also in the Hurrian-Hittite mythology of Anatolia.<sup>117</sup>

During the Aramaean period in Aleppo, mention of the cult of the weather-god Hadad is found in the treaty between King Ashur-nirari V (753–746 B.C.) and King Mati'el of Arpad (SAA II no. 2)<sup>118</sup> and in the texts from Sefire (KAI 222 A 11). As no myths were transmitted from Aleppo, the mere mention of the weather-god and his iconography<sup>119</sup> must suffice as source material for the 1st millennium B.C. It is reasonably certain that the cult of the Aramaean god Hadad was in direct continuity with the cult of the god Addu of Aleppo.

During the 2nd millennium B.C. the goddess Ḫebat is encountered as the *paredros* of the god Addu.<sup>120</sup> Even though she is not attested in Aleppo during the 1st millennium B.C., she is probably found in the divine iconography of Sam'al,<sup>121</sup> which makes a contemporary cult of her very likely in Aleppo.

The only written information about the deities worshipped in Neirab comes from the Aramaic inscriptions (KAI 225 and 226) on two sepulchral stelae from the late 8th century B.C. (pls. XVII and XIX).<sup>122</sup> In both

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Fales 2011a: 233.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Haas 1994: 553–555; Schwemer 2001: 211–217, 226–237; Durand 2002: 1–15.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Smith 1994 on Ugarit and Niehr 1994c: 170 on Anatolia.

<sup>118</sup> Text and translation in Parpola – Watanabe 1988: 8–13.

<sup>119</sup> On the iconography, cf. the reliefs of the weather-god mounting his chariot (see section 3.3) and the striding weather-god (see section 3.3), both found in the temple in Aleppo, as well as the so-called Babylon stele with the inscription BABYLON 1 (see section 3.3); on the inscription, see Hawkins 2000: 391–394.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. on the goddess Trémouille 1994: 87–105; ead. 1997; Archi 1999.

<sup>121</sup> See below.

<sup>122</sup> Today both stelae are in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 3026 and 3027); on the Aramaic inscriptions and the stelae, cf. most recently Yun 2006 and Niehr 2010b.

cases priests of the moon-god Šahr had died, thus their god is mentioned first. Šahr is also the chief god of Neirab. Other deities worshipped there are the sun-god Šamaš, the lunar goddess Nikkal, and the fire-god Nusku. In Mesopotamia the moon-god is the father of the sun-god, who acts as judge. The deities mentioned last, Nikkal and Nusku, show an Assyrian influence that reached from Harran to the cult in Neirab. The sequence of Sin, Nikkal, and Nusku as divine family is also present in Harran.

Even though the inscriptions mention the moon-god by his Aramaean name Šahr,<sup>123</sup> it is clear that this is the moon-god of Harran. Si'gabbar, mentioned in a letter from the governor of Harran to King Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), is described as a servant of King Sargon in Neirab, which places him in the last quarter of the 8th century B.C.<sup>124</sup> At the same time this letter illustrates the integration of the priest Si'gabbar in the state cult of the Assyrian Empire. The stele (AO 3026) mentioning the priest Sin-zeraibni is generally considered to be a bit older.

Further insight into the cult of Neirab comes from terracotta figures of dressed and naked women, goddesses, heads of men, gods, equestrians, as well as various creatures such as lions, sphinxes, and horses found during the excavations of 1926.<sup>125</sup> A detailed religio-historical interpretation of these finds is not possible, however, due to a lack of relevant written sources.

The fragment of an 8th-century stele comes from Tell Sifr. Its relief and inscription illuminate small aspects of the adoption of the Luwian religion by the Aramaeans. In two consecutive lines the inscription mentions the deities Rešep and Kubaba. The relief above it shows the hindquarters of a striding bull, referring to a weather-god, possibly Hadad.<sup>126</sup>

The co-occurrence of an Aramaean god with a Luwian goddess is also seen in the inscription from Ördekburnu, where the gods Rakkab'el and Kubaba of Aram (?) are mentioned.<sup>127</sup> The inscription from Tell Sifr herein not only mirrors the circumstances in Sam'al, but its script is also very similar to the one found in Sam'al texts. The cult of the goddess Kubaba, shown on the fragment of the stele from Tell Sifr, probably derives directly from her nearby cultic center of Carchemish.

<sup>123</sup> On the etymology of the divine name, see footnote 25.

<sup>124</sup> Text in Parpola 1985; id. 1987: 149f n. 189; and Theuer 2000: 373f n. 242.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Carrière – Barrois 1927: 201–207 and Abel – Barrois 1928: 307–313.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Michelini Tocci 1962.

<sup>127</sup> See below.

No major written sources exist to provide the names of the deities of 'Ain Dara. Because of this the temple's iconography (pl. XL) must be utilized.<sup>128</sup>

Of the many individual finds from the temple area several objects are worth mentioning, the relief of a striding goddess, for example. On the basis of typological comparisons, she can be identified as Ištar or Šauška. This relief (96 cm tall, 68 cm wide, 50 cm thick) is dated to the 12th or 11th century B.C. and stands in the mixed northern Syria–Hittite–Mesopotamian tradition. It was found on the south wall in the ante-cella and thus can hardly be the central cultic image of the temple.<sup>129</sup>

Furthermore, a fragment of a relief depicting a striding man was found 13 meters from the left side of the temple's main façade in the corner of a house. It is 30 cm tall, 80 cm wide, and 36 cm thick, and dates to the first building phase of the temple (between 1300 and 1000 B.C.). The fragment is part of an image depicting a deity or king. However, there are three parallel lines immediately below the missing outstretched right hand. A. Abou-Assaf interprets these as the remains of a thunderbolt, making it the representation of a weather-god. Due to its provenance and rendition in relief this image also cannot be the main cultic image of the temple of 'Ain Dara.<sup>130</sup>

Another group of finds is the orthostat facing of the cult pedestal (E1–E7) in the temple's cella. Each panel depicts a representation of a weather-god flanked by two hybrid creatures. All figures have their hands raised and thus carry, like atlases, the potential cultic image on the cult pedestal.<sup>131</sup>

The final important finds are the fragments of the cultic plinth. This was originally set in front of the cult pedestal in the cella. All four sides show a relief frieze of various mythological creatures. Regarding the plinth in the order of sides A, D, C, and B results in the sequence of mountain-gods, lion-men, mountain-gods, bull-men, bird-men, lion-men. Because the cultic plinth stood before the cult pedestal it was not used as a base for the cultic image of the temple. It probably held a cultic installation that served as an altar or table. Such an object was presumably made of wood with a metal coating and would have fallen victim to the sack of the temple.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>128</sup> On the temple of 'Ain Dara, cf. especially Abou-Assaf 1983; id. 1990; id. 1993; id. 1994; id. 1996; Kohlmeyer 2008; Novák 2012; and M. Novák's contribution in this volume.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Abou-Assaf 1983.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Abou-Assaf 1992.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Abou-Assaf 1990: 28, 57f with plates 43–46.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Weippert 2003.

The treaties from Sefire list the deities of Kittika as follows: Ashur and Mulliṣ, Marduk and Ṣarpanītu, Nabu and Tašmetu, Ir and Nusku, Nergal and Laṣ, Šamaš and Nur, Sin and Nikkal, and Nikkar and Kadiah (KAI 222: 7–10). Thus, there are six divine couples from the Assyrian-Babylonian pantheon and two Aramaized deities, Nikkar and Kadiah.<sup>133</sup> Thus, it follows that the pantheon of Bet Šullul / Kitikka was largely Assyrian.

The distinction between the oath deities of Kittika and Arpad is visible in the Sefire treaties where the gods of the desert and the fertile land (KAI 222: 10) are a blanket term summarizing the preceding list of Assyrian-Aramaean oath deities. Hadad of Aleppo, the supreme god of the Aramaeans of Syria, heads the list of oath deities of Arpad in analogy to the god Ashur.<sup>134</sup>

In Sam'al, the capital of Bit Gabbari,<sup>135</sup> the Phoenician inscription (KAI 24)<sup>136</sup> of King Kulamuwa (ca. 840–820 B.C.), dated to 830–820 B.C., mentions in its final part the personal gods of the first two Aramaean kings of Sam'al. In addition, the dynastic god of King Kulamuwa appears.

Ba'al Šemed appears as the personal god of the first Aramaean king of Sam'al, Gabbar (KAI 24: 15). The meaning of this god's name is controversial, as it is not attested outside of Sam'al. The classic interpretation of this name can be found in Benno Landsberger's publication of 1948. He defined the god Ba'al Šemed as "Lord of the Chariot," and therefore a mounted god of war. Benno Landsberger, however, saw a problem of a doublet with the god Rakkab'el and tried to evade it by assigning an ox team to Ba'al Šemed, so he would be seen as a weather-god.<sup>137</sup>

The common occurrence of the elements *ba'al* and *šemed* in northwest Semitic cultures can be explained better if one takes a look at the interpretation of the god's name. In Ugaritic mythology the weapon Kotharu crafts for Ba'al for his fight against the sea-god is known as *šmd* (KTU 1.2 IV 11–26). What type of weapon it was, such as a mace or a double axe, is still controversial.<sup>138</sup> But even without a closer definition of this weapon

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Fales 1990: 162f.

<sup>134</sup> See above, footnote 105.

<sup>135</sup> On the kingdom of Bit Gabbari and on Sam'al, cf. the references in Dion 1997: 99–112; Lipiński 2000a: 233–247; Wartke 2005; id. 2008; Hawkins 2008; Niehr 2010a: 267–270; id. 2013: 185–189; Casana – Herrmann 2010; Fales 2011b: 560–563.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. on the inscription especially Tropper 1993: 27–46, 153f; Hamilton 1998: 222–225; Green 2010: 136–156.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Landsberger 1948: 46f n. 116.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Smith 1994: 338–341; del Olmo Lete – Sanmartín <sup>2</sup>2004: 784f s.v. *šmd*; Dietrich – Loretz 2009: 173–177; Schmitz 2009: 138f.

it can be assumed that due to the mythological concept of the weapon of Ba'al the divine name Ba'al Šemed was derived. That would mean that Ba'al Šemed shows an Ugaritic heritage. In connection with this interpretation of the name one should think back to the weather-god of Aleppo, who is called "God (of the) Mace" in inscriptions, climbing into his chariot.<sup>139</sup> Alternatively, one can assume a heritage from the cult of Aleppo, as the weather-god of Aleppo had also played a role in Ugarit, where he was sometimes identified with the god Ba'al from Ugarit.<sup>140</sup>

It was after a dynastic change that the second Aramaean king of Sam'al, Banah, introduced Ba'al Hammon as his personal god (KAI 24: 16).<sup>141</sup>

The god Ba'al Hammon may be called the "Lord of the Amanus Mountains." It is fitting that the oldest evidence for this deity comes from Sam'al, which lies at the foot of the Amanus Mountains. Ba'al Hammon thus describes an old mountain god from the region of Sam'al. An amulet from Tyre originating from the 6th century B.C. must also be considered. It names both Ba'al Hammon and Ba'al Šaphon, two important mountain gods from the west Syrian mountain region.<sup>142</sup> King Banah of Sam'al had thus chosen a local mountain god as his personal god.

The gods Ba'al Šemed and Ba'al Hammon are no longer mentioned in the younger royal inscriptions from Sam'al. The dynastic changes following the reigns of the kings Gabbar and Banah brought their prominent positions in the pantheon of Sam'al to an end. King Kulamuwa chose a different god, Rakkab'el,<sup>143</sup> as his dynastic god. Rakkab'el now bears the title of "Lord of the House" (KAI 24: 16).

The god Rakkab'el is the only god mentioned in all the major inscriptions from Sam'al (KAI 24: 16; 25; 214: 2–3, 11, 18; 215: 22; 216: 5; 217: 7–8). His name can also be found in personal names such as Bar-Rakkab and in the inscription of Ördekburnu. Outside of Sam'al, Rakkab'el is mentioned

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Gonnella – Khayyata – Kohlmeyer 2005: 99 fig. 138; Kohlmeyer 2009: 200; Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: 65f, 79; and, on the setting, Popko 1998: 120f. According to Hawkins 2009: 169 "the 'god mace' refers not actually to the deity himself but to the divine weapon that he shoulders."

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Schmitz 2009.

<sup>141</sup> On the god Ba'al Hammon, cf. in general Xella 1991 and Lipiński 1995: 251–264.

<sup>142</sup> Published in Bordreuil 1986a. Cf. also a Phoenician seal from the second half of the 7th century B.C. with the place name *p'r hmn* (Pa'ar of the Amanus) in Bordreuil 1986b: 21f.

<sup>143</sup> On the discussion about the vocalization of the element *rk* as *rākib* (Part. G) or *rakkāb* (*qattāl* as a noun) cf. Landsberger 1948: 45; Fales 1980: 144; id. 2011b: 563; Tropper 1993: 46; Lipiński 1994: 206; id. 2000a: 615 n. 125; Hawkins 2008: 601f; Green 2010: 220 n. 1.

under the name “Ba’al Rakkab of Sam’al” in a letter to King Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.).<sup>144</sup>

Benno Landsberger had already submitted the following explanation for the name of the god Rakkab’el: “Dieser Stammesgott heisst somit einfach ‘Herr des Kriegswagens’. Die phönizischen Schreiber haben ihn durch den Titel ‘Streitwagenfahrer des El’ in den (von ihnen kreierten) Götterhofstaat von Sam’al eingeordnet. Man hat sich Rakkab-El ursprünglich wohl als das auf einem Streitwagen der Heeresphyle des Haya-Geschlechtes voranfahrende Göttersymbol zu denken.”<sup>145</sup>

The element *rkb* (“to drive”, “to ride”) is therefore linked to the driver of a chariot. Not to be overlooked is the possible reference to the motive of *rkb rpt* (“Rider of the Clouds”) attested at Ugarit.<sup>146</sup> The common element is that Ba’al as the weather- or war-god rides on the clouds. However, the relevant mythical contexts, which could explain the background of this notion, are missing in Sam’al. It is also unclear whether the element *’el* is a divine proper name or an appellation of a god.

King Kulamuwa dedicated an object, commonly referred to as a golden scepter sleeve, to this god Rakkab’el. The dedicatory inscription (KAI 25) invokes Rakkab’el without his title “Lord of the House,” as in KAI 24: 16. King Kulamuwa asked Rakkab’el for a long life, which makes it clear that Rakkab’el also held the position of a personal god.

From the town of Ördেকburnu, about 18 km south of Sam’al, comes an inscription on a sepulchral stele. Only some lines of the inscription are identifiable. The stele is dated to sometime between the reigns of kings Kulamuwa (ca. 840–810 B.C.) and Panamuwa I (ca. 790–750 B.C.).<sup>147</sup> However, due to the difficulties of textual reconstruction, the relationships of the gods among themselves are unclear.

The god Rakkab’el appears first. He is called “(my?) god”. The goddess Kubaba<sup>148</sup> follows, with the epithet “of Aram”. This reading is not entirely certain. The epithet might refer to north Syria<sup>149</sup> and thus represent a certain manifestation of the goddess comparable to that of the god Hadad-sikani found in the inscription from Tell Fekheriye (KAI 309: 1, 15–16).

<sup>144</sup> CT 53,46; the most recent edition by Luukko – van Buylaere 2002: 58–62, esp. 61.

<sup>145</sup> Landsberger 1948: 45.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. KTU 1.2 IV 8.29; 1.3 II 40; III 38; IV 4.6; 1.4 III 11.18; V 60; 1.5 II 7; 1.10 I 7; III 36; 1.19 I 43–44; 1.92: 37.40.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. for the state of research Lemaire – Sass 2012 and iid. 2013.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. for the goddess Hawkins 1980–1983 and id. 1981.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. on “Upper-Aram” and “Lower-Aram” the Sefire treaties (KAI 222 A: 6) and also Grosby 1995 and Lipiński 2000a: 214.

Furthermore, the inscription indicates that this goddess appeared next to the Sam'alite dynastic god Rakkab'el. Researchers have regarded her as the main goddess of the kingdom of Sam'al. Perhaps she had absorbed a major Aramaean goddess. Kubaba's important position in Sam'al is underscored by the mention of her next to the "Hadad of the Vineyards" in the Kuttamuwa inscription.<sup>150</sup>

King Panamuwa I (ca. 790–750 B.C.) had a royal necropolis founded at Gerçin, 7 km northeast of Sam'al. The inscription on the Hadad stele (KAI 214) from that necropolis dates from before 750 B.C.<sup>151</sup> This dedicative and commemorative inscription identifies the most important gods of Sam'al in the following significant order: Hadad, El, Rešep, Rakkab'el, and Šamaš (KAI 214: 2). The transposition of Rešep and Šamaš in the following line 3 is linked to the fact that in the further course of the inscription the god Rešep is emphasized. This amended order is maintained also in lines 11 and 18–19 of the inscription.

There is a long discussion about the identification of the divine symbols inscribed on the stelae of the kings Kulamuwa and Bar-Rakkab.<sup>152</sup> This discussion has made apparent that a correlation of the symbols with the gods referred to in the inscription cannot easily be made. In fact, one should take the inscriptions and the images as sources *sui generis* and interpret them accordingly. It follows from the stelae that the kings Kulamuwa and Bar-Rakkab styled themselves as loyal vassals of the Assyrians, and in addition to matching the clothing of the Assyrian kings also adjusted the pictorial representations of the gods Ashur and Rakkab'el.

The weather-god Hadad is, as in the other Aramaean kingdoms, the supreme god of Sam'al. His relevance is seen clearly in the attested evidence: Hadad is at the head of the pantheon in all inscriptions of Sam'al (KAI 214: 1–2, 11, 18; 215: 22). He commissions the king to construct the necropolis (KAI 214: 13–14). The heir apparent is pledged both to the cult of Hadad and the cult before his statue (KAI 214: 15–18, 21–22). Hadad is the god of the kingdom (KAI 214: 8–9; 215: 2). The only statue of a god found at Sam'al is a Hadad statue and Hadad alone enforces the curse contained in the inscription (KAI 214: 23–24).

<sup>150</sup> Cf., below, section 3.6. Pardee 2009a: 62 interprets the spelling *kbbw* as a dittography, while Younger 2009a: 166–170 leans toward a consequence of cuneiform writing.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. on the inscription especially Tropper 1993: 54–97, 154–159; Hamilton 1998: 225f; Green 2010: 175–193.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. the discussion in Tropper 1993: 24–26; Mayer 1995a; Niehr 2004b: 310f.

The find of a bronze disc with a relief also points to the god Hadad.<sup>153</sup> It has, together with an Old Aramaic inscription, three bosses and a bucranium at the center. This disc, with a diameter of 25 cm, was used as the plating on a shield and names a captain of the guard as its owner. The disc comes from Sam'al or the surrounding region according to the inscription and comparison with a similar object. The bucranium stands for Hadad, the chief god, in his capacity as the weather-god.

The sepulchral stele of the vassal Kuttamuwa (pl. XX), found in Sam'al in 2008, expanded our knowledge of the cult of the god Hadad as two previously unknown manifestations of the god occur therein.<sup>154</sup> Thus, line 3 of the inscription mentions a *hdd qrpdl* ("Hadad of Qrpd"). This is perhaps a local manifestation of the god. This explanation, however, suffers from not knowing the exact place name. As an alternative, the Aramaic version of a Luwian title "companion" (from *harpatalli*) has been adduced.<sup>155</sup> Line 4 of the inscription has a *hdd krmn*, i.e., a "Hadad of the Vineyards." This manifestation of the god Hadad can be explained by means of contemporary inscriptions naming the Tarḥunzas of the vineyard<sup>156</sup> as well as by using weather-god representations, especially from Tabal, that depict the god Tarḥunzas with grapes or with vines in his hand.<sup>157</sup>

Second in the hierarchy of the deities of Sam'al is the god El (KAI 214: 2.11.18; 215: 22). That the worship of El in Sam'al came by way of the Phoenicians or the Aramaeans is doubtful, given the very sparse evidence of this god in Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions.<sup>158</sup> Especially in the case of the god El a direct legacy of Ugarit in the northern Syrian–Anatolian borderland can be assumed as with the god Ba'al Šemed. Strictly speaking, this cannot be proven.<sup>159</sup> But it has to be considered a possibility, in view of the once high prominence of the god El in Ugarit, 350 years before the destruction of the city. That the cult of a formerly mighty god continued to be practiced by the descendants of his worshippers, who had fled abroad, is not a singular phenomenon.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Krebernik – Seidl 1997 and Gubel 2012.

<sup>154</sup> Cf., below, the text in 3.6.

<sup>155</sup> See Yakubovich 2010: 396f.

<sup>156</sup> Cf., among others, the inscription SULTANHAN in Hawkins 2000: 463–467.

<sup>157</sup> Cf., among others, the reliefs of Ivriž, Niğde, and Ereğli; also Aro 1998: 223–225, 281 with pl. 84 B 126; ead. 2003: 317–320, 335f with pls. XXXVII, XXXIX; Hutter 2003: 224, 276f; Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: 58f, 163.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. on this Röllig 1959 and Yakubovich 2010.

<sup>159</sup> But cf. also the archaeological finds indicating the existence of refugees from Ugarit in the region of Sam'al; cf. Pruss 2002: 172f.



In support of this assumption the case of the god Elkunirša, as he is known in a Hittite myth from Hattusa before 1200 B.C., can be cited.<sup>160</sup> This myth stands clearly in an Ugaritic narrative tradition. Another mention of the god Elkunirša as “El, creator of the Earth” occurs in the Phoenician inscriptions of Karatepe (KAI 26 III 18), dated between 720 B.C. and the beginning of the 7th century B.C. A continual presence of this god can be demonstrated here for a period of more than 500 years.<sup>161</sup>

Third place in the pantheon is the god Rešep (KAI 214: 2.3).<sup>162</sup> This deity looks back on a history in northern Syria from the time of Ebla (second half of the 3rd millennium B.C.). A connotation of the god Rešep to a certain sphere of responsibility cannot be seen directly in the inscriptions of Sam'al. Rešep is otherwise attested as the god of the underworld, the plague, and of war or healing. It is clear that Rešep, who appears as Arq-Rešep (KAI 214: 11) in Sam'al, has to do with the interests of the kingdom. Herewith the combat aspect of the god Rešep, which can already be found in west Semitic religions, especially in Ugarit, is accentuated. Thus, Rešep could be considered a protective, and therefore positive deity.<sup>163</sup>

To explain the divine name Arq-Rešep (KAI 214: 11) a northern Arabic influence has been accepted. Some researchers want to see the northern Arabic war god Ruḏa in this name. He is later attested in Palmyra as Aršu.<sup>164</sup>

The god Rakkab'el, following Rešep in the inscription of Panamuwa I, was already attested as a dynastic god by the time of King Kulamuwa (KAI 24: 16). The epithet “Lord of the House,” given to him in the Kulamuwa inscription, does not appear in the inscription of Panamuwa I. Only in more recent inscriptions is his particular position emphasized again.

Šamaš, for the most part, placed last in the god lists (KAI 214: 2–3, 11, 18; 215: 22);<sup>165</sup> he will probably have been attributed the area of law. However, this can only be inferred from Šamaš' usual functions and is not clearly stated in the inscription.

More clearly defined, however, is the relevance of Šamaš in the realm of death and the underworld. This is shown first on an archaeological level,

<sup>160</sup> Text in Hoffner 1990: 69f.

<sup>161</sup> The most recent citation of this god is attested in KAI 129 from Leptis Magna. In light of it being dated to the early 2nd century B.C., the cult of Elkunirša is attested over a period of about 1500 years.

<sup>162</sup> On the god Rešep, cf. most recently Lipiński 2009a.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Lipiński 2009a: 225–227.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Landsberger 1948: 48f n. 122; Tropper 1993: 23; Lipiński 1983; id. 1994: 208–211; id. 2009a: 225–228.

<sup>165</sup> On Šamaš, cf. most recently Kutter 2008.

as both the statue of the deified dynastic founder found on the acropolis as well as the grave next to the *hilani* I building are aligned to the east, facing the sunrise.<sup>166</sup> The stele of Kuttamuwa was also set up facing the sunrise.<sup>167</sup> The inscription of Kuttamuwa calls for the offering of a ram to the sun-god at the time of his funeral. Furthermore, a hardly recognizable winged solar disk of approximately 13.5 cm in height fills the upper image field of the Kuttamuwa stele.<sup>168</sup>

Deified ancestors also belong to the divine realm. This concept from the West Semitic area is already known from Ugarit and is found in the expression of *'lh 'bh* (“the god of his father”)<sup>169</sup> in the inscription of King Panamuwa I in the context of an oath (KAI 214: 29) in Sam'al.

King Bar-Rakkab (ca. 733–713/11 B.C.), the successor of King Panamuwa II (ca. 740–733 B.C.), erected a stele with a memorial inscription (KAI 215) around 733/731 B.C.<sup>170</sup> Although found in Tahtalı Pınar, half way between Sam'al and Gerçin, it belongs, like the inscription on the Hadad stele of Panamuwa I (KAI 214), in Gerçin.<sup>171</sup> Since the two inscriptions are only twenty years apart and the same royal family remained in power, significant differences cannot be expected to appear in the cult of the gods of Sam'al.

In the inscription for Panamuwa II Hadad appears as the divine personal protector of the king (KAI 215: 2). Otherwise, “the gods of Yādiya”<sup>172</sup> are called on in general (KAI 215: 2). At the end of the inscription, Hadad, El, Rakkab'el, with the title “Lord of the House,” Šamaš, and “all the gods of Yādiya” appear (KAI 215: 22).

The construction and memorial inscriptions of King Bar-Rakkab<sup>173</sup> focus on the special position of the god Rakkab'el as the dynastic god in Sam'al (KAI 215: 22). He had held this position since the time of King Kullamuwa I (KAI 24: 16; 25) and continued to hold it until the time of kings

<sup>166</sup> See below, section 3.6.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Struble – Herrmann 2009: 36.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Struble – Herrmann 2009: 20.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. van der Toorn 1993 and id. 1994: 47–49.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. on the inscription esp. Younger 1986: 91–99; Tropper 1993: 98–131, 159–162; Green 2010: 194–219.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1893: 48, 53f and Sachau 1893: 65 and later Dion 1974: 3; Tropper 1993: 98 and Niehr 1997: 298f; id. 2006: 118. If Hamilton 1998: 227 places the stele along the northeastern road leading away from Sam'al he ignores the cultic and royal ideological context of the stele's placement.

<sup>172</sup> On Yādiya, cf. Starke 1997b: 458 with note 121 and id. 1999: 525.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. on the inscriptions especially Younger 1986: 100–102; Tropper 1993: 132–169, 163f; Hamilton 1998: 226–230; Green 2010: 220–231.

Panamuwa I (KAI 214: 2–3, 11, 18) and Panamuwa II (KAI 215: 22). King Bar-Rakkab accordingly carries the name of this god. None of the other royal names known from Sam'al contains the name of a deity from Sam'al as a theophoric element. Furthermore, Bar-Rakkab credits his enthronement to the god Rakkab'el (KAI 216: 5) and sees himself as a servant of this same god (KAI 217: 2–3) and the “gods of his father’s house” in general. In return Rakkab'el should help his servant find favor before his sovereign king, Tiglath-Pileser (KAI 217: 7–9).

An inscription of King Bar-Rakkab of Sam'al on an orthostat (KAI 218) shows the adoption of the moon cult of Harran in the pantheon of Sam'al (pl. III). In this inscription, dated between 733/732 and 727 B.C., Bar-Rakkab, who usually calls Rakkab'el, the dynastic god of Sam'al, his lord, now calls a “Ba'al Harran” his lord. That “Ba'al Harran” stands for the moon-god Sin is shown by a depiction of a crescent moon with the tassels typical for the moon-god of Harran on the orthostats.<sup>174</sup>

An iconographic representation of Aramaean deities from Sam'al in Luwian dress can be found on the reliefs of the outer castle gate (pl. II).<sup>175</sup> They are the weather-god, a god of war, and two goddesses. More precisely, the orthostats of the east side of the outer castle gate form a procession of gods, including a goddess with a mirror in her hand standing between a god of war and the weather-god. This goddess is interpreted as the wife of the god of war and is seen as the goddess Kubaba.<sup>176</sup> This interpretation, though, is not supported by any inscriptions. The sitting goddess following the image of the weather-god might be Ḫebat, the wife of the weather-god of Aleppo.<sup>177</sup>

Seven silver medallions from Sam'al depict a goddess standing on a lion, behind whom the star of Ištar is visible. In this case the identity of the goddess is not recorded, but the circle of stars and the lion make plausible the interpretation as the goddess Ištar or Astarte.<sup>178</sup> Additionally, a naked goddess holding her breasts is depicted on a horse's head-piece. She can be interpreted as “mistress of the animals.”<sup>179</sup>

<sup>174</sup> This does not mean that the dynastic god Rakkab'el is to be interpreted as moon-god as proposed by Krebernik 2006–2008. Cf. already Tropper 1993: 146.

<sup>175</sup> Hawkins 1984: 76f. Regarding the identification of the goddesses, cf. Orthmann 1971: 274–279.

<sup>176</sup> Wartke 2005: 87 and Cornelius 2012: 16.

<sup>177</sup> On the identification of Ḫebat, cf. Wartke 2005: 87 and Cornelius 2012: 16.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Kreuzer 1996: 110f; Niehr 2010a: 277; Cornelius 2012: 19–21.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Cornelius 2012: 18f, 20 with fig. 3 and see below the head-piece from Unqi.

Another silver medallion originating from the area of Sam'al shows a scene of the moon falling to the earth. This Hittite myth still finds itself in the iconography of the 1st millennium B.C.<sup>180</sup>

An amulet without inscription, also from Sam'al, shows on one side a man with a dagger standing over a person lying before him and on the other side a standing armed man.<sup>181</sup>

Representations of winged genii, sphinxes, and griffins are also found in Sam'al.<sup>182</sup> The position of these hybrids within the religion, whether as a protective spirit or demon, cannot be ascertained in any detail due to a lack of written sources.<sup>183</sup>

The only written indication of Aramaean deities in Unqi<sup>184</sup> is an Aramaic inscription on a horse's head-piece, which came as a votive gift to the Heraion of Samos,<sup>185</sup> and on one of the blinders of a bridle, which was a votive gift to the temple of the god Apollo Daphnephoros of Eretria in Euboea.<sup>186</sup> The inscription reads:

That which Hadad gave to our lord Hazael from Unqi in the year when our lord crossed the river.<sup>187</sup>

To understand the inscription it must be said that it pertains to the booty that the god Hadad gave to King Hazael of Damascus<sup>188</sup> on the occasion of his campaign over the Orontes and into the kingdom of Unqi.

The authors of the inscription were possibly the inhabitants of Unqi, who called Hazael of Damascus their lord. More precisely, one can think of the priesthood of the god Hadad, who presented the conqueror Hazael with a gift in the name of their god.<sup>189</sup> This gift then was brought to the temple in Damascus and from there found its way as a votive gift to Samos or Greece. This is not to say that King Hazael himself sent votive gifts to

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<sup>180</sup> Cf. the text in Hoffner 1990: 33–35 and the interpretation of the silver medallion in Seidl 2002.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Wartke 2005: 79 fig. 79.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1902: 205f, 217–219, 221–226; pls. XXXIV; XXXVI; XXXVII a/d; XXXVIII; XLII; XLIII; XLIV; id. 1911: 242 fig 149; 330–333, pls. LV–LVI; Wartke 2005: 80 fig. 80; 83 fig 88.

<sup>183</sup> On this problem, cf. Landsberger 1948: 95f.

<sup>184</sup> On Pattina/Unqi, cf. the information in Niehr 2010a: 284–289; Hawkins 2009; id. 2011.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Braun-Holzinger – Rehm 2005: II, 33 no. 16 (with literature) and pl. 5.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Braun-Holzinger – Rehm 2005: II, 30 no. 4 (with literature).

<sup>187</sup> Cf. on the inscription especially Bron – Lemaire 1989; Eph'al – Naveh 1989; Amadasi Guzzo 1996; Fales 2006a.

<sup>188</sup> On King Hazael and his expansionist politics, cf. e.g., Lemaire 1991a and Niehr 2011.

<sup>189</sup> So Bordreuil 1993b: 256 and id. 1998: 56f.

a Greek sanctuary. Although, there is evidence of votive offerings of international provenance in Samos,<sup>190</sup> the horse blinders were probably loot made by Greek mercenaries in the service of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (756–727 B.C.) during the sack of Damascus in 732 B.C. They then brought these pieces to Samos, respectively to Eretria.<sup>191</sup>

This mention of the god Hadad of Unqi corresponds to a dedication of a metal disc with an Assyrian inscription found in Tell Tayinat. It says: “For Adad, the regulator of the waters of Heaven (and) Earth, the great lord . . .”<sup>192</sup> Like in the inscription on the statue found in Tell Fekheriye (KAI 309) the Aramaean weather-god with epithets typical for Addu is adapted to the Mesopotamian weather-god.

Further information about the pantheon of Unqi can be found in the iconography of the horse’s head-piece and the horse blinder.

Depicted on the head-piece (pl. XXVI) is a naked goddess wearing a winged solar disk on her head. She is standing on a lion’s head and holds in each of her hands another lion’s head on each of which stands another naked goddess holding her breasts. Between the two goddesses and below the solar disc is another naked breast-holding goddess. This central figure represents the “mistress of the animals” and might be the goddess Astarte.<sup>193</sup>

Shown on the blinder are a lion and a hero holding two other lions’ hind legs.

There is another head-piece from Tell Tayinat connecting the motifs of the blinder and the above-mentioned head-piece. On it a woman holding her breasts stands above lion heads; above her is a hero striding over two lions and holding two sphinxes by their tails.<sup>194</sup>

The oldest references to the pantheon of Hamath on the Orontes<sup>195</sup> are the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions from Hamath and its surroundings.

Under the aspect of religio-historical cultural contact the goddess Pahalatis is of particular interest. She is mentioned in the Luwian inscriptions from Hamath and its surrounding area. Her name is traced back to the Semitic *ba’alat* (“mistress”, “lady”), a title, which the goddess of Byblos

<sup>190</sup> On the international provenance of the votive gifts in the Heraion of Samos, cf. Petersen – Wagner 2005; Ebbinghaus 2006; Bumke 2007.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Ebbinghaus 2006: 209–212 and Luraghi 2006: 38–41.

<sup>192</sup> The text is found in Schwemer 2001: 620.

<sup>193</sup> Cf. Uehlinger 1998–2001: 53–64, this 64.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Braun-Holzinger – Rehm 2005: 36 n. 30 with pl. 7.

<sup>195</sup> On the kingdom of Hamath, cf. the references in Dion 1997: 137–170; Lipiński 2000a: 249–318; Niehr 2010a: 289–300.

wore in the form of *bēltu ša gubla* or *b'lt gbl*. This goddess, who was known in Hamath by her Luwian name Pahalatis, possibly held the position of *paredros* of the weather-god. The inscription HAMA 4 refers to her high rank. According to this inscription Urḫilina himself built the “seat” of Pahalatis and cared for the income of the temple.<sup>196</sup> The latter is made apparent in the inscription HAMA 8 where the king himself allocates a granary to the goddess.<sup>197</sup> Likewise, according to two other inscriptions, the king had stelae made for the goddess.<sup>198</sup> Her position as *paredros* of the weather-god and therefore highest-ranking goddess of Hamath is referred to in the inscription HAMA 5, which instead of Pahalatis as in HAMA 4 shows the divine name Tarḫunt<sup>199</sup> about whom the same conclusions can be drawn as for the goddess. It is also referred to in a fragment of an inscription from Hamath, which mentions both divine names together (HAMA fr. 1).<sup>200</sup> Additionally, there is an Aramaic graffito of a personal name with the theophoric element *b'lt* (KAI 204).<sup>201</sup>

On a religio-historical level the Phoenician influence finds itself not only in the form of Pahalatis but also in the theophoric element Adon in personal names from Hamath around 720 B.C.<sup>202</sup> In addition, there is the god Ba'alšamayin, who appears in the Zakkur inscription (KAI 202 A). All three deities, Pahalatis, Adon, and Ba'alšamayin, originated in Byblos.

From the region around Hamath two more names of goddesses should be cited. The inscriptions MEHARDE and SHEIZAR mention “the goddess” or “the mistress of the land,”<sup>203</sup> a title that most likely references the goddess Kubaba. Attested since the 2nd millennium B.C., the “goddess or mistress of the land” comes originally from Carchemish and expanded her sphere of cultic influence to Anatolia and north and middle Syria. The goddess is depicted on the stele from Meharde. This representation also incorporates motifs of Kubaba.<sup>204</sup>

The most important testimony on the religion of the kingdom of Hamath during the time of the Aramaeans is found in the inscription of

<sup>196</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 403–406.

<sup>197</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 409f.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. the inscriptions HINES (text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 409) and SHEIZAR (text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 416–419).

<sup>199</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 406f.

<sup>200</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 419.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Otzen 1990: 278 n. 2.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. on the references Otzen 1990: 275–277 n. 1.

<sup>203</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 415–419.

<sup>204</sup> Photo in Hawkins 2000: pl. 225.

King Zakkur of Hamath (KAI 202). It was written on the lower part of a stele; the upper part once held a statue of which only the feet on a stool are extant. The statue was most likely a representation of King Zakkur and was placed before the god Iluwer in one of his sanctuaries.<sup>205</sup> The stele was not found in Hamath, though. In all likelihood it was discovered on the acropolis of Hazrak, modern Tell Afis<sup>206</sup> in 1903. The obverse of the inscription (A) states the following about the god Ba'alšamayin:

(1) The monument which Zakkur, king of Hamath and Lu'aš, set up for Iluwer [in Afis.] (2) I am Zakkur, king of Hamath and Lu'aš. I am a man of 'Anah and Ba'alšamayin [raised (3) m]e and stood beside me, and Ba'alšamayin made me king [over] (4) Hazrak. Then Bar-Hadad, son of Hazael, king of Aram, united against me s[even](5)teen kings. Bar-Hadad and his army, Bar-Gush and his army, [the ki(6)ng of] Que and his army, the king of Amuq and his army, the king of Gurgu[m] (7) [and] his [ar]my, the king of Sam'al and his a[rmy], the king of Melid [and his army] . . . (8) [ . . . ] seven[teen kings], [th]ey and their armies. All these kings laid siege to Hazra[k] (10) and they raised a wall higher than the wall of Hazrak, they dug a ditch deeper than [its] dit[ch]. (11) Now I raised my hands to Ba'alšamayin and Ba'alšamayin answered me [and] Ba'alšamayin [spoke to (12) me] through seers and diviners. [And Ba'alšamayin said to (13) me]: "Do not be afraid! Since I have made [you king, I will (14) stand] beside you. I will save you from all [these kings who] (15) have besieged you." [Ba'alšamayin] also said to [me, " . . . ] all these kings who have [besieged you . . . ] and this wall [ . . . ]."<sup>207</sup> (KAI 202 A: 1–15)

The god Iluwer mentioned in first place is the god to whom King Zakkur erected the stele as a sign of his personal devotion (line 1). During the second half of the 3rd and the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C. the god Wer or Mer, later Iluwer, was one of the most important weather-gods in the Middle Euphrates area between Tuttul and 'Anah.

There is no direct evidence of the cult of Iluwer in the Euphrates region imported by Zakkur to Hamath during the 1st millennium B.C., to which the Zakkur inscription belongs.<sup>208</sup>

According to this inscription, the god Ba'alšamayin often acted favorably on behalf of his protégé Zakkur. In addition, Ba'alšamayin appears as

<sup>205</sup> In regard to the surviving feet on a stool of the royal statue, cf. the Aramaean royal statue from 'Ain et-Tell (ca. 800 B.C.) in Orthmann 1975: fig. 411.

<sup>206</sup> On Afis as the citadel of Hazrak, cf. Lipiński 2000a: 255–258 and Niehr 2003: 94.

<sup>207</sup> Cf. on the English translation especially Gibson 1975: 9–13; Lipiński 2000a: 255; Millard 2000b.

<sup>208</sup> Cf. on Iluwer Schwemer 2001: 200–210; id. 2008: 27–29; Masetti-Rouault 2009: 145.

the highest-ranking god of the pantheon (lines 23–27) in the part of the inscription (B) on the left side of the stele.

An examination of the composition of the Zakkur inscription shows that it contains features of commemorative and dedicatory inscriptions. In this case the beginning and ending of a dedicatory inscription bracket a commemorative inscription.<sup>209</sup> This insight is important for determining the role of the gods mentioned in the inscription namely Iluwer as the personal god of the king and Ba'alšamayin as the god of the kingship and kingdom. The older commemorative inscription encompasses the events surrounding Hazrak (A 2–B 10) in which the god Ba'alšamayin appears as kingmaker and liberator of King Zakkur.

Considering that the Zakkur inscription originates shortly after 800 B.C. it is not only the earliest Aramaean evidence of the god Ba'alšamayin but also the earliest evidence of his worship. The only older mention of "Ba'al of the Heavens" is in the Yeḥimilk inscription (KAI 4) from Byblos from about 950 B.C. Additional Phoenician mentions of "Ba'al of the Heavens" in the inscription from Karatepe (KAI 26) and the mentions of Ba'alšamayin in the inscription from Hassan Beyli<sup>210</sup> and in the treaty of Esarhaddon (SAA II no. 5 IV 10'–13')<sup>211</sup> are from the 8th and 7th century B.C. The history of the god Ba'alšamayin during the period between 950 B.C. (KAI 4) and 800 B.C. (KAI 202) cannot be reconstructed as we lack written sources pertaining to this topic.

Ba'alšamayin and Iluwer are mentioned together with the divine pair Šamaš and Šahr in the curses of the Zakkur inscription (KAI 202: 23). The weather-gods could carry out their curse by sending too much or too little rain, the solar deity acts as an agency of justice, and the moon-god could strike someone with leprosy.

Information about another god, Ašima' from the kingdom of Hamath originates from other sources.<sup>212</sup> When Hamath was defeated in the battle of Qarqar in 720 B.C. the Assyrians deported part of the population to the former kingdom of Israel (2 Kgs 17: 24–28), which had been annexed as an Assyrian province under the name Samerina. According to the Old Testament Ašima' was the god of the people of Hamath who were deported

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Parker 1997: 107–109 and id. 1999: 53–55.

<sup>210</sup> Cf. Niehr 2003: 59f.

<sup>211</sup> Text and translation in Parpola – Watanabe 1988: 27 and additionally Niehr 2003: 43–45.

<sup>212</sup> On Ašima', cf. van der Toorn 1992: 86; Cogan 1999b; Niehr 2003: 191–195; Merlo 2009.



to Samaria (2 Kgs 17: 30). A god Ašima' is also mentioned in the 4th century B.C. Aramaic inscriptions from the North Arabian oasis Tayma.<sup>213</sup> A combination of this divine name with the god Bethel from the Aleppo region appears in the Jewish-Aramaean papyri from Elephantine in the 5th century B.C. where this god appears as Ašim-Bethel.<sup>214</sup> Another occurrence is in a Greek inscription from the Aleppo region dating to the 3rd century B.C., which contains a god Συμβετυλος.<sup>215</sup>

Small finds give further evidence of deities worshipped in Hamath, even though these representations of deities evade identification by name. Well known is the 9.5-cm-tall statuette of an enthroned god wearing a horned headdress. The gold-plated bronze figure shows a bearded man who holds what may be a scepter in his right hand and a cup in his left.<sup>216</sup> As this figure belongs to the type of enthroned high god one may consider it a representation of the god Hadad.

Then there are a number of clay plaquettes or clay models of goddesses.<sup>217</sup> As they are naked and holding their breasts they are referred to as goddesses of the Astarte type, without meaning to say that a goddess of that name was worshipped in Hamath. Perhaps they represent the goddess Pahalatis/Ba'alat the chief goddess of the kingdom known from Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions of Hamath and its region.

Furthermore, there are fragments of several statues whose condition do not permit any attribution to deities or kings, as well as fragments of thrones, altars, and stelae.<sup>218</sup>

The connection of the god Iluwer with Tell Afis, located 45 km southwest of Aleppo, can be made through a broken piece of pottery found there in 1997 on which the letters *lwr* are written, which expand to read the divine name Iluwer.<sup>219</sup>

### 3.2 *Kingship*

It is above all the royal inscriptions and royal iconography that provide a glimpse of the royal ideology of the Aramaean dynasties of Sam'al.<sup>220</sup>

<sup>213</sup> See below H. Niehr's contribution on Tayma.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. Porten – Yardeni 1993: TAD C 3.15: 127.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. Lidzbarski 1908: 323f.

<sup>216</sup> Cf. the illustrations and descriptions in Riis 1948: 138 fig. 186 and Orthmann 1975: XLVIII, 482.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Riis – Buhl 1990: 192–203.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Riis – Buhl 1990: 54–64.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Mazzoni 1998a: 196; ead. 2012: 35; Soldi 2009: 104f with figs. 5f.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. especially Euler 1938; Landsberger 1948; Czichon 1995; Dion 1997: 242–270; Brown 2008; Green 2010: 136–156, 307–315; Gilibert 2011: 55–135; Niehr 2013: 200–203.

According to inscriptions and iconography, the kings of Sam'al made the following statements. King Kulamuwa (ca. 840–810 B.C.) wrote in his inscription (KAI 24) at first negatively about the achievements of his predecessors in order to highlight his own architectural and political achievements. He “sat on the throne of his father and was father and mother to his people.” Because he was then beleaguered by foreign kings, he called on the Assyrians to help him.<sup>221</sup> This corresponds to the notable fact that King Kulamuwa had himself depicted in the image field of the orthostat wearing the jewelry and clothing of an Assyrian king. He not only elevated his own status as an Aramaean petty king but also displayed his status as loyal vassal to his Assyrian overlord.<sup>222</sup> This agrees further with the image in the upper frame of his orthostat where Kulamuwa turns to the gods Ashur and Rakkab'el in the *ubāna tarāšu* speech gesture. Thus the chief Assyrian god and the dynastic god of Sam'al were revered in tandem.<sup>223</sup>

King Panamuwa I (ca. 790–750 B.C.) wrote in his memorial inscription (KAI 214) of himself that the gods stood with him and placed the scepter of lordship into his hands. After he had sat on the throne of his father, the gods gave him all he asked for, as well as abundance and fertility for his land. This abundance manifested itself in the construction of temples for the gods of the city and a necropolis for the king's royal funerary cult. He pledged his successor to the throne, under threat of harm, to invoke his name along with the name of the highest god Hadad and to hold the royal mortuary cult at Gerçin, which included a joint sacrifice to Hadad and his death spirit.

King Panamuwa II (ca. 740–733 B.C.) was instated by the king of Assyria, according to his memorial inscription (KAI 215), which his son and successor Bar-Rakkab drafted in his honor. In return he gave his political loyalty, which he never abandoned during his lifetime; he died during the campaign against Damascus, as a vassal of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III.

King Bar-Rakkab (ca. 733–713/711 B.C.) was, according to his inscription (KAI 216), instated by the dynastic god Rakkab'el and the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III, because of his father's loyalty as well as his own. With Bar-Rakkab the loyalty of the rulers of Sam'al to the Assyrians reached its peak.

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<sup>221</sup> On the correspondence of Kulamuwa's domestic politics and foreign affairs according to KAI 24, cf. Gilibert 2011: 80f with fig. 45.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. esp. Czichon 1995; Brown 2008; Gilibert 2011: 79–84.

<sup>223</sup> For the gods Ashur and Rakkab'el, see above, section 2.1; for the *ubāna-tarāšu*-gesture, cf. Magen 1986: 45–55 and Czichon 1995: 369–371.

More insight into the royal ideology is granted by an orthostat depicting the enthroned king Bar-Rakkab. The statement of the relief is usually reduced to the depiction of the enthroned king and his scribe.<sup>224</sup> This view, however, disregards the overall statement of the relief. In this scene the king is the guarantor of law and order. He is seated on his throne while an official approaches him with writing utensils in his hand and a diptych under his arm.<sup>225</sup> Between the two figures in the center of the scene is the symbol of the moon-god of Harran representing the divine guarantor of treaties and oaths. The king says the words: "I am Bar-Rakkab, son of Panamuwa. My lord is Ba'al Harran" (KAI 218), which commit him to follow the legal order.

This situation is reflected by the expression *šdq*, referring to loyalty, in other inscriptions of King Bar-Rakkab. Because of this loyalty the god Rakkab'el and the overlord Tiglath-Pileser placed Bar-Rakkab on the throne of Sam'al (KAI 216: 4–7; 219: 4–5). Bar-Rakkab describes himself as more loyal than the other vassal kings (KAI 217: 3–6).

The relationships of the gods to the kings and vice versa in these inscriptions can be summarized as follows: The gods place the king on his throne, hand him the scepter of lordship (KAI 214: 2–3, 8–9), and support him during his reign (KAI 214: 4, 10–14; 215: 1–2). Accordingly, the kings build temples to the gods for them to live in and provide for them (KAI 214: 19–20). Furthermore, the kings build necropoleis (KAI 214: 11–15), prove themselves loyal to the gods and their political overlords (KAI 215: 1–2, 11–18; 216: 4–7; cf. 217: 4–6 and 219), and their death spirits are invoked together with Hadad and their descendants sacrifices bring after their death (KAI 214: 14–22; 215: 21).

In addition to the already discussed reliefs and statues of the kings Kulamuwa, Panamuwa I, Panamuwa II, and Bar-Rakkab there are further reliefs and orthostats at other locations in the city of Sam'al. They too grant insight into the royal ideology of Sam'al.<sup>226</sup>

There is a deliberate sequence of stelae from the southern city gate (A) to the outer citadel gate (D) and the *hilani* buildings on the citadel. At the Southern city gate were eight orthostats (Zincirli 3–10) with battle

<sup>224</sup> E.g., Gilibert 2011: 86 "In *Zincirli* 66 the king is shown engaged in administrative matters. . . ."

<sup>225</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1911: 347, who sees a "Buch . . . dessen Deckel durch ein richtiges Scharnier verbunden sind."

<sup>226</sup> I follow Gilibert 2011: 191–221 in the numbering of the reliefs and orthostats.

and hunting scenes, mythical creatures, and two lion statues guarding the gate.<sup>227</sup> They present an image of the king as a victor, hunter, and vanquisher of demons. The king portrays himself as the victor over the natural and supernatural powers of chaos and thus as the guarantor of the divine order. Forty orthostats (Zincirli 12–51) were placed to both sides of the street leading to the outer citadel gate and several aniconic orthostats without any decorations were placed inside the gate. Their arrangement is such that the eastern side depicts martial and hunting scenes and scenes from the ancestor cult and the king, while the western side shows demons, processions, divine beings, and musicians.<sup>228</sup> Five orthostats depicting courtiers (Zincirli 78, 79, 80, 81, 82)<sup>229</sup> were found in the *hilani* III building. At the entrance to the *hilani* IV building were orthostats showing King Bar-Rakkab (Zincirli 66), courtiers (Zincirli 68), a banquet scene with King Bar-Rakkab (Zincirli 69), several musicians (Zincirli 70–73)<sup>230</sup> as well as representations of King Bar-Rakkab standing before divine symbols without a libation vessel (Zincirli 74) and with a libation vessel in his hand (Zincirli 75).<sup>231</sup>

With regard to the overall ensemble it is important to note that the reliefs decorate not the inside of buildings but rather outdoor spaces along gates, squares, and palaces. These outdoor spaces were therefore likely intended for ceremonies.<sup>232</sup>

These insights are complemented by the results of excavations conducted since 2006, which revealed the existence of a processional road lined with orthostats leading from a temple outside the city gates to the southern gate. One of these orthostats (1.25 m tall) depicts a Tree of Life and a royal servant adjacent to it.<sup>233</sup>

The inscription on the stele of King Zakkur (KAI 202) found in Hamath points to the close relationship between the god Ba'alšamayin and the king. Ba'alšamayin had rescued Zakkur (lines 2–3), stood by him (lines 3, 13–14), and made him king over Hazrak (lines 3–4, 13). For his part Zakkur

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<sup>227</sup> Cf. the overview in Koldewey 1898: 111–130; von Luschan 1902: 201–236 and pls. XXXIV–XLVIII; id. 1911: 325–380; Pucci 2008: 52–54; and Gilibert 2011: 55–67.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. the overview in Koldewey 1898: 122–127; Pucci 2008: 52–57; Gilibert 2011: 61–68.

<sup>229</sup> Cf. the overview in Koldewey 1898: 151–154; Pucci 2008: 71f; Gilibert 2011: 88–90.

<sup>230</sup> Cf. the overview in Gilibert 2011: 85–88.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Gilibert 2011: 87f, 215.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Pucci 2008: 52–80, 163–177 and Gilibert 2011: 97–114.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Schloen – Fink 2009b: 215f and id. 2009c: 8, II fig. 29.

raised his hands in prayer to Ba'alšamayin and the god answered him (lines 11–12). Ba'alšamayin spoke to the king by means of seers and prophets (lines 11–13) and promised him liberation from his enemies (lines 13–15). Thus, Ba'alšamayin is the god of the kingdom of Hamath.

In the kingdom of Bit Agusi the royal name Adramu or Adrame (“Addu/Haddu is exalted”) is found in the inscriptions on the stelae from Antakya and Pazarcık as well as on the stele from Breğ.<sup>234</sup> This name reflects the king's close connection to the chief god of the pantheon. Furthermore, there is a close connection between the royal name Bar-Hadad (“Son of Hadad”) and the chief god Hadad, as can be seen both in the inscription KAI 201 found in Breğ near Aleppo and in the royal names from Damascus. In the latter case the question arises whether and in what way the names are based on a perception of divine sonship of the king. A throne name would also be a possibility,<sup>235</sup> although without further written sources from Arpad or Damascus this question must remain unanswered.

### 3.3 *Temples and Cults*

Excavations have been conducted on the citadel of Aleppo since 1998. This has made it possible to confirm the existence of the temple of the weather-god of Aleppo. Archaeological remains of a temple are attested in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages. This temple was in use until the beginning of the 1st millennium B.C. It burned down during a phase of rebuilding in 900 B.C. and was abandoned.<sup>236</sup> Nevertheless, a continuity of cultic practices, among others, can be established from written sources.

The earliest of these is an Assyrian text according to which King Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) received tribute from King Adramu/Adrame of Bit Agusi, whereupon he offered sacrifices to the weather-god of Aleppo.<sup>237</sup>

The inscriptions from Sefire reveal that the sanctuary of Aleppo could grant asylum, as residents from Kitikka fled to Aleppo (KAI 224: 4–7). King Mati'el was supposed not to grant them refuge but to repatriate them to Kitikka instead.<sup>238</sup>

<sup>234</sup> Cf. RIMA III A.0.104.2, 5.9; RIMA III A.0.102.3, 11; KAI 201: 2; cf. Lipiński 2000a: 212–216.

<sup>235</sup> See below, section 4.2.

<sup>236</sup> On this temple, cf. Kohlmeyer 2000; id. 2009; id. 2012; Gonnella – Khayyata – Kohlmeyer 2005 and the contribution of Novák in this volume.

<sup>237</sup> On this text, cf. Schwemer 2001: 620 with n. 5007.

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Greenfield 1991a and Fitzmeyer <sup>2</sup>1995: 147–149.

In 1899, R. Koldewey found a stele in Babylon with the depiction of the weather-god of Aleppo identified by a Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription (BABYLON 1)<sup>239</sup> together with two votive vessels. The stele was brought to Babylon as booty in the wake of a Syrian campaign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 B.C.). It is dated to around 900 B.C. and was used as a cultic image during the Aramaean period in Aleppo. The 1.28-m-tall and 0.53-m-wide stele shows a weather-god facing left. He is bearded, with hair locks, and wears a horned headdress, shirt, kilt, and pointed shoes. In his right hand he holds an axe and in his left a thunderbolt. A sword is strapped to his side. However, it is not clear if this stele comes from the temple of the weather-god on the citadel or from another temple in or near Aleppo.<sup>240</sup>

K. Kohlmeyer's excavations on the citadel of Aleppo brought to light further reliefs with representations of the weather-god of Aleppo.

The first relief shows the weather-god, whom the inscription names "God (of the) Club," mounting his war chariot, which is drawn by two bulls.<sup>241</sup> The god wears a horned headdress and holds a club in his right hand and the reins in his left. The club forges a connection between the weather-god of Aleppo and the god Ba'al of Ugarit in his representation as *Ba'al au foudre*, as mentioned previously.<sup>242</sup> It also connects to the description of Ba'al's weapons in the Ba'al Cycle (KTU 1.2 IV 11–26) and to the god Ba'al Samed from Sam'al.

The second relief shows a weather-god with a horned headdress facing to the right. He is dressed in a shirt and kilt with a sword strapped to his side. He faces a king who is depicted on the adjacent relief.<sup>243</sup>

Archaeological studies of the citadel have not yet been able to place the Hellenistic temple. In all probability it is a northeastern extension of the Iron Age temple in the area in front of or below the later Ottoman barracks.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> This text in Hawkins 2000: 391–394 and an illustration in Hawkins 2000: pls. 209 and 210 and Gonnella – Khayyata – Kohlmeyer 2005: 15 fig. 10.

<sup>240</sup> Hawkins 2000: 391 assumes a provenance from the temple of the weather-god of Aleppo because of his mention in the inscription, more reservedly Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: 113 n. 9.

<sup>241</sup> Gonnella – Khayyata – Kohlmeyer 2005: 99 fig. 138.

<sup>242</sup> Cf. above 3.1.

<sup>243</sup> Gonnella – Khayyata – Kohlmeyer 2005: 92 fig. 124.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. Kohlmeyer 2000: 22 and Gonnella – Khayyata – Kohlmeyer 2005: 15f. On the continuation of the temple's cult up to the 3rd century A.D. See below, section 5.

Despite excavations in Neirab there is as yet no archaeological evidence of a temple there.

Two sepulchral stelae from Neirab offer an important clue to the existence of a temple to the moon-god Šahr. The wording "... *kmr šhr bnr̄b*" ("... priest of Šahr in Neirab"; KAI 225: 1–2; 226: 1) in these inscriptions indicates that Šahr's cultic site was in Neirab. Even though Aramaic syntax does not distinguish between the location of the priest and that of the god, there are similar Aramaic expressions in the texts from Elephantine that mention "Yahu [who is] in the fortress Yeb" that can be used for clarification.<sup>245</sup> Thus, the temple of the moon-god Šahr in Neirab is clearly distinguished from the temple of the moon-god Sin in Harran.

The temple on the acropolis of 'Ain Dara has been especially well investigated.<sup>246</sup> It is of the "long-room" type with exterior dimensions of 38 × 32 m. This type of temple is mainly known from north Syria, in for example, Tell Tayinat,<sup>247</sup> Alalah, Ebla (Tempel D), and Emar (temple of Ba'al and Astarte). It is also found in Palestine in, for example, Hazor and Jerusalem. Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem is a "long-room" with a tripartite interior. The Old Testament gives its length as 30 m (cf. 1 Kgs 6: 2), which accurately corresponds to the temple in 'Ain Dara.

The Sefire treaties mention the location in which they were placed (KAI 223 C: 2–3, 7). The *bty 'lhy'* mentioned here are widely understood to mean "betyls".<sup>248</sup> This is inaccurate, because the term refers to the temples in which the treaty stelae were placed before the gods. Thus, Sefire was a cultic site for the treaties' oath deities, i.e., the gods of Kitikka, who ensured that the treaties were observed. This is also indicated by the list of oath deities where the deities are requested to open their eyes over the treaty.<sup>249</sup>

A Neo-Babylonian inscription written on the torso of a statue found in Sefire also points to the existence of a temple at this site. It refers to a residence for the god of Sefire and the installation of his statue.<sup>250</sup>

The temple of the kingdom of Kitikka, where the stelae were located, was probably a sanctuary located near the border of Bit Agusi, although the fact that the inscription mentions several temples means that the stelae

<sup>245</sup> Porten – Yardeni 1986: TAD A 4.7: 6; 4.8: 7 [incompl.]; B 2.2: 4; 3.3: 2; 3.5: 2; 3.10: 2; 3.11: 2; cf. similar expressions in Niehr 2003: 194.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. the references in footnote 128.

<sup>247</sup> See below.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. for example Alt 1934 = 1959; Donner – Röllig <sup>3-5</sup>1971–2002: 259, 263; Lemaire – Durand 1984: 128, 142; Fitzmyer <sup>2</sup>1995: 125.

<sup>249</sup> See below on the textual finds from one of the temples in Tell Tayinat.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. Warmenbol 1985 and Lipiński 2000a: 206, 209 fig 213.

were duplicated. Therefore, a corresponding temple must exist in the kingdom of Bit Agusi.

At Sam'al the inscription of Panamuwa I on the Hadad statue depicts the king as the builder of a temple (KAI 214: 19–20). With this, an important trait of Ancient Near Eastern royal ideology is adopted.

The fragmentary text of lines 19–20 reports that Panamuwa built a temple for “the gods of this city,” i.e., for the gods of Sam'al. The verb in line 19 is unclear. Most often “to plan” or “to promise” is amended. The verb *bnh* “to conduct construction work” (partially reconstructed) denotes building activity. In general, the construction of a temple included the establishment of the cult; the phrase “and I let the gods live therein,” alludes to the introduction of the statues of gods and divine symbols into the temple.

The topographical part of the claim “the gods of this city” cannot refer to Gerçin, the site where the statue of Hadad was found. It may rather refer to Sam'al as the capital. The construction notice in KAI 214: 19 gives the impression that the main gods of Sam'al were worshipped in a temple, Hadad taking the highest position, while the other gods can be addressed perhaps as *theoi synnaoi*.

The remark that the king had given the gods “a place of rest” (KAI 214: 20) during his reign is probably a reference to this temple's cultic continuity. Compare to this the Aramaic inscription on the statue from Tell Fekheriye, according to which Hadad “gives rest and vessels of food to all the gods, his brothers” (KAI 309: 3–4).

The inscription of King Bar-Rakkab for his father and predecessor Panamuwa II (KAI 215) also contains an allusion to gifts for the gods, which merely states that the cult proceeded in the correct manner. The same inscription speaks of a sacrifice to Hadad and the invocation of his name. Despite the fragmentary context the crown prince can still be identified as the one offering a sacrifice to the chief god of the kingdom of Sam'al. The peculiarity of this passage lies in the combination of the sacrificial offering to the god Hadad with the royal mortuary cult.

After this insight into the textual foundations let us now consider the archaeology of Sam'al. The recent excavations, in particular, which began in 2006 and have continued regularly, have led to some interesting insights regarding to the remains of temples and shrines.

The difficulty in locating a central temple building within the city of Sam'al does not mean that there was no temple at all.<sup>251</sup> Rather, the problem

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<sup>251</sup> This is the assumption of Novák 1999: 201; id. 2004a: 325–327; id. 2005a: 254f, who wants to localize the kingdom's religious center in Tilmen Hüyük.



lies in defining what typical temple architecture is. One can generally expect that a certain part of the palace served cultic purposes, without it being visible in the architecture today.

With regard to the acropolis, the assumption was made that perhaps a temple had once been situated on the eastern corner (Area 2).<sup>252</sup> This was due to the discovery of a lion figure marking an entrance. The eastern corner of the acropolis is also its highest part.

The excavations in the residential area of the northern lower city (Area 5) demonstrate the most interesting and often overlooked instance of a city sanctuary. The discovery of the stele of Kuttamuwa in July 2008 led to an ongoing investigation of the building in whose annex (A/II) the stele was erected. Meanwhile, however, it should already be clear that Kuttamuwa had created a mortuary chapel for the veneration of his memory. The reason for this chapel was the existence of an adjacent neighborhood temple (A/III). Comparable neighborhood temples exist, for example, in the form of the *sanctuaire aux rhythons* in Ugarit, two chapels in Carchemish, the stelae temple of Hazor, the shrine of Tell Qasile, and the two chapels and so-called cult room from Tell Halaf, which are contemporary to the shrine of Sam'al.<sup>253</sup>

Meanwhile there is also evidence for the existence of an extra-urban shrine (Area 7). A row of stelae was located about 100 m outside of the southern city gate as was a rectangular structure, which has been interpreted as having been a shrine. A more detailed interpretation must await the results of further excavations.<sup>254</sup>

There are two temples in close proximity to each other in the upper town of Tell Tayinat (Kunulua). Temple I (building II), excavated between 1935 and 1937, is located south of one of the *hilani* buildings (building I). The approximately 2.05-m-thick mud brick walls of the temple were reinforced with wooden beams. The temple was open to the east, and was about 11.75 m wide and 25.35 m long. It is divided into three parts, a vestibule, cella, and adyton. The vestibule is 5.92 × 7.62 m with two antae and two columns on double lion bases. It is followed by a 9.60 × 7.62 m large cella, which adjoins a 3.25 × 7.62 m adyton. There was a pedestal to place offerings near the right-hand pillar in front of the adyton. Of the interior fittings of the adyton only the remains of a 3.55 × 2.60 m mud brick

<sup>252</sup> Cf. Schloen – Fink 2009c: 6 with figs. 12 and 13.

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Struble – Herrmann 2009: 36–42 and Herrmann forthcoming.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. Schloen – Fink 2009b: 210f; iid. 2009c: 6, 8, 11 with figs. 29 and 30.

altar and a pedestal are visible. Another altar stood before the temple.<sup>255</sup> Researchers have long since recognized the structural similarity of the Temple of Jerusalem to Temple I of Tell Tayinat.<sup>256</sup>

Excavations carried out in Tell Tayinat between 2007 and 2009 have unearthed a second temple. This Temple II (building XVI) lies east of the *hilani* building (building I), and opens to the south. Thus, the temples are oriented toward each other by way of a common fore-court. Temple II is somewhat smaller than Temple I, with a width of 9 m and a length of 21 m, but is also divided into vestibule, cella, and adyton. The adyton contains a pedestal reached by four steps that fills almost the entire room. The east side shows the remains of a mud brick altar. Eleven Neo-Assyrian clay tablets with scientific, lexical, and juridical texts were found on the west side of the adyton. Additionally, furnishing remains were found in the cella and adyton.<sup>257</sup>

The two temples cannot be assigned to Hadad or other deities due to a lack of written material from that time. The inscription on the horse's blinder and head-piece makes the dedication of one of the temples to Hadad highly probable.<sup>258</sup> Furthermore, one can refer to the Late Bronze Age double temples in Emar, dedicated to Ba'al and Ḫēbat, and in Alalaḫ, dedicated to Teššup and Astarte, which tend to confirm a dedication of the Tell Tayinat Temples I and II to Hadad and Astarte.<sup>259</sup>

Several large buildings (buildings I–V) were exposed during excavations on the southern part of the acropolis of Hamath between 1931 and 1938. The following statements can be made in terms of the existence of temples:

Building III is identified as a temple based on the remains of an archive containing tablet fragments of hymns, rituals, magical and medicinal texts, omens, exorcistic rituals, and correspondence. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the previous building contained a stele for a deity, possibly the weather-god Tarḫunt. Building III was thus used at least partly as a temple.<sup>260</sup> One can assume that the goddess Pahalatis was worshipped here together with the weather-god. Small finds include the

<sup>255</sup> On this temple, cf. Busink 1970: 558–562; Haines 1971: 53–55; Werner 1994: 114f; Harrison 2012: 6–10.

<sup>256</sup> Cf., for example, Busink 1970: 558–562.

<sup>257</sup> On this temple, cf. Harrison 2012: 10–18 and, on the texts, Lauinger 2011.

<sup>258</sup> See above, section 3.1.

<sup>259</sup> See also Harrison 2012: 18f.

<sup>260</sup> For a different view, cf. Werner 1994: 141 and Matthiae 2008: 210f.

remains of orthostats with lion representations, a basalt stele depicting a scene of a meal, an aniconic stele, and various fragments of bowls.

Four large blocks of basalt with Hieroglyphic-Luwian dedicatory inscriptions provide further evidence for temples and sanctuaries in Hamath. These inscriptions mention, among others, the goddess Pahalatis' temple (HAMA 4) and that of the weather-god Tarḥunt (HAMA 5).<sup>261</sup>

Of particular interest are the polished red bricks with Aramaic inscriptions containing predominantly personal names. They have been dated to the 8th century B.C., i.e., before the fall of Hamath in 720 B.C.<sup>262</sup> Outside the main entrance to building III were two 30-cm-high pedestals, whose surface was made up of these inscribed bricks. Ten bricks were found on the northern pedestal, two of which were inscribed, and six bricks were found on the southern pedestal, three of which were inscribed. Another three bricks were found in the immediate vicinity and probably belonged to this structure. The writing style of the inscriptions indicates that they were written mostly by uneducated persons. Researchers assume these inscriptions fulfilled a religious function as pleas, votive inscriptions, or commemorative texts.<sup>263</sup>

Three other buildings on the citadel of Hamath are also referred to as temples or sanctuaries. One is a small building north of building III, in which Aramaic graffiti were found on the floor. Another is an open-air sanctuary between buildings II and IV, where three bricks with Aramaic inscriptions were found.<sup>264</sup>

Beneath the mosque west of the citadel are the remains of a Roman temple and a Christian church. This situation is similar to the one in the area of the Umayyad mosques of Damascus and Aleppo. The dedication of the Roman temple is unknown.

Excavations in Tell Afis, the citadel of Hazrak, uncovered a temple and a ceremonial courtyard used for cultic functions in the 8th century B.C.<sup>265</sup> The courtyard spans 15 × 15 m, while only 2-m-thick brick walls remain

<sup>261</sup> Text and translation in Hawkins 2000: 403–407.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. on the inscriptions and their find spots Riis 1978–1980; Otzen 1988; id. 1990.

<sup>263</sup> For a different view, cf. Lipiński 2000a: 266–280, who argues against a religious character and for texts concerning deliveries. Such an interpretation poses the question whether the find situation was appropriately considered.

<sup>264</sup> Ussishkin 1966b designates building IV as a temple because of its structural similarity to the temples of Tell Tayinat and Jerusalem. Differently, Werner 1994: 81 and Matthiae 2008: 208.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. Mazzoni 2008: 24–29; ead. 2010; ead. 2012; Soldi 2009: 105–108.

of the temple. There are no written sources that allow us to attribute this temple to a specific deity.

The acropolis of Hazrak is most likely the origin of the stele with the Zakkur inscription (KAI 202). The inscription mentions that the stele was erected before Iluwer, i.e., before his statue (KAI 202 A: 1; B: 13–15), as a votive offering.

A basalt stele from the 8th or 7th century B.C., found in 1994, offers another indication of cult practices in Hazrak (Tell Afis). The stele is rounded at the top and depicts an eight-pointed star above a recumbent crescent moon in its upper image field. Even though this stele was found in a necropolis outside of the ancient city, it comes from the more highly situated acropolis where the Zakkur stele (KAI 202) was also erected.<sup>266</sup> The fragmentary inscription might point to King Hazael's way to Unqi.<sup>267</sup>

### 3.4 *Prophecy and Divination*

The trilingual inscription of Incirli gives a possible indication of the phenomenon of prophecy in Bit Agusi. The text reports that while the king was about to conduct a sacrifice a wise man rose and advised him not to offer a human sacrifice. The very fragmentary text unfortunately allows no further insight.<sup>268</sup>

Prophecy is explicitly attested for the kingdom of Hamath, though. When the city of King Zakkur of Hamath was beleaguered by a coalition of Aramaean kings he called upon his tutelary god Ba'alšamayin for help and the god spoke to him through "seers" (*hzy*) and "messengers" (*'ddn*). They gave the king the following oracle:

(15) "Do not be afraid! Since I have made [you king, I will (14) stand] beside you. I will save you from all [these kings who] (15) have besieged you."<sup>269</sup> (KAI 202 A: 13–15)

The prophets mentioned here are probably visionaries or ecstasies and their messengers, who were in the service of the temple of Ba'alšamayin.<sup>270</sup>

<sup>266</sup> Cf. Mazzoni 1998b and Amadasi Guzzo 2009.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. Amadasi Guzzo 2009: 341–344 and above, 3.1.

<sup>268</sup> Textual reconstruction and translation in Kaufman 2007.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. on the translation Gibson 1975: 9, 11 and Millard 2000b.

<sup>270</sup> On prophecy in Hamath, cf. Ross 1970; Zobel 1971; Greenfield 1972; Lemaire 1997: 172–175; Lipiński 2000a: 509. On prophecy in the religion of the Aramaeans, cf. the texts from Til Barsib (see above, section 2.4) and Tell Deir 'Alla (see below, section 4.4).

To the practice of divination belongs an 8th-century-B.C. bronze bowl with Aramaic inscriptions and astral imagery, which was described by R. D. Barnett and intensively studied by A. Lemaire and K. L. Younger.<sup>271</sup> The bowl provides a glance into the astronomy of the Aramaeans of Syria, and probably originates from a royal court, where it would have been used for divinatory purposes. As Younger notes, “This bowl undoubtedly had divinatory purposes that addressed particular royal concerns. It is likely that it portrayed certain astral configurations that could be used in astral divination in order to avert any possible evil portents and ensure the beneficent outcomes that the king desired. If this bowl was used as a censer, it may well have served in either lecanomancy, libanomancy, or both, with the oil or smoke pattern touching or covering different astral entities on the bowl, and thus giving ‘signs’ of the portents that would need to be averted.”<sup>272</sup>

### 3.5 *Magic*

The Sefire treaties also contain, aside from curses that become effective in the event of a breach of terms and are intended bring all kinds of distress to the kingdom and its people, the so-called nullity curses (KAI 222 A: 14–35). Additionally, there are some comparative curses that give instructive examples of the practice of sympathetic magic:

(35) Just as this wax is burned by fire, so may Arpad be burned and [her *gr*] *eat* [daughter-cities]! (36) May Hadad sow in them salt and *weeds*, and may it not be mentioned (again)! This *gnb*<sup>273</sup> and [ ] (37) (are) Mati’el; it is his person. Just as this wax is burned by fire, so may Mati[’el be burned by fire] re! (38) Just as (this) bow and these arrows are broken, so may Inurta and Hadad break [the bow of Mati’el], (39) and the bow of his nobles! And just as the man of wax is blinded, so may Mati[’el] be blinded! [Just as] (40) this calf is cut in two, so may Mati’el be cut in two, and may his nobles be cut in two! [And just as] (41) a [ha]r[lot is stripped naked], so may the wives of Mati’el be stripped naked, and the wives of his offspring, and the wives of [his] no[bles! And just as (42) this wax woman is taken] and one strikes her on the face, so may the [wives of Mati’el] be taken [and ].<sup>274</sup> (KAI 222 A: 35–42)

<sup>271</sup> Cf. Barnett 1966; Lemaire 1999; Younger 2012.

<sup>272</sup> Younger 2012: 230.

<sup>273</sup> Meaning uncertain.

<sup>274</sup> Cf. on the translation Fitzmyer <sup>2</sup>1995: 47.

These are rites for the *demonstratio ad oculos* accompanying the treaty's conclusion ceremony. That they were actually conducted is shown by the expressions "this wax" (line 37) and "(this) bow and these arrows" (line 38). These rites using wax effigies and weapons are a legacy of Hittite magical practices, which passed into the Aramaean Sefire treaties by way of the Luwians.<sup>275</sup>

### 3.6 *Funeral and Mortuary Cult*

The oldest evidence for a royal mortuary cult in Sam'al is given by the statue of a ruler (Zincirli 63) that was found at the palace of Zincirli (pl. XV). This statue was erected outside the southeastern wall of Palace J, not within the area of the royal tombs. The king's statue was standing on a base formed by two lions, which were tamed by a hero depicted in a kneeling run (Zincirli 64). Because such bases were used as pedestals for divine statues the divine status of the king, represented as a royal statue, can be assumed. This impression is reinforced by the cuplike holes embedded in the heads of the lions and of the hero that served to receive libations. The statue dates to the time before King Kulamuwa, i.e., in the first half of the 9th century B.C. Thus, it is one of Kulamuwa's predecessors who is represented here, perhaps even the founder of the dynasty, King Gabbar.<sup>276</sup> Every visitor to the palace had to pass this cult site.

Felix von Luschan, who excavated Sam'al, had already realized that the statue was oriented toward the rising sun, the same direction toward which the grave next to the *hilani* I and the stele of Kuttamuwa were oriented. The same situation is also found in Guzana (Tell Halaf), where the two grave shrines and the so-called sanctuary point east.<sup>277</sup> The solar component in the mortuary cult is explicitly acknowledged in the stele of Kuttamuwa, which faces east and lists the sacrifice of a ram to the sun-god.

A new epigraphic analysis of the sepulchral stele from Ördekburnu<sup>278</sup> by A. Lemaire and B. Sass in April 2008 indicates that the first royal necropolis existed south of Sam'al during the reigns of the kings Kulamuwa

<sup>275</sup> On the construction of ritual effigies and their usage in magic, cf. Haas 2003: 569–613.

<sup>276</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1911: 362–369; Niehr 1994b: 58 with references in n. 5; Bonatz 2000a: 14, 24–27, 76–78, 154 and pl. II A 6; Hawkins 2008: 604; Gilibert 2011: 76–79, 83f.

<sup>277</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1911: 363; Niehr 2006: 112, 127, 129–131; Kutter 2008: 302–307. For the actual situation, cf. Orthmann 2009.

<sup>278</sup> Cf. on the stele von Luschan 1911: 329f with fig. 239; Bonatz 2000a: 21, 59, 68 and pl. XIX C52.

(ca. 840–810 B.C.) and Panamuwa I (ca. 790–750 B.C.).<sup>279</sup> As part of the sacrificial rules in the stele's inscription, line 9 states: *wbmqm.mlky.šʕyn.ly* (“and in this necropolis of kings two rams for me”). The speaker is a princess or queen of whose name only the element *Pīya-* remains.<sup>280</sup> A. Lemaire and B. Sass clarify the exact origin of the stele of Ördekburnu as follows: “On pourrait songer au tell de Karapınar Höyük ou à celui de Karapınar Mezarlık. Ce dernier, situé à environ 2 km d’Ördekburnu, pourrait avoir été le lieu d’origine de la stèle.”<sup>281</sup> It is possibly the necropolis of King Hayyan (ca. 870–850 B.C.), whose ascent to the throne marked a change in dynasties.

Whatever persuaded King Panamuwa I to build a new royal necropolis in Gerçin (cf. KAI 214: 1) a few decades later is unknown except that the god Hadad commissioned it. A dynastic change is unlikely to have been the cause.<sup>282</sup>

This site is located seven kilometers northeast of Sam’al on a bedrock hill that visibly dominates the surrounding landscape. In Gerçin the remains of five statues were found, some of which had inscriptions. These inscriptions, and the statues themselves, clearly refer to the practice of the royal ancestor cult and the existence of a necropolis in Gerçin. However, Gerçin has not yet been archaeologically explored. There have been only two small efforts so far to inspect and recover the statues, one in June 1888 and one in February 1890. Therefore, any statements made today about royal funerals and ancestor worship in Gerçin are based only on stray archaeological finds, especially the statues, and on epigraphic evidence.

This refers specifically to the following five statues (statue fragments):

1. A 2.85-m-tall basalt statue of an upright standing god with a horned headdress. According to its inscription (KAI 214) it is a statue of the god Hadad. The statue was broken into several pieces in antiquity. The head (in two pieces) and the upper body were found at the foot of the hill, while the lower body, with the 24 lines of the inscription, still lay on its crest. The original height of the statue is estimated at 3.50 m to 4 m.<sup>283</sup>

<sup>279</sup> Cf. Lemaire – Sass 2012 and iid. 2013.

<sup>280</sup> Cf. Lemaire – Sass 2012: 239 and iid. 2013: 123f.

<sup>281</sup> Cf. Lemaire – Sass 2012: 240.

<sup>282</sup> Cf. Lipiński 2000a: 243.

<sup>283</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1893: 49–52 with fig. 19 and pl. VII; Orthmann 1971: 75f; Voos 1986: 28f and catalogue no. 5; Wartke 2005: 25–28 figs. 24–27; 33–36, 68 fig. 61.

2. Fragment of a basalt statue of a standing male; a remnant of the beard survives, while the head and legs are missing; the partially preserved arms were folded over the chest.<sup>284</sup>
3. Torso of a male statue, without head or legs, made of basalt; the partially preserved arms were folded over the chest.<sup>285</sup>
4. Double statue of basalt without heads or legs.<sup>286</sup>
5. Lower part of the basalt statue of a standing man found in Tahtalı Pınar; 1.93 m tall. The original height was probably 3.50 m. A 23-line inscription on the garment (KAI 215) identifies the figure as King Panamuwa II (ca. 740–733 B.C.).

Based on the inscriptions it is certain that the statue fragments of Gerçin are in one case (no. 1) from a statue of a god and in another (no. 5) from that of a king. Fragments 2, 3, and 4 remain unassigned. The double statue (no. 4) could have its counterpart in that of a seated couple in Tell Halaf and is therefore interpreted as a depiction of a deceased royal couple. The question arises, whether one statue of Hadad (no. 1), the chief god, sufficed for the cult area of Gerçin and whether, therefore, numbers 2 and 3 could be considered fragments of royal statues. A statue of King Panamuwa II can be expected, based on the inscription KAI 215: 14–15.

However, even if these statues and fragments of statues were the most striking evidence for the royal ancestor worship in Sam'al and Gerçin, the practice mentioned in the inscriptions should be investigated.

King Panamuwa I describes his building activities in his inscription on the Hadad statue, found at Gerçin:

- (14) And I [erec]ted this statue of Hadad and the necropolis of Panamuwa, son of Qarli,  
 (15) king of Yādiya, next to the statue (in) the cham[ber]. (KAI 214: 14–15)

The above-mentioned statue of the god Hadad was therefore not placed directly in the grave chamber, but probably at a central cult place on the hilltop of Gerçin.<sup>287</sup> In the grave chamber, which is yet to be identified, there would have been a statue of King Panamuwa I, of which perhaps some remains may be found among the surviving statue fragments.

<sup>284</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1893: 52 and 44 fig. 13.

<sup>285</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1893: 52 and 44 fig. 14.

<sup>286</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1893: 53–55 with figs. 16 and 17.

<sup>287</sup> Cf. the map of Gerçin drawn by Robert Koldewey and published in Wartke 2005: 25 fig. 24 and Niehr 2001.



The Hadad statue and grave chamber presented an architectural and ritualistic ensemble for the king's funeral and the royal mortuary cult. This ensemble is also indicated by the fact that the inscription on the Hadad statue (KAI 214) mentions the cult of the deceased king.

In this context, the following instructions with regard to the cult are to be considered. To the descendant of Panamuwa I, who follows him on the throne, the request to conduct the royal ancestor worship is addressed:

- (15–16) Whosoever from my sons should grasp the [scep]ter and sit on my throne and maintain power and do sacrifice to this Hadad  
 (17) let him then say:  
 “[May] the [spi]rit of Panamuwa [eat] with thee, and may the spirit of Panamuwa dri[nk] with thee.” Let him keep remembering the spirit of Panamuwa with  
 (18) [Had]ad. (KAI 214: 15–18)

In this way, the person conducting the sacrifice calls (“to call by name”) the late king, Panamuwa, before Hadad to invite the deceased. The successor to the throne who refuses this ritual must reckon with the punishment of Hadad (KAI 214: 20–24).

The Aramaic interpretation of *nbš* / *npš* must be stressed, by which *nbš* *pnmw* is understood as the spirit of Panamuwa, who is present in the royal statue. This is the oldest evidence for the Aramaic use of *nbš* / *npš* in terms of “spirit of the dead”. In more recent Aramaic inscriptions this use of *nbš* / *npš* is often attested.<sup>288</sup>

Otherwise, the “god of his father” (KAI 214: 29–30) appears in Sam'al. To him a member of the royal house should, in case of an allegation, raise his hands and take an oath. The *'lh 'bh* named here is reminiscent of the death spirit known as *'il 'ib*<sup>289</sup> from Ugarit, which, in addition to the cult of the gods El, Ba'al Šemed, and Rešep, shows a further connection between Sam'al and Ugarit.

As part of the royal ancestor cult of Sam'al, Hadad, as the chief god of the pantheon, is tasked to assign portions of the sacrifice, as is written in the inscription on the statue of Tell Fekheriye (KAI 309: 3–4). The sacrifice is made to Hadad, who invites the *nbš* of Panamuwa to partake in the celebration. It should be mentioned here that as part of the Hittite royal

<sup>288</sup> Cf. Greenfield 1973: 46f, 49f; Niehr 1994b: 63–65; Kühn 2005: 117–233; Pardee 2009a: 62f.

<sup>289</sup> Cf. above, note 169.

ancestor cult images of the deceased king were placed in various temples, and also in the temple of the weather-god.<sup>290</sup>

The stele erected by King Bar-Rakkab (ca. 733–713/11 B.C.) for his deceased father Panamuwa II, which had been originally at Gerçin, was brought later to Sam'al and left halfway there at the town of Tahtalı Pınar.<sup>291</sup> The relevant text states:

- (16) ... and my father Panamuwa died while following his lord Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, in the campaigns; even [his lord, Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, wept for him],
- (17) and his brother kings wept for him, and the whole camp of his lord, the king of Assyria, wept for him. His lord, the king of Assyria, took ...
- (18) his spirit [eat and drink]; and he set up an image for him by the way, and brought my father across from Damascus to this place.<sup>292</sup> In my days ...
- (19) all his house [wept] for him. (KAI 215: 16–19).<sup>293</sup>

Thus, King Tiglath-Pileser takes care of the spirit of the deceased, which becomes even more important since the funeral in the royal tomb cannot take place immediately. In light of the newly found Kuttamuwa inscription from Sam'al it is clear that the construction of an image by Tiglath-Pileser concerns the spirit, that is the *nbs̄*, of the dead king. Benno Landsberger noted this, translating the relevant passage in the following manner: "... und es nahm sein Herr, der König von Assur [...] seine Seele und stellte für sie ein Relief auf am Wege. ..."<sup>294</sup> One made an effigy, in which the spirit of the deceased took residence, and had the body brought to Gerçin, where the burial took place. This points to an act of lamentation by the family. Following these actions, Bar-Rakkab ascended the throne of his father.

The statue also prescribes some rules for the cult of the deceased king. However, this text is too fragmentary to deduce the precise rituals for the

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<sup>290</sup> Cf. Niehr 2001: 85–89. On eating and drinking with a god, cf. the text of a sepulchral stele from Kululu in Tabal; text and translation of KULULU 2 in Hawkins 2000: 487–490 and cf. also Aro 1998: 247.

<sup>291</sup> See note 171.

<sup>292</sup> In concurrence Sachau 1893: 77, 80; Landsberger 1948: 70; Gibson 1975: 81; Sader 1987: 168. Against Tropper 1993: 126 "nach Assu<r>", who assumes an orthographic mistake and interprets the burial of Panamuwa II at Ashur and not in Sam'al as "Ehrung und Auszeichnung für den Toten." This is not attested anywhere else.

<sup>293</sup> Adopted from Gibson 1975: 81.

<sup>294</sup> Landsberger 1948: 70.

royal funerary cult. It can be seen at most as a royal offering rite. As the inscription puts it:

- (21) And the king shall lay [his hand] upon a fitting ram, and he shall send forth this ram to the tomb of my father Panamu[wa]. (KAI 215: 21)

This ritual is not quite clear. There have been attempts to explain it as a substitution rite following the Hittite royal ancestor cult in which the transgressions of the deceased are transferred to an animal.<sup>295</sup> The question remains, though, why the ram is sent with the king's *materia peccans* to the grave of his deceased predecessor. The text shows a rather close connection between the person administering the sacrifice and the offering and the subsequent transfer of the offering to the deceased. Perhaps it deals with a cleansing rite of Bar-Rakkab that is a one-time act and not a repeating ritual prior to his ascension.

From the reign of King Panamuwa II comes the stele of the vassal<sup>296</sup> Kuttamuwa, which was found in situ in the northern part of Sam'al (Area 5). This find is more important than other stelae with banquet scenes as they have almost never been found in their original archaeological context.<sup>297</sup>

Key to understanding the cultic installation and its function is the fact that the corpse of Kuttamuwa had been interred elsewhere and that the stele and its inscription are about the one-time inauguration festival of the mortuary cult chamber<sup>298</sup> and the yearly celebration for the care of the deceased's spirit (*nbš*).<sup>299</sup>

The inscription on the stele<sup>300</sup> reads:

- (1) I am Kuttamuwa, vassal of Panamuwa, who commissioned for myself a stele while  
 (2) still living and I placed it in my mortuary cult chamber<sup>301</sup> and established a feast (at)

<sup>295</sup> So Haas 2003: 43f, 783f.

<sup>296</sup> On Kuttamuwa's status as vassal or local dynast, cf. Struble – Herrmann 2009: 41 and esp. Masson 2010: 51 with note 30, who refers to the Luwian title *tarwani* as an equivalent to Aramaic *'bd*. On this title, cf. Jasink 1998; Giusfredi 2009; id. 2010: 90–97.

<sup>297</sup> For the stele, cf. esp. Struble – Herrmann 2009 and Herrmann forthcoming.

<sup>298</sup> Cf. also Masson 2010: 52 and Lemaire 2012: 134.

<sup>299</sup> Also Nebe 2010: 324 and Lemaire 2012: 135.

<sup>300</sup> For the *editio princeps*, cf. Pardee 2009a and also id. 2009b.

<sup>301</sup> According to Mazzini 2009 *swd* means "hall", "audience-chamber", "reception-hall". Cf. also Nebe 2010: 320f and del Olmo Lete 2011; Lemaire 2012: 133f translates "chapelle d'éternité" and mentions in this context the Hittite term *hešta*, whereas Masson 2010: 52 proposes a comparison with Hittite <sup>NA4</sup>*hekur* in the sense of "... chapelles mortuaires des-

- (3) this chamber: a bull for Hadad (of) QrpdI,<sup>302</sup> a ram for Nika-
- (4) rawas,<sup>303</sup> a ram for Šamaš, a ram for Hadad of the Vineyards,<sup>304</sup>
- (5) a ram for Kubaba, and a ram for my spirit that is in this stele.
- (6) Henceforth, whoever of my sons or
- (7) of the sons of anybody (else) should come into possession of
- (8) this chamber: Let him take from
- (9) the produce of this vineyard a sheep<sup>305</sup>
- (10) every anniversary.<sup>306</sup> He is also to perform the
- (11) slaughter in (proximity to) my spirit<sup>307</sup>
- (12) and is to apportion
- (13) for me a leg-cut.<sup>308</sup>

The inscription tells of the installation of the stele (*nšb*) in a mortuary cult chamber (*syd 'lm*), an opening ceremony in this chamber, in which the god Hadad (of) QrpdI was offered an ox, and Šamaš, Hadad of the vineyards, Kubaba, and the death spirit (*nbš*) of Kuttamuwa were offered a ram each. With the sacrifice to the god Hadad, the vassal expressed his loyalty to the highest god of the kingdom, who is also found in the mortuary cult of King Panamuwa I (KAI 214: 17, 21–22). The god Šamaš is included in the mortuary offerings because of his involvement with the underworld. This corresponds to the eastern alignment of the stele.

The stele was placed in the annex of the intra-urban shrine built by Kuttamuwa. Vessel fragments were found within close proximity of the stele. They form the archaeological evidence of offerings given to the spirit of the deceased Kuttamuwa. No grave or urn of the deceased has been recovered.

The descendants of the deceased would regularly deposit more offerings (lines 6–13). These yearly offerings might have been made at the beginning of a new year, i.e., the day of the new moon in the first month.<sup>309</sup> Particularly remarkable is that a stele inhabited by the spirit of the dead is called *nbš*. This is the first attestation of such language use traceable as

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tinées à perpétuer, voire rendre éternel, le culte d'un défunt." The element *'lm* stands for "tomb" and "netherworld"; cf. Tropper 1993: 60f; Niehr 1997a; Kutter 2008: 298 with n. 17.

<sup>302</sup> Cf. above, section 3.1 n. 155.

<sup>303</sup> On the Anatolian god Nikarawas/Nikaruas, cf. Masson 2010: 53.

<sup>304</sup> Cf. above, 3.1.

<sup>305</sup> Cf. Lemaire 2012: 135.

<sup>306</sup> Cf. Lemaire 2013a: 149f.

<sup>307</sup> Here *nbš* stands for the stele housing the spirit of the dead.

<sup>308</sup> Cf. Pardee 2009a: 53f.

<sup>309</sup> So Lemaire 2012: 135f and id. 2013a: 149.

far as the inscriptions from Tayma (4th century B.C.),<sup>310</sup> from further sites in northern and southern Arabia,<sup>311</sup> and in the Nabataean and Palmyrene dialects.<sup>312</sup> One should not overlook the fact that already in Ugarit during the Late Bronze Age stelae enabled the dead to participate in funerary meals.<sup>313</sup>

A bearded man carrying a bowl and a pine cone in his hands is depicted on the left side of the stele. Before him stands a table on which a meal is laid out in a request for food offerings.

In Sam'al more images of funerary banquets are found on a gravestone,<sup>314</sup> on orthostats,<sup>315</sup> and on a gold pendant (?).<sup>316</sup> The stele from Ördekburnu also shows a scene featuring a meal above the funerary inscription.<sup>317</sup>

Stelae with scenes depicting a dining table begin to occur in northern Syria and southern Anatolia during the 1st millennium B.C. These scenes are used for deceased members of the upper class as well as the royal house, but not, as far as we know, for dead kings.<sup>318</sup>

The necropoleis of Hamath were uncovered during excavations in a valley west and south of the citadel mound, as well as along its slopes. The more than 1,600 burials are characterized by the coexistence of inhumations and cremation remains.

Bodies were buried in the necropoleis from the 12th century B.C. onward until the Assyrians destroyed the city in 720 B.C. Because of the two burial customs' coexistence, inhumation and cremation, an ethnic differentiation between Luwian and Aramaean burials cannot be made.

After cremation the bones of the deceased were recovered and buried in pottery urns. The grave goods were placed partly inside and partly outside of the urns. They consisted of arrowheads, bracelets and necklaces, knives, sickles, needles, pottery vessels, bullae, seals, jewelry, and amulets.

During construction work in 1889, inhabitants of Neirab unearthed a large basalt sarcophagus from a tumulus on the town's Southern edge. Two years later they found two sepulchral stelae with Aramaic inscriptions

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<sup>310</sup> Cf. Kühn 2005: 136–141 and see the contribution of H. Niehr on northern Arabia in this volume.

<sup>311</sup> Cf. Kühn 2005: 141–164.

<sup>312</sup> Cf. Kühn 2005: 164–184.

<sup>313</sup> Cf. Niehr 2012a.

<sup>314</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1911: 325–328, pl. LIV; Bonatz 2000a: 38–40 and pl. XVII C46; Wartke 2005: 72 fig. 69.

<sup>315</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1902: 214 fig. 105; id. 1911: 242f fig. 149, 328–330.

<sup>316</sup> Cf. Wartke 2005: 82 fig. 85. This interpretation, however, is not quite clear.

<sup>317</sup> Cf. von Luschan 1911: 329f; Bonatz 2000: 40f and pl. XIX C52.

<sup>318</sup> Cf. Bonatz 2000a; id. 2000b; id. 2001b.

(KAI 225 and 226; pls. XVII and XIX) close to the location of the original find.<sup>319</sup> These two stelae lay north and south of the sarcophagus, so that a relationship with it can be assumed. Inside the sarcophagus were the remains of two burials, not of the two priests mentioned in the stelae's inscriptions but rather of one of the priests alongside a woman. The gender of the second individual is inferred from the discovery of a necklace and two gold pieces of jewelry.<sup>320</sup>

Because of their Aramaic inscriptions, the two sepulchral stelae provide an account of the town's burial practices. The inscription<sup>321</sup> on the first stele (AO 3026) reads:

(1) Sin-zero-ibni was priest (2) of Šahr at Neirab. He died. (3) And this is his image (4) and his sarcophagus.<sup>322</sup> (5) Whoever you are, (6) who drags away this image (7) and this sarcophagus (8) from its place, (9) may Šahr and Šamaš and Nikkal and Nusku tear away (10) your name and your place from the living, and with evil death (11) may they kill you, and may they cause your offspring to perish. But if (12) you guard this image and this sarcophagus (13) in the future may yours be guarded. (KAI 225)

The inscription can essentially be reduced to an introduction of the deceased and curses on potential grave robbers, coupled with blessings upon the one who protects the stele and sarcophagus. Thus, the inscription is intended to protect the peace in death of the priest Sin-zero-ibni.

The representation on the stele shows the priest Sin-zero-ibni facing right (pl. XIX). His right hand is raised in blessing and a band in his left hand signifies his rank. The priest addresses the reader in the last section of the inscription, blessing the one who protects the grave.<sup>323</sup> The peg on the bottom of the stele is a provision for erecting it on something or at the grave of the deceased.

The inscription<sup>324</sup> on the second stele (AO 3027) reads:

(1) Si'gabbar was a priest of Šahr at Neirab. (2) This is his image. Because of my righteousness before him, (3) he established a good name for me and prolonged my days. (4) On the day I died, my mouth was not closed to words, (5) and with my eyes I was looking at children of the fourth (generation). They wept for (6) me and were greatly disturbed. And they did not place

<sup>319</sup> See above, section 3.1.

<sup>320</sup> Cf. Clermont-Ganneau 1897: 183–187 and Voos 1986: 93–98, 117–119.

<sup>321</sup> Cf. the editions in Gibson 1975: 95–97; Yun 2006: 21–27; Niehr 2010b: 43–47.

<sup>322</sup> On the discussion of *ʾršt'* as sarcophagus, cf. Niehr 2010b: 45.

<sup>323</sup> Cf. on this interpretation Niehr 2010b: 51f.

<sup>324</sup> Cf. the editions in Gibson 1975: 97f; Yun 2006: 21–27; Niehr 2010b: 47–50.

with me any vessel (7) of silver or bronze. With my garment (only) they placed me, so that (8) in the future my sarcophagus would not be dragged away. Whoever you are who do wrong (9) and drag me away, may Šahr and Nikkal and Nusku make his dying odious, (10) and may his posterity perish. (KAI 226)

In contrast to the previous inscription, KAI 226 particularizes biographical aspects. It is also followed by a curse against potential violators of the grave but offers no blessings to any protectors.

The phrasing of the inscription in the first-person singular creates the impression that the deceased spoke these words during his lifetime. This occurs also in the Phoenician grave inscriptions of the kings Tabnit (KAI 13) and Ešmunazor (KAI 14) from Sidon, and in the Assyrian grave inscription of Adda-Guppi, mother of King Nabonidus.<sup>325</sup> Furthermore, it has been noted that the grave inscription of the priest Si'gabbar exhibits a structural similarity to a Hieroglyphic Luwian grave inscription from Sheizar near Hamath.<sup>326</sup>

The image on the stele shows a dining scene (pl. XVII). On the left side the deceased priest Si'gabbar sits on a chair with his feet resting on a stool. He holds a drinking vessel in his right hand for receiving libations and his left hand touches the table indicating that the food placed there is intended for him. On the opposite side of the table stands his son with a fan. He is responsible for the care of the dead.

Both inscriptions indicate that the stelae are an image (*šlm'*) of the deceased (KAI 225: 3, 6, 12; 226: 2). However, this statement refers not to the scene but rather to the overall representation of the deceased, indicating his presence at his place of burial and his ability to receive the care of his descendants. This set of facts is explicitly stated on the stele of Kuttamuwa.

The two priests' burials were part of a larger necropolis of the 7th century B.C. It was intensively researched during the excavations of 1926 and 1927 and the burial customs of this Aramaean necropolis are well documented.<sup>327</sup>

<sup>325</sup> Cf. the text in Schaudig 2001: 500–513 and also Tawil 1974: 57–65.

<sup>326</sup> Cf. Hawkins 1980: 215f, 219f; the Hieroglyphic Luwian text is now found in Hawkins 2000: 416–419.

<sup>327</sup> Cf. Carrière – Barrois 1927; Abel – Barrois 1928; Nunn 2000b: 436–439.

## 4. MIDDLE SYRIA

The following kingdoms and cities give insight into the religion of the area east of Lebanon: the kingdom of Şobah, with the city Ba'albek; Geshur, with the city Betsaida; and Aram, with the cities Damascus, Malaḥa, and Tell Deir 'Alla, and other smaller towns in the Damascus region.

4.1 *The Pantheon*

In Ba'albek, in the kingdom of Şobah,<sup>328</sup> the Graeco-Roman divine name Jupiter Heliopolitanus cannot hide the fact that we are dealing with a Semitic weather-god. He can be determined to be the god Hadad. The aspect of Hadad as weather-god is alluded to by the Semitic elements in his iconography, such as images of bulls and astral symbolism. The gift of the life-giving water also falls under the jurisdiction of Hadad.<sup>329</sup>

To elucidate this one needs to elaborate on the etymology and semantics of the place name "Ba'albek". In recent years it has become clear that the origin of that place name is not "Ba'al of the Beqa'" as often claimed. S. Wild has shown that this etymology must be abandoned because of Semitic linguistic reasons. A change of the middle consonant *qof* to *kaf* and the loss of 'ayin at the end of the element *beqa'* would be expected in Semitic linguistics. It is more likely that the original divine name is *ba'al nebek*, which can be interpreted as "Ba'al of the Spring".<sup>330</sup>

However, the question remains whether the element "Ba'al" represents a divine name or the divine epithet "Lord", which is more likely in an Aramaean cultural context with a view on Palmyra. In this case the original form is "(Hadad, who is) Lord of the Spring".

At the side of the god Hadad of Ba'albek was the goddess Atargatis, who became known there as Venus.<sup>331</sup>

Important evidence for the cult of the moon-god in the kingdom Geshur<sup>332</sup> comes from the city Betsaida near the Sea of Galilee. During excavations in the 1990s a stele with a relief was recovered from the area

<sup>328</sup> On the kingdom of Şobah, cf. the references in Dion 1997: 172–176; Lipiński 2000a: 319–345; Niehr 2010a: 301–304.

<sup>329</sup> On Jupiter Heliopolitanus, cf. esp. Fleischer 1973: 326–369; Hajjar 1977; id. 1985: 21–135, 205–229; id. 1990: 2468–2484.

<sup>330</sup> Cf. Wild 1973: 219–223.

<sup>331</sup> On the goddess Atargatis of Ba'albek, cf. esp. Fleischer 1973: 273–275; id. 1986; Hajjar 1985: 135–157, 229–236; id. 1990: 2485–2488; Drijvers 1986: 357.

<sup>332</sup> Cf. Niehr 2010a: 304–308.



of the gate to the upper city. It measures 115 × 59 × 31 cm and dates to the 9th or 8th century B.C. The relief shows a bull's head mounted on a pole. Four bent limbs extend from the left and right side of the pole, two to each side. They should be understood as arms and legs. A sword is strapped between the limbs and on the right side there is a rosette made of four spheres (pl XLIII).<sup>333</sup>

Two opposing interpretations of this figure exist. One interpretation favors the representation of a weather-god with lunar aspects, while the other sees a tauromorphic moon-god where the crescent moon forms the horns. This image is constructed against the backdrop of the symbol of the moon-god of Harran. That means it is the image of a crescent moon, which is mounted on the pole and thus an argument in favor of interpreting the stele's image as one of the moon-god.

A comparable representation of the moon-god comes from Gaziantep in southern Anatolia<sup>334</sup> as well as from three further stelae from the southern Damascus region of Hauran, specifically 'Awas (near Salḥad), Tell el-Ash'ari (near Tafar),<sup>335</sup> and eṭ-Ṭurra<sup>336</sup> in northern Jordan.

In the kingdom of Aram<sup>337</sup> the god Hadad was chief god of the pantheon of Damascus. His name is found as a theophoric element in the royal names Bar-Hadad and Hadad-Ezer. The oldest evidence of the god Hadad of Damascus is found in the inscription on the Dan stele. It reports that Hadad called Hazael to be king and marched before him in battle (KAI 310: 4–5). Hadad of Damascus had the epithet *rammānu* (“the Thunderer”).<sup>338</sup> He was known in Hellenistic-Roman times as Zeus or Jupiter Damascenus. Contemporary inscriptions describe him as “Heavenly God” and “God of the Fathers or Lords”.<sup>339</sup> The goddess Atargatis appears as *paredros* of Hadad of Damascus.<sup>340</sup>

<sup>333</sup> Published in Bernett – Keel 1998.

<sup>334</sup> Cf. Bernett – Keel 1998: 10f.

<sup>335</sup> Cf. Bernett – Keel 1998: 8–10.

<sup>336</sup> Cf. Wimmer – Janaydeh 2011.

<sup>337</sup> On Aram and Damascus, cf. the references in Pitard 1987; Sack 1989; ead. 1997; Dion 1997: 182–216; Lipiński 2000a: 347–407; Burns 2005: 1–79; Niehr 2010a: 308–313; and also the Numéro Spécial sur l'Archéologie et les Découvertes Récentes in AAAS 51/52 (2008/2009).

<sup>338</sup> Cf. the references from the treaty between Ashur-nirari V and Mati'el of Arpad (SAA II no. 2: 24–25; text and translation in Parpola – Watanabe 1988: 8–13) and the Old Testament (2 Kgs 5: 18). Zec 12: 11 confuses him with a vegetation deity; cf. Niehr forthcoming a.

<sup>339</sup> Cf. Niehr 2003: 101 and Freyberger 2006: 167–169.

<sup>340</sup> Cf. Freyberger 2006: 167f.

Furthermore, there are references to the cult of the god Ba'alšamayin in Damascus. While excavating near the house of Ananias in the Christian quarter of the city, an altar with a Greek inscription was found that names the god of the heavens. This is a Greek translation of the divine name Ba'alšamayin. Because of the altar's discovery it was speculated that this was the location of a temple for the god Ba'alšamayin. The assumption of a temple where the god of the heavens was worshipped found additional support when another altar, this one with the relief of a bull, was found at this location. Nothing is known about the cult's followers.<sup>341</sup>

The inscription mentioning the god of the heavens is dated to the 2nd or 3rd century B.C. Beyond the find spot near the house of Ananias it was supposed that the altar with the Greek inscription might have originated from the area of the great temple of Jupiter Damascenus, which was dismantled for its stones during Christian times. No further hypotheses can be built upon these considerations, due to a lack of reliable evidence.<sup>342</sup>

Other deities worshipped in Damascus were Adonis<sup>343</sup> and the river-god Barada.<sup>344</sup>

There are several other small towns in the Damascus region<sup>345</sup> that give insight into the cults of this region.

A cylinder inscription of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.) mentions booty from King Hazael of Damascus's royal city of Malaḥa. The loot came from the temple of the moon-god Šēru, who is otherwise known as the Aramaean moon-god Šahr.<sup>346</sup>

The local pantheon of the southern Damascus region is illuminated by Inscription I from Tell Deir 'Alla, dating to the 8th century B.C.<sup>347</sup> During that time the region belonged to the kingdom of Aram.<sup>348</sup> The use of the Aramaic script makes clear that a scribe trained in the Transjordanian region wrote it.<sup>349</sup> This text mentions the deities El, Šamaš ("solar deity"), Šagar ("lunar deity"), and Aštar ("morning star") by name, although their roles are not quite clear because of the fragmented textual evidence.

<sup>341</sup> Cf. Niehr 2003: 101f.

<sup>342</sup> Cf. Niehr 2003: 102.

<sup>343</sup> Cf. Haider 1996: 193.

<sup>344</sup> Cf. Haider 1996: 193 with fig. 76.

<sup>345</sup> Cf. Niehr 2010a: 314–316.

<sup>346</sup> Cf. Grayson 1996: 151 n. 92; Dion 1997: 179; Lipiński 2000a: 350f, although Malaḥa is, contrary to Lipiński, not to be identified with the city Hazor.

<sup>347</sup> Cf. the publication of the inscription in Hoftijzer – van der Kooij 1976: 31–308; also Müller 1982; Weippert 1991; Blum 2008.

<sup>348</sup> Cf. Dion 1997: 199f and Niehr 2011: 344f.

<sup>349</sup> Cf. van der Kooij – Ibrahim 1989: 65–67.

The pantheon in general is called *'lhn* and has a sub-group *šdyn*, which may be considered a council of gods.<sup>350</sup>

Although the cults of various Aramaean deities ranged from the region of Damascus to the Decapolis, only the deities Atargatis, Ba'alšamayin, Hadad, Jupiter Heliopolitanus, and Zeus Damascenus are mentioned here without going into further detail.<sup>351</sup>

#### 4.2 *Kingship*

There is some evidence on the topic of kingship from Damascus but it does not lend itself to constructing a coherent picture.

Noticeable is the number of recorded royal names with a theophoric element, such as Hadad, Bar-Hadad, Hadad-Ezer, and Tab-Ramman.<sup>352</sup> In these cases it can be assumed that the theophoric element Hadad refers to the chief god of Damascus. Whether and how the idea of a divine sonship of the king is behind the royal names is a question that must be asked especially for the name Bar-Hadad (“son of Hadad”).<sup>353</sup> Given the absence of myths and rituals from Damascus this question will have to remain unanswered. Another question is the potential existence of throne names. During the Neo-Assyrian period it is attested that his predecessor on the throne could bestow a new name upon the crown prince.<sup>354</sup> This is also conceivable for the kingdoms of Damascus and Bit Agusi.

The inscription on the Tel Dan stele (KAI 310) offers further insight into the conception of kingship. It states that Hadad, the chief god of Damascus, first raised the current king to his position: [*w*]yhm<sup>l</sup>k hdd '[y]ty] (“And Hadad made me king”; KAI 310: 4) and then granted him military protection by marching into battle before him and arranging for a favorable outcome.

The inscription further illustrates that the deceased king went to his ancestors: *wyšk* *'by wyhk 'l ['bhw]h* (“and my father lay himself down and went to his [fathers]”; KAI 310: 3). This concept of entering the netherworld<sup>355</sup> is comparable to the concept of joining the *rapi'ūma* in Late Bronze Age Ugarit as shown in KTU 1.161. This text, KTU 1.161, shows that joining the ancestors was not simply accomplished by burial but was

<sup>350</sup> Cf. on the state of research Niehr 1990–1993: 1082 and Jericke 2010: 161f.

<sup>351</sup> Cf. esp. Sourdel 1952: 19–31, 39–44; Niehr 2003: 229–264; Freyberger 2006: 168f.

<sup>352</sup> Cf. the overview in Lipiński 2000a: 407.

<sup>353</sup> See above, section 3.2.

<sup>354</sup> Cf. Radner 2005: 33–35.

<sup>355</sup> Cf. Suriano 2007: 164–166.

accompanied by a ritual of its own.<sup>356</sup> This may also have been the case in 9th-century Damascus.

A reference found in more recent sources, which reveal the deification of the deceased kings of Damascus, favors such an assumption. Evidence of this is found in a later reminiscence from the *Antiquitates Judaicae* of Flavius Josephus. He reports on the common cult of Adados and Azaelos in Damascus:

Then he (Azaelos) took over the royal power himself, being a man of action and in great favour with the Syrians and the people of Damascus, by whom Adados and Azaelos who ruled after him are to this day honoured as gods because of their benefactions and the building of temples with which they adorned the city of Damascus. And they have processions every day in honour of these kings and glory in their antiquity, not knowing that these kings are rather recent and lived less than eleven hundred years ago.<sup>357</sup>

Josephus tried to euhemerize the genesis of the gods of Damascus and their cults. The god Hadad is easily recognized in the name Adados, while Azaelos is none other than King Hazael. This mention of a common cult of the pantheon's chief deity and a deceased king is reminiscent of the royal funerary cult of Sam'al in the Aramaean religion of Syria during the second half of the 8th century B.C.<sup>358</sup>

Josephus' source is the historian Nicholas of Damascus. He was born 64 B.C. in Damascus and penned a history of the Ancient Near East and Greece. He was also well-versed in the religious traditions of his hometown.<sup>359</sup> Thus, there is evidence of rituals from the 1st century B.C. This means that in Damascus the cult of the deified King Hazael persisted into the 1st century B.C. and perhaps even up to the Christianization of the city.

#### 4.3 *Temples and Cults*

The area of the great temple of Ba'albek has only been excavated on a very small scale, the results of which have not been published. There are only a few scattered notes. Recent investigations in 2004 and 2005 have brought to light finds from the Neolithic to the Middle and Late Bronze

<sup>356</sup> Cf. Niehr 2008: 248–253 and id. 2012b.

<sup>357</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* IX § 93–94; text and translation in Marcus 1966: 48–51; cf. Dussaud 1922: 220; Millar 1994: 314–316; Dion 1997: 203f; Schwemer 2001: 624 n. 5037; Niehr 2011: 352.

<sup>358</sup> See above, section 3.6.

<sup>359</sup> On Nicholas of Damascus, cf. the references in Niehr 2011: 352, since then also Parmentier – Barone 2011.

Age, although they have not yet been able to shed light on the function of this complex.<sup>360</sup>

The appearance of the divine statue of the weather-god Hadad from the great temple of Ba'albek is known from copies, which were sold in part as devotional objects; from coins; and from an ancient description. The image on the coins shows a weather-god holding a whip and a sheaf of grain standing between two bulls. His robe is decorated on the front with the busts or heads of the planetary deities and on the back with an eagle flanked by thunderbolts. On his head he wears a kalathos.<sup>361</sup>

The goddess Atargatis is depicted enthroned between two sphinxes. She wears a long cloak and a polos crown and holds a sheaf of grain in her left hand.<sup>362</sup>

The find spot of the moon-god's stele in Betsaida argues in favor of the god's cult taking place at one of the city's gates.<sup>363</sup> Approaching the upper city of Betsaida from the north, the stele of the moon-god was located on a pedestal to the right of the city gate. In front of the stele was a basin with the remains of three incense bowls. The basin had drainage and was a cultic installation for receiving libations.

Further stelae were found near the gate. Four flanked the outside and inside of the gateway; they and other stelae were not decorated with reliefs. Deposition benches and an altar with horns were also found near the city gate. On the city side of the gate a pit with burnt animal bones was excavated, exemplifying the sacrificial character of this place.

In general, cultic activities at the city gate, a fortification's most vulnerable location, placed it under the protection of the gods. The cult of the moon-god points to the legal sphere, making the area around and inside the city gate one of law and concluding contracts. An interpretation of the other stelae is not as straightforward; perhaps they were ancestor stelae. The practice of erecting such stelae is known from other cities.

The complex may have been destroyed during the campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III against Aram-Damascus in 733/732 B.C.

There were other sacrificial sites within the city of Betsaida. The site located on the city side of the southwest gate is especially important. It

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<sup>360</sup> Cf. van Ess 2008. I thank my colleague Konrad Hitzl (Tübingen/Kiel) for pointing this out.

<sup>361</sup> Cf. Fleischer 1973: 326–369; Hajjar 1985: 21–118; id. 1990: 2468–2477.

<sup>362</sup> Cf. Fleischer 1973: 273–275; Hajjar 1985: 136–153; id. 1990: 2485–2487.

<sup>363</sup> Cf. the overview in Bernett – Keel 1998: 2–7, 45–74; Haettner-Blomquist 1999: 49–57; Jericke 2010: 126–129.

consisted of a paved platform with a horned altar made of basalt. Nearby was a pit containing animal bones, ash, and pieces of pottery vessels.

In Damascus a temple complex of the weather-god was built upon a raised platform south of the Barada River beginning in the 10th century B.C.<sup>364</sup> The Old Testament mentions a temple of the god (Hadad) Rimmon in Damascus (2 Kgs 5: 18).

One of the archaeological finds from this temple is an 80 × 70 cm large basalt relief depicting a sphinx and dating to the 8th century B.C. It was built into the temple's northern wall during Hellenistic times and is therefore no longer in situ. The sphinx was probably one of a pair, which framed the doorway or a central relief.<sup>365</sup>

The temple complex of Jupiter Damascenus included a 385 × 305 m outer courtyard (*peribolos*) and a 150 × 100 m inner courtyard (*temenos*) in the middle of which was the cella. At certain festivals a market could be held in the outer courtyard. The temple was probably rebuilt during Augustan times and was heavily restored during the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211 A.D.). Parts of the building's decoration, which survive today, date from that period.

The temple's cella is believed to lie beneath the courtyard of today's Umayyad Mosque and has not been excavated. The former walls of the inner courtyard have been built into the mosque's southwest wall. The temple itself lasted until the end of the 4th century A.D.

Some impressions of the cult statues of Zeus or Jupiter Damascenus and his *paredros*, the goddess Atargatis, can be gained from their representations on coins of the 1st century A.D.<sup>366</sup>

Coins from the time of Antiochus XII (87–84 B.C.) show a god standing on a two-tiered pedestal, which is flanked by two bulls. He wears a flowing gown with a cloak and a polos crown. As a symbol of fertility he holds an ear of grain in his left hand and wears a solar symbol on his chest as an indication of his solar aspects. His resemblance to Jupiter Heliopolitanus of Ba'albek is evident.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Cf. Watzinger – Wulzinger 1921: 3–42; Dussaud 1922: 225–234; Freyberger 1989; id. 2006: 158–167.

<sup>365</sup> Cf. Abd el-Kader 1949; Trokay 1986; Caubet 1993.

<sup>366</sup> Cf. on these two deities' iconography Dussaud 1922: 221f; Fleischer 1973: 263–269, 379f; id. 1986; Haider 1996: 189–191; Freyberger 2006: 167–169.

<sup>367</sup> See above.

On coins from the early 1st century B.C. the goddess Atargatis is also shown standing on a two-tiered pedestal. She wears a veil and long, flowing gown. In her left hand she is holding a fruit or flower and on her chest is the emblem of the moon. An ear of grain grows on either side of her.

Texts from Tell Deir 'Alla mention not only prophecy but also cult personnel. The first column of the Tell Deir 'Alla inscription refers in line 13 to a *'nyh* "a (female) fortune-teller", *rqht mr* "woman who prepares myrrh", and *knhh* "priestess". Because of the fragmented state of the text no statements can be made about the activities of the cult personnel.<sup>368</sup>

#### 4.4 *Prophecy and Divination*

The inscription on the stele from Tel Dan (KAI 310) gives a first look into the area of prophecy, from which inferences can be drawn on the practices of prophets at the royal court of Damascus. According to this inscription the god Hadad made Hazael king. The act is preceded by an inquiry into the divine will by prophets,<sup>369</sup> a practice explicitly noted in the inscription of King Zakkur of Hamath (KAI 202), which also notes his salvation from a siege.

Bala'am, mentioned in Inscription I from Tell Deir 'Alla, functions as seer of the gods (line 1).<sup>370</sup> The inscription says nothing about the realization of such an act of divination, though fasting and chanting probably played a role. The revelation takes place at night, which could mean it is a dream revelation or incubation dream.

The existence of a prophet's writing is particularly noteworthy. It was first written on a scroll and later copied onto an interior wall of a house in Tell Deir 'Alla.<sup>371</sup> Later, the prophetic character of Bala'am was incorporated into the Old Testament (Num 22: 2–24: 55), where he is the only non-Israelite prophet in the service of the god YHWH.<sup>372</sup>

## 5. OUTLOOK

The defeat of the last anti-Assyrian rebellion led by King Ya'ubidi of Hamath near Qarqar in 720 B.C. did not seal the fate of the religion of the

<sup>368</sup> Cf. Müller 1982: 228f and Lipiński 2000a: 507f.

<sup>369</sup> Cf. Lemaire 1998c: 6f and Suriano 2007: 166f.

<sup>370</sup> Cf. on Bala'am esp. Lemaire 1990a.

<sup>371</sup> Cf. van der Kooij – Ibrahim 1989: 64–69.

<sup>372</sup> Cf. in detail Weippert 1991; Levine 2000: 267–271; Seebaß 2007: 2–107; Noort 2008; Puech 2008.

Aramaeans of Syria. Only a few selected references to its survival far into Christian times can be presented here.

Emperor Julian the Apostate (361–363 A.D.) writes in a letter dated between the 10th and 12th of March 363 A.D. to Libanios about the sacrifices he made to the weather-god of Aleppo who is now called Zeus:

From Litarbae I proceeded to Beroea, and there Zeus, by showing a manifest sign from heaven, declared all things to be auspicious. I stayed there for a day and saw the Acropolis and sacrificed to Zeus in imperial fashion a white bull.<sup>373</sup>

It is remarkable that there is a continuity of the cult in the weather-god's temple on the citadel of Aleppo.<sup>374</sup>

The cult of the moon-god of Harran is reported as existing even longer than the cult of the weather-god of Aleppo. Julian the Apostate also sacrificed to him in 363 A.D. Even the destruction of the moon-god's temple by Emperor Theodosius (379–395 A.D.) did not end the cult of the moon-god of Harran. The latest references date to the 10th century A.D., as the moon-god's cult endured in the religion of the Šābians. Of particular importance is the textual evidence from Sumatar Harabesi in the Tektek Mountains about 50 km from Harran.<sup>375</sup> The cult of Ba'alšamayin enjoyed a comparable continuity and is attested in Harran and Nisibis until well into the 6th century A.D.<sup>376</sup>

In Guzana (Tell Halaf) the cult of the weather-god is also documented into Christian times.<sup>377</sup>

In Hierapolis (modern Manbiğ), the goddess Atargatis was worshipped from the 4th century B.C. Her name, Atargatis, is a composite of the names Astarte and Anat. The most important source about her cult, cult personnel, and followers is the *De Dea Syria* of Lucian of Samosata. Atargatis was worshipped together with her *paredros* Hadad. Her cult far overshadowed his and this old Syrian weather-god now took second place behind the goddess. Other important cult sites of Atargatis in Syria are Edessa, Harran, Hatra, Aleppo, Damascus, Palmyra, and Dura Europos. Given the

<sup>373</sup> Text and translation in Wright 1923–1961: 200–203.

<sup>374</sup> See above, section 3.3, on Aleppo.

<sup>375</sup> Cf. esp. Chwolsohn 1856; Cramer 1986: 643f, 645–650; Tubach 1986: 132–175; Green 1992: 44–217; Gündüz 1994; Lipiński 1994: 190–192; Strohmaier 2011.

<sup>376</sup> Cf. Niehr 2003: 315–317.

<sup>377</sup> Cf. Müller-Kessler – Kessler 1995; on the region of Guzana during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, cf. Luther 2012.



criticism of the church fathers about the cult of Atargatis it is clear that this cult was active well into the 5th century A.D.<sup>378</sup>

In Damascus the cult of Jupiter Damascenus is documented into the 4th century A.D. At this point his temple was demolished and in place of the temple's cella a church dedicated to John the Baptist was built. The church in turn had to give way to the forecourt of the Umayyad Mosque in the 8th century A.D.<sup>379</sup>

North of Damascus is Emesa, modern Homs, which was under the influence of Hamath, as the history of Qaṭna during the 1st millennium B.C. shows.<sup>380</sup> After Hamath was destroyed in 720 B.C. and Qaṭna abandoned in the middle of the 6th century B.C. the city of Emesa experienced a major upturn. The cult of the god Elagabal is documented here. The divine name refers to a deified mountain and demonstrates the deification of mountains in the Aramaean religion. Elagabal was worshipped in the shape of a divine stone (*betyl*). Even though his cult complex is thought to be located on the acropolis based on epigraphic finds, recent excavations have not yet yielded sufficient evidence.<sup>381</sup> Elagabal gained supra-regional importance when his priest, Varius Avitus, became emperor under the name of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus in 218 A.D. He brought the revered stone of Elagabal from Emesa to Rome, where the god was placed at the head of the pantheon and made equal or superior to Jupiter or the sun-god. A temple was built for him on the Palatine Hill to which his cult image was transferred. After the emperor's death in 222 A.D. it was brought back to Emesa.<sup>382</sup>

It can be assumed that the cult of Palmyra, in keeping with the other Aramaean regions, also worshipped Hadad, although the name Hadad was replaced with the epithet Ba'al ("the lord"), Bol in the Palmyrene dialect. Two bulls accompanied him, which fits with the cult of the Aramaean weather-god Hadad. They were named 'Aglibol ("bull calf of Bol") and Yarḥibol ("young bull of Bol"). In Palmyrene epigraphy and iconography the chief god of this triad appears under the slightly varied name of Bel. This shows the reception of the Babylonian god Marduk who carried the epithet *bēlu* ("Lord") and thus connects well with the Aramaean god Bol

<sup>378</sup> On the cult of Hierapolis, cf. esp. Hōrig 1979; Fick 1996: 210–216; Niehr 2002 (with literature).

<sup>379</sup> On this basilica, its location, and destruction, cf. Dussaud 1922: 234–250; Creswell 1958–1968: 59–73; id. <sup>2</sup>1969: 151–196; Burns 2005: 88–91, 111–124.

<sup>380</sup> Cf. al Maqdissi – Morandi Bonacossi 2009 and Morandi Bonacossi 2009.

<sup>381</sup> Cf. Moussli 1983: 254–261 n. 2; id. 1984; King 2002; Young 2003.

<sup>382</sup> Cf. Niehr 1997b (with literature).

of Palmyra. His accompanying bulls were made astral deities and depicted anthropomorphically. Yarḥibol became a sun-god and 'Aglibol a moon-god. Bel's followers in Palmyra were members of the tribe of Bani Komare, a tribe with an Aramaic name ("the sons of priests").

Another divine triad of Palmyra was worshipped in the temple of Ba'alšamayin, as the gods 'Aglibol and Malakbel were under his sovereignty; 'Aglibol took the role of moon-god and Malakbel that of sun-god.<sup>383</sup>

The triad consisting of the deities Maran ("Our Lord"), Martan ("Our Lady"), and Barmaren ("Son of our Lords") dominated the pantheon of Hatra. Maran and Barmaren featured prominently in the religious life of Hatra. The goddess Martan occurs rarely on her own in inscriptions. Maran was the chief god of Hatra. He was originally the sun-god, which becomes apparent in two inscriptions where he is called son of Šamaš. On coins from Hatra he is depicted as Helios. Barmaren is depicted with horns, a crescent moon, and a radiant crown. This suggests a lunar aspect of the god Barmaren, who is thus determined to be the moon-god of Hatra. He has also taken the title *mr'lh*' ("Lord of the Gods") from Semitic moon-god theology. If he is shown alone he gains solar aspects and is characterized as cosmocrator. The goddess Martan is represented with a tower-like hairstyle. She has lunar aspects, which reflect her affiliation to the chief god who possesses solar aspects.

Other important deities from Hatra are Allat, Atargatis, Ashurbel, Heracles-Nergal, and Ba'alšamayin. Heracles-Nergal was regarded as the protector of the city of Hatra and numerous statues testify to his omnipresence in the temples there. Chthonic aspects can be seen in his representation with a dog. Ba'alšamayin most likely came with merchants from Palmyra to Hatra. He presided over a pantheon of several gods, which was located in his temple. At the same time he was subordinate to the triad of Hatra, as inscriptions from his temple show.

Furthermore, the moon-god Šahr, the god of luck or fate *g(n)d'*, and *zqqq'*, a spirit of the dead, all appear in the inscriptions from Hatra.<sup>384</sup>

The preceding pages were only able to give a glimpse into the present state of research on the religion of the Aramaeans of Syria. Further excavations and discoveries of archaeological, iconographic, and epigraphic finds will probably further expand our knowledge.

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<sup>383</sup> On the religion of Palmyra, cf. esp. Hoftijzer 1968: 25–50; Niehr 1998: 170–186; id. 2003: 103–163; Dirven 1999; Kaizer 2002; Tubach 2006; Martínez Borobio 2008: 417–428.

<sup>384</sup> On the religion of Hatra, cf. esp. Hoftijzer 1968: 51–61; Tubach 1986: 213–335; Niehr 1998: 186–190; id. 2003: 169–179; Martínez Borobio 2003: 429–437.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ART

Dominik Bonatz

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

##### 1.1 *Aramaean Art: Problems of Definition*

A discussion of the art created by the Aramaeans in Syria must begin with the sober observation that it is impossible to define “Aramaean art”. Attempts to undertake an ethnic classification of the artworks of past societies have generally proved problematic, since they misjudge the dynamic of ethnicity, “the paradoxical sense that ethnicity is something reinvented and reinterpreted in each generation by each individual and that it is often something quite puzzling to the individual, something over which he or she lacks control.”<sup>1</sup> The history of the Aramaeans, in particular, is based on a series of reinventions and reinterpretations, which must be evaluated against the backdrop of very different regional traditions. The conditions under which the Aramaeans established their urban settlements were extremely diverse due to the large areas that they inhabited. The leeway for constructing individual identity was correspondingly large. Furthermore, since in contrast to Assyria and Ashur—the capital that gave this civilization its name—Aramaean culture had no ideological center, it is difficult to make out the factors that would have led to the emergence of a national or collective Aramaean consciousness. Against this social backdrop, arguments for the existence of a distinctly Aramaean element in visual art based on style or iconography must be dismissed.

By contrast, a specific form of Assyrian art existed in the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the 1st millennium B.C., since in this case the centralist organizational forms of the political and administrative systems also provided for clear conventions in visual art.<sup>2</sup> Although these conventions did not yet make Assyrian sculptural works an expression of ethnic identity, these

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<sup>1</sup> Schiffer 1986: 195.

<sup>2</sup> Winter 1997.

works were probably a feature of Assyrian culture both at the center of the empire and on its periphery. In the territorially small Aramaean city-states, the fundamental political conditions were very different. Visual culture was determined not by state centralism but by regional autonomy. The coexistence of older Hittite-Luwian and newly established Aramaean traditions has often been discussed in this context.<sup>3</sup> In the older research literature, a common interpretation of the stylistic differences between sculptural works was that the various ethnic groups used these works to define their visual culture and that the works even expressed rivalries between groups.<sup>4</sup> But the factors that cause a historical—though not necessarily an ethnic—style to emerge in visual art are much more complex than such a restricted view is capable of explaining. In the tribally based world of the Aramaeans, social synthesis and acculturation processes most likely had a deeper influence on the development of visual art than did linguistic and cultural boundaries.<sup>5</sup> More recent publications have sufficiently considered this issue<sup>6</sup> or have circumvented the problem entirely by excluding Aramaean art from their observations.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of its selection, the following treatment of “Aramaean art” places greater emphasis on the sociopolitical context of the sculptural works than on formal or thematic criteria. It is not even possible to use the language of the inscriptions on some of the monuments as a criterion for judging their cultural affiliation,<sup>8</sup> since different writing systems were adopted, particularly in the context of the Aramaean dynasties. The discussion will therefore focus on sculptural works from cities or city-states that were predominantly governed by Aramaean élites. Very different ethnic, cultural, and political conditions often prevailed in these cities. Sam’al, situated in a side valley of the Amanus Mountains, was the northwestern-most branch of the Aramaean tradition and was thus much closer to the Hittite-Luwian tradition than was Guzana, located in a former Hurrian-Akkadian region at the source of the Khabur River. The history of Til Barsib in the central Euphrates region and of Hamath on the

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Frankfort 1954: 164–167; Lebrun 1993; Bunnens 1995a; Hutter 1996; Novák 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Particularly Akurgal 1949: 135–137; id. <sup>2</sup>1976: 100–104. For a detailed discussion, see section 2.1 on Sam’al (Zincirli).

<sup>5</sup> See also Novák 2002: 148.

<sup>6</sup> Sader 1987: 281–283; Aro 2003: 281–285 (including an attempt to define “Luwian art”); Akkermans – Schwartz <sup>4</sup>2006: 367f, who deny any clear difference between Luwian and Aramaean material culture, including art.

<sup>7</sup> Lipiński 2000a.

<sup>8</sup> Contra Aro 2003: 281f.

Orontes River most vividly documents the transition from a Luwian to an Aramaean ruling class. In the case of Damascus in the late 9th century B.C., an Aramaean regional power emerged practically on its own. Beginning in the 9th century, all these cities, city-states, and smaller monarchies progressively fell under the sway of the expanding Neo-Assyrian Empire, which provided an important external impetus for the local production of sculptural works. Finally, elements adopted from Phoenician and even Egyptian culture broadened the range of creative possibilities, transforming art production into an increasingly complex and open process. In this eventful history of art, one finds little coherence.

### 1.2 *Archaeological Research and the Limits of the Present Overview*

There are only a handful of excavation sites in the Aramaean centers in Syria that have yielded a significant number of sculptural works. These are Zincirli (ancient Sam'al), Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana), Tell Aḥmar (ancient Til Barsib), Arslan Tash (ancient Hadattu), and Hama (ancient Hamath). At all these sites, excavations began in the first half of the 20th century, and although they have resumed in recent years at Tell Aḥmar, Zincirli, and Tell Halaf, only a few individual finds have expanded the repertoire of monumental artworks. As shown by the temple in Aleppo with its rich sculptural program, many of the spectacular new discoveries lie outside the bounds of "Aramaean art".<sup>9</sup> In other cases, such as the monumental temple in the citadel of Tell Afis (identified as the Aramaean city of Hazrak), only a few sculptural remains were unearthed.<sup>10</sup> For the most part, this survey must therefore content itself with reassessing long-known sculptural works. These works are part of a historical context that must be frequently reevaluated due to new readings and interpretations of texts as well as progress in the research of architectural and stylistic history.

The time frame under investigation begins shortly after the emergence of the Aramaean city-states in Syria in the 11th century and extends to their demise around 720 B.C. The subsequent drastic decline in art production in all cities with a residual Aramaean population is linked to the fact that the different forms of both monumental and minor art (including

<sup>9</sup> Kohlmeyer 2000. Aro 2003: 304f, 312f discusses the sculptures and the temple.

<sup>10</sup> For the temple, see Mazzoni 2006–2007: 23–26 fig. 2 and Soldi 2009: 106 figs. 6–7. The fragments of carved basalt stones from the area of the temple may indicate that there were several sculptures on display that were taken away once the area began to serve as an open quarry (Soldi 2009: 108 fig. 8b–d).

ivory carvings) were closely intertwined with the ideology linked to the king and the local élite. The Assyrians, who were primarily responsible for the political subjugation of the Aramaeans, were apparently the main factor in preventing the development of regionally or locally independent art forms. On the other hand, as early as the 9th century and above all in the 8th century, the Assyrian conquests paved the way for new methods and markets for disseminating art objects and styles. This resulted in an ongoing synthesis of artistic vernaculars that will be described in detail in this chapter. The synthesis did not come to an abrupt end when the Aramaean city-states lost their political and cultural autonomy. It continued until the end of the Iron Age within the context of an internationalization of culture and a rapidly growing Aramaic *oikoumene*.<sup>11</sup>

In section 2, “Monumental Art in Architecture,” the sculptural works (orthostat reliefs and portal figures) are treated on the basis of where they were found in order to identify the commonalities and differences between the sites where they were erected. In section 3, “Free-Standing Sculptures,” the statues and stelae from these and other sites are examined in relation to the different functions they performed—whether as religious dedication monuments, royal monuments, or funerary monuments. The survey concludes in section 4 with a discussion of seals and minor arts that can be plausibly related to the Aramaic *koine*.

## 2. MONUMENTAL ART IN ARCHITECTURE

A characteristic feature of the Luwian and Aramaean cities was the design of public space using monumental sculptural works. The outer faces of the walls along the central urban axes were decorated with carved orthostats and the gates were flanked with portal figures. By portraying religious and mythical themes, war, the hunt, court ceremonies, and everyday life, the urban élite were able to communicate their ideology to the public. The introduction of new visual themes and the use of different central areas of the city for visual propaganda were highly dynamic processes. Older sculptural works were seldom replaced by new ones. Rather, they often stood for generations at their original sites, creating sites of remembrance that strengthened collective identity.

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Mazzoni 2000a: 55 and Dion 1995c: 1292f.

The development of this monumental style doubtless had its origins in Luwian cities such as Carchemish and Malatya, which formed a direct link to Hittite traditions of the Late Bronze Age. It continued to unfold in the Aramaean settlements that emerged in the late 11th and 10th centuries B.C.<sup>12</sup> The carved orthostats were initially mounted on the bases of the city gate walls, where they symbolically marked the hierarchical transition between exterior and interior areas of the city.<sup>13</sup> In addition to functioning as bearers of images and inscriptions, they played a practical role in protecting the surfaces of the walls from the effects of the weather. Beginning in the 10th century B.C., the façades of central buildings and the edifices on squares and alleys were increasingly decorated with sculptured narratives. These representations, which were continually charged with meaning at public ceremonies and during public processions, seem to have been aimed at creating a consensus between the ruling élite and the rest of the urban population.<sup>14</sup> Only later was the emphasis placed on erecting sculptured orthostats in the exclusive areas of the palaces, on their main porches, and on the façades that were shielded by the walls of the citadel complex. The visual message of such monuments centered on the aristocratic élite and their court ceremonies.<sup>15</sup>

The Aramaeans' method of designing public space with monumental sculptures was not distinct from Hittite-Luwian practices. Rather, it has become clear that, when cities were planned, decisions were made on the basis of local geographical conditions, the availability of resources, and geopolitical relations.<sup>16</sup> The Aramaean cities of Sam'al and Guzana are two striking examples. Based on their layout alone—the one circular, the other rectangular—they are marked by considerable differences.<sup>17</sup> When it came to selecting visual themes and motifs, these cities, like many Aramaean settlements, initially continued local traditions but then

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<sup>12</sup> Mazzoni 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Mazzoni 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Gilibert 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Gilibert 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Mazzoni 1994: 326f.

<sup>17</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the urban design and architecture of both cities, see Pucci 2008: 15–126 and M. Novák's contribution in this volume. According to S. Mazzoni, "the choice of the circular plan [was] a clear reference to the local earlier traditions, and largely an effect of natural topographic growth. The choice of the quadrangular plan emphasized, on the contrary, the new city was a planned, functional structure providing an image of great ideological appeal, no less than that propagandized by the Neo-Assyrian cities" (Mazzoni 1994: 330).



increasingly opened up to foreign influences in ways that accorded with their specific interests.

## 2.1 *Sam'al*

Given the special stylistic features of the sculptural works from Sam'al (modern-day Zincirli), which were created over a 250-year period between the second half of the 10th and the early 7th centuries B.C., a rough distinction can be made between two main phases: an older phase, lasting until the end of the 9th century, marked by a strong orientation toward Hittite-Luwian visual traditions, and a younger one, extending up to or shortly before the conquest by Esarhaddon in 671/670 B.C., in which monumental art developed a local court style that was clearly influenced by the Assyrians.

In the vicinity of Sam'al there is a second site at which a large number of monumental sculptures from a gate structure and a palace entrance (orthostat reliefs and portal figures) were excavated.<sup>18</sup> This site—Sakçagözü, situated 21 kilometers to the northeast—has tentatively been identified as Lutibu, a fortress on the territory controlled by Hayyan, the king of Sam'al, and mentioned by Shalmaneser III in 858 B.C.<sup>19</sup> But the sculptural works from Sakçagözü differ from the art in Sam'al in terms of their iconography and pronounced Assyrianizing style. It has therefore been suggested that they originated around 712/711 B.C., when Sargon II placed a number of cities, including Melid and Sakçagözü-Lutibu, under the control of the Anatolian vassal state Kummuh.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, a number of the reliefs, particularly the “hunt relief” with a chariot scene and lion slayers, display stylistic and thematic similarities to the north-west Syrian ivories that were recovered from room SW 7 in Fort Shalmaneser in Nimrud and date to the second half of the 8th century B.C.<sup>21</sup> For this reason, the sculptural works from Sakçagözü may be the result of a later development of the regional style of Sam'al art. They will not be treated at greater length in this survey due to their strong affinity with Assyrian art.

<sup>18</sup> Ussishkin 1966a; Orthmann 1971: 79–82; Sakçagözü A/1–13; B/1–3.

<sup>19</sup> Sader 1987: 173 n. 57 and Lipiński 2000a: 237.

<sup>20</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 237f.

<sup>21</sup> Winter 1976b: 32–38; for the ivories, see below, section 4.2.

### 2.1.1 *Orthostat Reliefs*

The oldest series of sculptural reliefs in Sam'al were found at the southern city gate and the outer citadel gate.<sup>22</sup> Both groups were probably created after the mid-10th century B.C. Due to their slight stylistic differences it can be assumed that they emerged in different periods.<sup>23</sup> The figures on the reliefs on the southern gate are stiff and awkward, while those on the reliefs on the outer citadel gate show the first attempts to treat the body as an organic form. There are also fluid transitions in the iconography of the images in both groups, which include winged griffins and sphinxes as mythological hybrid creatures and scenes from the lion and deer hunt. The more numerous and better preserved reliefs from the outer citadel gate most clearly demonstrate the intrinsic visual context that S. Mazzoni aptly describes as a “dynastic parade.”<sup>24</sup> Scenes of the divine sphere appear on the left of the gate, those of the human world on the right. The front of the gate is dominated by the theme of war, the interior by that of the hunt. An orthostat at the front corner of the gate (Zincirli B/5)—appearing on the left when viewed from the entrance—depicts the ruler as a protagonist in the worldly order (pl. I). Two members of the ruling house are shown striding in front of him, including perhaps his son or successor. They are additional representatives of the dynastic order. The adjacent orthostat shows the ruler and his spouse at a shared meal (Zincirli B/3). In the later reception of these sculptural works, this scene was probably understood not only as a royal feast in which the ruling couple partook, but also as a symbol of the continued existence of the dynastic ancestors in the afterlife (see section 3.3). The protection of the city and the ruling dynasty is symbolically embodied by the large number of divinities present, the mightiest of which can be seen across from the image of the royal family, now at the right corner of the gate. The triad of gods at the top of the divine sphere (pl. II; Zincirli B/13a, B/13b, B/14) illustrates in an exemplary manner the iconographic similarities to sculptural art

<sup>22</sup> Orthmann 1971: Zincirli A/1–9 (southern city gate) and B/1–33 (outer citadel gate). The only pieces that are possibly older than these carved orthostats are the three unfinished foreparts of sphinxes from the region of “Der alte Bau unter dem Thore” and a forepart of a fourth sphinx from outside the city. They bear similarities with the sculptures found in the Yesemek quarry and support the thesis that the sculptures produced there were intended for Sam'al, among other places (Orthmann 1971: 73, 79 C 6–7, K/8).

<sup>23</sup> Orthmann distinguishes between the stylistic groups Zincirli I and II, both of which are part of the stylistic phase “Late Hittite II” or, with respect to Zincirli I, mark its transition (Orthmann 1971: 60–62, 462).

<sup>24</sup> Mazzoni 1997: 318–322.

in Carchemish—similarities that are typical of other visual motifs in the context of the outer citadel gate.<sup>25</sup> The representations of the god leading the triad with a spear and shield, the goddess in the center holding a mirror and wearing a fringed veil, and the god at the rear with an axe and lightning fork, recall the triad of Tarḥunzas, Kubaba, and Karḥuḥas that is depicted on the Long Wall of Sculpture in Carchemish.<sup>26</sup> A notable difference is that the gods on the outer citadel gates in Carchemish appear in a different order. The inscriptions from Sam'al/Yādiya never mention such a divine triad. Its pantheon was headed by the male deities Hadad, El, Rakkab'el, and Shamash.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the image of a Kubaba-like goddess on the relief at the outer citadel gate stands in marked contrast to the almost complete absence of female deities in other local representations and sources.<sup>28</sup> Carchemish evidently had a profound influence, as a model, on the emergence of a specific visual tradition in Sam'al, but due to the lack of written sources, we have no knowledge of its associated content. The oldest inscription from Sam'al, which can be found on the Kulamuwa stele (KAI 24; see below), is some one hundred years younger than the sculptural works from the outer citadel gate.

The younger sculptural works from Sam'al include the carved orthostats from *hilani* IV ("Northern Hall"), which W. Orthmann placed in the stylistic group "Zincirli III," and the series of orthostats in the stylistic group IV from *hilani* IV.<sup>29</sup> In terms of style, these reliefs are generally characterized by a pronounced tendency toward three-dimensional design and the detailed treatment of the features of the face and head. The reliefs date to the reign of King Bar-Rakkab (ca. 733/732–713/711 B.C.), though it must be noted that *hilani* III was probably only constructed and decorated with sculptural works in the second half of his rule.<sup>30</sup> The stylistic differences to the older sculptural works from the outer citadel gate (stylistic group II) can be explained in part by the time difference of almost two hundred years, but they are also attributable to Assyrian influences, which

<sup>25</sup> For the general similarities between art in Carchemish and Zincirli during the stylistic phase "Late Hittite II," see Orthmann 1971: 133–136, 466.

<sup>26</sup> Hawkins 1984: 76f figs. 112f.

<sup>27</sup> Tropper 1993: 20–22 and cf. also Niehr's chapter on religion in this volume.

<sup>28</sup> Kubaba is only mentioned in the inscriptions on the stele from Ördek Burnu, situated 20 kilometers south of Sam'al, and on the stele of Kuttamuwa from Sam'al (cf. Niehr 2010a: 276, 282).

<sup>29</sup> Orthmann 1971: 63–65.

<sup>30</sup> For an extensive discussion of the temporal relationship between *hilani* IV/"Northern Hall" and *hilani* III, see Gilibert 2011: 129–131.

encouraged the formation of a distinct court style that even determined the themes of the images.

Assyrian influences can also be seen in one of the few surviving examples of monumental art in Sam'al from the time before Bar-Rakkab's reign. The orthostat from the entrance area of building J bears an inscription and an image of King Kulamuwa, who is thought to have ruled in the late 9th century B.C. The position of the royal figure at the head of the inscription reflects the tradition of Hittite and Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions and illustrates the semantic interaction between the image and the text.<sup>31</sup> In contrast to the inscription, the visual representation of the ruler—his pose, the style of his hair and beard, his hat, and his tightly bound robe—is a faithful reproduction of Assyrian royal images.<sup>32</sup> The divine symbols at which the ruler is pointing in a characteristically Assyrian gesture are also consistent with the design of Assyrian royal stelae.<sup>33</sup> The only detail foreign to Assyrian representations is the wilted flower that Kulamuwa holds in his left hand. It emphasizes the posthumous commemorative character of the depicted person,<sup>34</sup> which is a feature of other sculptural works from Sam'al as well. To a certain extent, this commemorative character fits in with the inscription, which provides a long review of the ruler's deeds in autobiographical apologetic form.<sup>35</sup> In this text Kulamuwa affirms, among other things, that he "hired" the army of the Assyrian king for support in his conflicts with the Danunians (KAI 24: 7f). With the clear intention of providing legitimacy for Kulamuwa's rule, the image of the king and the account of his deeds emphasize his ties to the large Assyrian power, which possibly provided a model for the king's mode of self-representation.

The emulation of Assyrian models continued in the relief orthostats of *hilani* IV ("Northern Hall") and *hilani* III. However, since these orthostats were works by local sculptors they show a clear synthesis with the highly developed local art tradition. The Aramaean king Bar-Rakkab appears on two corner orthostats erected at the entrance to *hilani* IV. On one he is enthroned in front of a scribe (pl. III), and on the other he sits at a banquet

<sup>31</sup> Hamilton 1998: 222 and Glibert 2011: 119–129.

<sup>32</sup> Orthmann 1971: 66. For a discussion of the local development of this type of representation on the Kulamuwa stele, see Czichon 1995.

<sup>33</sup> The gesture is known as *urbāna tarāšu* from Assyrian texts and can be interpreted in this context as a gesture of communication with the gods, cf. Magen 1986: 94–99.

<sup>34</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 102 C46, C72.

<sup>35</sup> See also Ishida 1985.

prepared by a servant.<sup>36</sup> A fan bearer stands behind each representation of the seated ruler (visible on the narrow side of the corner orthostats). The design of both images recalls Assyrian representations in glyptic art and on palace reliefs, but many of the details of both the king's clothes and his hair and beard reflect the fully developed local style in Sam'al. A characteristic feature of the Aramaean ruler is his helmet-like pointed cap, which has its origins in the Assyrian royal cap and is often referred to in the research literature as the "Aramaean tiara."<sup>37</sup> The cloak, which is worn over a long robe with one corner draped across the right shoulder, also identifies the king and other members of the Sam'al court élite (pl. IV).<sup>38</sup> The single, spiraling lock of hair that hangs down in front of Bar-Rakkab's ear and can be seen on other figures associated with the king (e.g., the fan bearers on the same orthostat) was once seen as a characteristic Aramaean stylistic element, like the Aramaean tiara.<sup>39</sup> But as diacritic markers of status and social distinctions, such elements in visual art primarily had an impact in the spatially and temporally limited confines of Sam'al society and cannot generally be regarded as features of an Aramaean style.<sup>40</sup> The fundamentally new thematic focuses seen on the reliefs at *hilani* IV and *hilani* III—the representation of ritual court ceremonies in contrast to the combination of divine and royal imagery on the older city and castle gates—is directly related to the function of a conventionalized visual language that was used to represent the king and the local elite.

This monumental sculptural art places the ruler at the center of a clearly ritualized act that is focused on him. On the reliefs on the western side of the entrance to *hilani* IV, the ruler is shown sitting at a meal with a procession of courtiers and musicians advancing toward him.<sup>41</sup> At *hilani* III he leads the procession of court officials and male members of

<sup>36</sup> Orthmann 1971: 63 Zincirli F/1a–b (VA 2817) (here pl. III), from the eastern wall of the entrance. The orthostat originally erected on the opposite western wall has only been partially reconstructed from several scattered fragments (VAM Berlin S 8587 + S 6585, AOM Istanbul 7797). See Voos 1985: 71–86 fig. 14.

<sup>37</sup> Orthmann 1971: 67, 156f.

<sup>38</sup> See also the figures on the relief at *hilani* IV (Orthmann 1971: Zincirli H/4–H/9) and an additional representation of Bar-Rakkab on an orthostat found south of *hilani* IV (Orthmann 1971: 549, Zincirli K/1).

<sup>39</sup> Akurgal 1949: 13, 27–29 and id. 1976: 100f.

<sup>40</sup> In this connection it should be added that a very similar form of the robe with a corner draped across the right shoulder can be seen, for example, on the statue of a ruler from Melid (Malatya)—i.e., on a sculptural work from a Luwian city (Bonatz 2000a: A13).

<sup>41</sup> See the reconstruction drawing in Voos 1985: fig. 15.

the royal family that is moving in parallel to the entrance.<sup>42</sup> Insight into the participants' status and role can be gained not only by studying their position in relation to the king, but also by examining how their attributes conform to him. The image of the king apparently reflected and provided a foundation for hierarchical relations in the upper echelons of society.<sup>43</sup>

Under King Bar-Rakkab, who proved loyal to the Assyrian power, Sam'alean monumental art experienced its last golden age in the late 8th century B.C. A creative balance was struck in the local visual tradition that had developed under Assyrian influence. In the two scenes depicting Bar-Rakkab on the throne, for example—both of which were prominently displayed at the entrance to *hilani* IV (“Northern Hall”)—two different (craft) traditions were united at one site through the image of the throne from Assyria in the one scene and the representation of the throne from local workshops in the other.<sup>44</sup> The visual message that was sent to the rather exclusive audience in the palace area on the citadel of Sam'al was probably understood to be an ideological one, even if we cannot reconstruct this message in detail today. It testifies to the local rulers' confident self-perception. It was only the violent subjugation of the city by the Assyrian king Esarhaddon around 671 B.C. that led to a radical ban on the local exercise of power and on these affirmations of identity. This key event was followed by a transformation of the urban landscape, the relocation or destruction of older sculptural works, and the creation of new works of a purely Assyrian character. The most impressive of these latter works is the triumphal stele erected by Esarhaddon at the main gate of the citadel (gate D).<sup>45</sup>

### 2.1.2 *Portal Lions*

Monumental sculptures of lions in the tradition of Hittite portal lions were also erected as guardian figures in Aramaean Sam'al, as they were

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<sup>42</sup> Orthmann 1971: 548; Zincirli H/8. Of the reliefs on the eastern façade of *hilani* III, only a few were found in situ, meaning that it is impossible to completely reconstruct the succession of images. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that only ten orthostats were transported to the museums in Berlin and Istanbul (Orthmann 1971: 547–549; Zincirli H/1–H/10–11). The rest remained at the excavation sites and are lost today (Pucci 2008: 71 n. 394).

<sup>43</sup> See also Gilibert 2011: 186.

<sup>44</sup> For a detailed description of the furniture and its cultural historical classification, see Symington 1996: 134f.

<sup>45</sup> Concerning the architectural changes carried out when the Assyrians assumed power, see Wartke 2005: 68f and Pucci 2008: 80.

in numerous Luwian locations at city gates and the entrances to palaces.<sup>46</sup> In Sam'al such figures conspicuously flanked all the gates to the citadel.

At the outer citadel gate the lions in the lower passages are set out in relief from the orthostats and depicted in profile. Their elongated bodies stretch across the width of two connected orthostats.<sup>47</sup> However, the three contemporaneous or only slightly older lions found near the inner citadel gate (gate E) already exhibit the combination of fully sculptured form and relief figures typical of portal lions (pl. V).<sup>48</sup> In this case only the animals' heads are fully sculptured, while their bodies are represented in relatively flat relief. These three older-style portal lions were found together with two others in a ditch south of the inner citadel gate (gate E), where, during a later phase of the city's history, they had been buried in almost ceremonial fashion. However, prior to this they and a lost sixth lion must have formed an impressive ensemble of guardians in the lower passages of the inner citadel gate for several centuries.<sup>49</sup> Upon closer inspection, it is conspicuous that the two portal lions (pl. VI) in the later style are reworkings of sculptures in the earlier style.<sup>50</sup> The remains of the paws of the older figures can still easily be made out in front of the relief backdrop at the base of the orthostats. Above them rises a sculptured body featuring a greater elaboration of details such as the animal's coat. The section featuring the chest and forelegs has also been rendered in fully sculptured form. The lion's mouth is wide open, the whiskers bristle back along the head, and the ears are laid back closely against the head. The aggressive demeanor of this predatory cat represents a stark contrast to the cubic and torpid form of the head of the older sculpture. To a certain extent, the creature's aggressive expression corresponds to that of the two roaring lions from gate Q—the only entrance to the palace complex in the northwest of the citadel—but the lions from gate Q are significantly more compact and therefore probably also older than the reworked lions from

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<sup>46</sup> For an overview of the portal lions in Luwian centers, see Aro 2003: 307–310. On the portal lions in Hamath, see below, 2.4. A detailed discussion of the stylistic development of lion representations is provided by Akurgal 1949: 39–76.

<sup>47</sup> Orthmann 1971: Zincirli B/11 and B/24. The lions are paralleled by two bulls in the upper passage of the same gate (Orthmann 1971: Zincirli B/26 and B/30).

<sup>48</sup> Orthmann 1971: Zincirli C/1–3 (= pl. V). For stylistic reasons, Orthmann favors dating these portal lions to the phase represented by the oldest Zincirli I group (Orthmann 1971: 70).

<sup>49</sup> On the find, see von Luschan 1902: 230–236 fig. 137, pl. 48 and Gilibert 2011: 99–103. On the reconstruction of the original constellation in gate E (inner citadel gate), see Koldewey 1898: 127–130 fig. 37 and Gilibert 2011: 104–106 fig. 52.

<sup>50</sup> Orthmann 1971: 70: Zincirli C/4–5 (= pl. VI).

gate E.<sup>51</sup> It is only when we come to the individual lions found in the area of *hilani* II and III that the stylistic parallels with the later lions from gate E (inner citadel gate) become so pronounced that we can assume they originate from approximately the same time.<sup>52</sup> Since the palace buildings whose entrances were probably once adorned with these lion figures are linked to the construction activities of Bar-Rakkab (ca. 733/732–713/711 B.C.), these figures were probably produced during this time or shortly afterward.

The portal lions thus stand for different phases in Sam'al's history as a city. They demonstrate not only a change in style within this group of artworks but, even more, the programmatic and dynamic embellishment of this exclusive domain of Sam'al with symbols of power. The ritual disposal of the portal lions from the inner citadel gate (gate E) underscores this function and was probably one of the diverse and drastic consequences of the Assyrian assumption of power in Sam'al after 671/670 B.C.<sup>53</sup>

## 2.2 *Guzana*

There is no precise information available concerning the founding of Guzana (now Tell Halaf) as the capital of the Aramaean city-state of Bit Baḥiani, but it probably took place no later than the early 10th century B.C.<sup>54</sup> It is difficult to date the sculptures on the main building in the western half of the citadel, the so-called Western Palace or Temple Palace of Kapara, since it remains unclear when this Aramaean ruler lived, with estimates ranging from the 10th to the 8th century B.C.<sup>55</sup> In the inscriptions on numerous sculptural works on the palace façade Kapara describes himself as the builder of the palace, whereas the inscriptions on a number of orthostats at the rear contain the phrase “temple of the storm-god.” As a result, researchers assumed at an early stage that these so-called small orthostats originally belonged to another building.<sup>56</sup> The stylistic differences between these orthostats and the reliefs on the palace façade indeed

<sup>51</sup> Orthmann 1971: 68–60; Zincirli D/1–52.

<sup>52</sup> Orthmann 1971: 70f; Zincirli H/3 und J/1.

<sup>53</sup> See also Ussishkin 1970: 125f and Gilibert 2011: 101.

<sup>54</sup> Novák 2009: 94.

<sup>55</sup> Regarding this discussion, see Orthmann 2002: 19–23; Pucci 2008: 81 n. 455 and 125 n. 704.

<sup>56</sup> The first researcher to make this assumption was von Oppenheim 1931: 126–128; on the subsequent development of the discussion, see Elsen-Novák – Novák 1994 and Orthmann 2002: 21f.



suggest that the two groups of works were produced at different times.<sup>57</sup> However, the fact that the rule of Kapara cannot be precisely dated means that we lack an important basis for historically situating the reliefs. Dating is made even more difficult by the fact that, as a whole, the monumental sculptural works from Guzana have a special status within the tradition of “Neo-Hittite” art. Furthermore, unlike the works from Sam’al, they do not exhibit any clear influence by Neo-Assyrian art.<sup>58</sup> This latter observation has led M. Novák to assume that Kapara and the artworks associated with him should be dated to the second half of the 10th century B.C., when Guzana was independent of Assyria.<sup>59</sup> However, if we assume that the Kapara period took place in the 9th or even (as M. Pucci suggests) in the 8th century B.C.,<sup>60</sup> we are faced with the interesting question as to why, given the political status of the city as an Assyrian vassal, an apparently autonomous production of art continued in Guzana.

The access staircase to the entrance area of the Western Palace leads through the so-called Scorpion Gate abutting its eastern side, which is named after the two jamb figures made of basalt that flank the front opening of the gate.<sup>61</sup> Their deployment as apotropaic guardians at one of the citadel gates recalls similar installations in other Luwian and Aramaean cities, including the citadel gates in Sam’al (see above). However, their chimeric character, which combines the head of a man with the body, wings, and claws of a bird and the tail of a scorpion, is the product of a local tradition. This is also evident in a very similar figure of a scorpion-bird-man on one of the “small orthostats” on the southern side of the Western Palace.<sup>62</sup>

In order to approach the entrance to the Western Palace after passing through the Scorpion Gate, the ancient visitor had to make a U-turn. This meant that he perceived the building’s ornamentation in two separate moments. The first occurred after the visitor came to the lower area of

<sup>57</sup> According to Orthmann, stylistic groups Halaf I and II (Orthmann 1971: 120–123).

<sup>58</sup> See Novák 2002: 156f and Orthmann 2002: 101f.

<sup>59</sup> Novák 2009: 94. Guzana first came under the political sway of Assyria during the reign of Adad-nirari II (911–891 B.C.). In 893 B.C., during his fifth campaign to Ḫanigalbat, this ruler demanded tribute from Guzana, thereby providing the first clearly datable mention of the city.

<sup>60</sup> Pucci 2008: 126f. She concludes: “Tell Halaf had a settled relationship with the Assyrians, which guaranteed a peaceful condition and allowed an uninterrupted architectural development (ibid. 127).”

<sup>61</sup> Von Oppenheim 1955: pls. 141–145; on the site of the figures, see Orthmann 2002: 34f.

<sup>62</sup> Von Oppenheim 1955: pl. 92b.

the citadel and consisted in an encounter with the reliefs on the small orthostats on the southern side and the eastern corner of the palace, while the second occurred when he reached the terrace leading to the porch bedecked with caryatids and reliefs in the northern section of the palace. The Scorpion Gate on the eastern side served as a functional and symbolic interlocking point between these two areas.

Since the original sequence of the 187 small orthostats was obviously altered when they were reused, it is impossible to reconstruct the original pictorial context.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, even in this later combination, the themes of the individual scenes make it clear that these works presented the image of an economically, politically, and religiously idealized landscape.<sup>64</sup> Several depictions point to the cultivation of the land, with palm trees, the harvesting of their fruit, and the flourishing of transport and trade, in which the camel played an important role (pl. VIIa). They include some 20 different wild and domesticated animals, and show fishing and the slaughter of fowl as activities associated with daily life. For the early Aramaeans in Guzana, the landscape in this imagery clearly served as a *mnemotope*, as a domain in which their newly achieved urban identity was enhanced. The images of warlike conflict (pl. VIIb) interspersed among these “peaceful” images introduce an element into the visual discourse that is perhaps connected with the emergence of the Aramaean dynasty of Guzana. These concrete places of memory were combined with abstract historical and mythological locations in which gods, monsters, heroes, and ancestors acted as tutelary figures for the self-image of society (pl. VIIc). This may be considered the dynamic process of Aramaean art in Guzana, in which objects relating to the past were produced and traditions were invented.

In this relief series, the images relating to the past, in particular, feature motifs associated with a distinctively local Bronze Age tradition. Mittanian and Middle-Assyrian glyptic art from the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C. provided models for the representations on the orthostats, including two bull-men supporting the winged solar disk, winged griffins, winged lions, and other monsters, as well as caprids appearing next to a stylized palm tree.<sup>65</sup> This leads to two alternative conclusions regarding the development of early Aramaean art in Guzana:

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<sup>63</sup> Pucci 2008: 95f.

<sup>64</sup> Bonatz 2001a: 72–75.

<sup>65</sup> E.g., von Oppenheim 1955: pls. 19a, 86a, 89b, 91a, 95b, 99a.

either this art represents the continuation of an indigenous north Syrian–Hurrian tradition or the adaptation of a Middle-Assyrian influence that retained a direct cultural efficacy at the local level.<sup>66</sup>

By contrast, the much larger reliefs that measure up to one-and-a-half meters in height and are found on the orthostats on the northern façade and in the entrance to the Western Palace represent a further stylistic and iconographic development of the small orthostats on the southern side. Differences can be observed in the more even indentation of the relief backdrop, the sharp definition of the contours of figures in relation to the relief backdrop, and the even plane on which all the figures move.<sup>67</sup> The heterogeneous impression is also underscored by the balanced symmetry of the individual orthostat blocks. The sphinxes at the entrance to the palace are each flanked by a lion, and a hunting archer is depicted two orthostats away from these animals. In one case, the orthostat between the hunter and the lion bears an *en face* representation of the storm-god, in the other, the orthostat shows the emblem of kneeling bull-men and a human figure supporting the winged solar disk as a symbol of the sun-god. This religious accent, which is reinforced by the divine caryatids in the entrance to the building (see below), creates a dichotomy that resulted in the term “temple palace” being introduced to the research literature at an early stage. Nevertheless, despite all references to cultic activities,<sup>68</sup> the idea that the palace functioned as a temple can probably be excluded since the character of the interior rooms projects a sense of secular prestige. It seems more likely that the revived sculptural program on the Kapara building was based on the idea that the ruler residing there was legitimized by the protection and proximity of the gods.<sup>69</sup>

A prominent feature of this style of architectural sculpture is the three statues of gods that form caryatids supporting the roof beams of the porch. They stand upon animal bases, which were also used to elevate divine or royal statues in other regions. But in terms of their architectural function as the bases for anthropomorphic columns, they are without parallel. From an iconographic perspective, the animal bases provide at least some clue

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<sup>66</sup> This argument was put forward as early as Orthmann 1971: 470f. His reference to the evidence of Middle-Assyrian art in Tell Fekheriyeh, which is located only 2.5 km east of Tell Halaf, is given extra weight by the numerous finds of Middle-Assyrian and Mittanian cylinder seal impressions during recent excavations.

<sup>67</sup> See Orthmann 1971: 122f.

<sup>68</sup> An altar was found in front of each of the orthostats with divine figures or symbols. It was used either for offerings or to place a light (Pucci 2008: 107f).

<sup>69</sup> See Pucci 2008: 108f.

as to the identity of the gods they support. According to a local Hurrian-Syrian tradition, the central figure on a bull could be Teššub-Adad, while the figure to the right on a lion could be Šawuška-Ištar. The third figure could be Šarruma, the son of the storm-god, although this assumption is only supported by the Hittite tradition.<sup>70</sup> However, the iconographic idiosyncrasies of the represented figures and the lack of recognizably divine attributes in the case of the female figure make interpretation difficult. The caryatids, in particular, seem to represent the thematic and probably functional synthesis of different pictorial and architectural traditions that was a specific characteristic of the workshop of Guzana.

### 2.3 *Til Barsib and Hadattu*

The problems inherent in attempting to formulate a concept of “Aramean art” are clearly evident in the case of the sculptural works found in Til Barsib (now Tell Aḫmar) and Hadattu (now Arslan Tash). Both sites were located approximately 30 kilometers from each other in the tribal area of Bit Adini. Although they were settled by Aramaeans for a longer period and at times had Aramaean rulers,<sup>71</sup> as yet none of the monuments found there—relief orthostats in Til Barsib, portal figures and steles (see section 3.1.2) at both locations—have been described as Aramaean.

In the late 10th century B.C., the city of Til Barsib, referred to as Masuwari in Luwian inscriptions and located only 20 kilometers from Carchemish, probably came under the control of the Adini tribe that had long been settled in the area. However, previous scholarship has identified the short reign of Aḫuni (ca. 870–856 B.C.) as the first evidence of Aramaean hegemony in Til Barsib. Only recently has it been argued that the rulers who took power in an earlier phase, Hamiyata and his father Ariyahina, were also of Semitic-Aramean descent.<sup>72</sup> This would mean

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<sup>70</sup> Regarding this discussion, see Bonatz forthcoming a: 14f and Schwemer 2001: 616. According to Schwemer, the female divinity, a local Ištar figure, can be identified as Šala, the *paredra* of Adad. Novák’s suggestion that the male divinity on a lion is the god Ḫaldi, who was worshipped in western Zagros and in Urartu, remains hypothetical (Novák 2002: 157).

<sup>71</sup> On the history of Hadattu, see Lipiński 2000a: 170f; on the history of Til Barsib, see below.

<sup>72</sup> Dalley 2000: 80 and Bunnens 2009: 75f. As Bunnens argues here, the background to this assumption of power had more to do with conflicts between rival Semitic-Aramean groups than with conflicts between Aramaean and an ethnically Luwian segment of the population. Lipiński presents a somewhat different interpretation of historical events and the succession of rulers in Til Barsib (2000a: 183–187).

that all the monumental inscriptions and sculptural works dating from the time prior to the Assyrian conquest of Til Barsib in 856 B.C. would have to be attributed to an Aramaean dynasty, although the script used is hieroglyphic Luwian and the style and iconography of the sculptural works is clearly based on the Neo-Hittite visual art found in Carchemisch.<sup>73</sup> It thus appears that the writing and visual media of the new rulers in Til Barsib essentially emerged under the influence of the culture of Carchemish. In this context there is nothing to indicate a conscious demarcation in relation to the Hittite-Luwian heritage.

The fragments of orthostats from Til Barsib featuring representations of warriors were not found in situ.<sup>74</sup> After the Assyrian assumption of power under Shalmaneser III, they were probably moved to the new palace and could still be seen there in the period of Assyrian hegemony.<sup>75</sup> The Assyrians henceforth erected their own sculptural works in the city, which they renamed Kār-Šalmaneser. The most impressive works from this period include the monumental lion sculptures erected by the *turtānu* Šamši-ilu in the first half of the 8th century at the eastern gate of Tell Aḥmar. It is interesting to note that these sculptures are not in the style of the portal lions found in Assyrian palaces, such as those erected by Ninurta-bēl-ušur, the eunuch (*ša rēši*) of Šamši-ilu, at one of the gates of Arslan Tash. Rather, they are in the tradition of Syro-Hittite lion sculptures and are linked with local traditions predating the Assyrian assumption of power.<sup>76</sup>

How can such phenomena be interpreted against a background of intercultural relations and changing forms of rule? As governors, Šamši-ilu and Ninurta-bēl-ušur represented the Assyrian power in the subjugated Aramaean cities. But in the regions they administered they also acted as local potentates, which is expressed in their often complex relationship.<sup>77</sup> The purely Assyrian inscription that is clearly visible on the front side of the lions in Til Barsib/Kār-Šalmaneser represents the means by which Šamši-ilu expressed the political power and presence of Assyria. On the other hand, the Syro-Hittite or Neo-Hittite style of the sculptures must surely be interpreted as expressing a consensus with the still viable Aramaean élite, who had adapted this style over generations. By contrast,

<sup>73</sup> Orthmann 1971: 48.

<sup>74</sup> Orthmann 1971: Til Barsib A/2–3, 5–6.

<sup>75</sup> Bunnens 1994: 24f.

<sup>76</sup> Bunnens 2009: 79f figs. 7a (lion from Arslan Tash), 8a (lion from Til Barsib), with comparisons to portal lions from Nimrud (fig. 7b) and Havuzköy (fig. 8b).

<sup>77</sup> Bunnens 2009: 79.

on the lions found in Hadattu (Arslan Tash), Ninurta-bēl-ušur rendered his inscriptions in three languages—Assyrian, Aramaic, and Luwian—and positioned them on the backs of the figures, where they are harder to see. This safeguarding of the textual message—namely, the commemoration of Ninurta-bēl-ušur’s achievements as a builder—took into account the three potential and, in its author’s view, enduringly effective cultural components in this region.<sup>78</sup> By contrast, the Assyrianizing style of the lions in Arslan Tash served as a vivid expression of Assyrian hegemony within the context of an Aramaean city.

As is shown by this comparison of two locations that are just a day’s travel apart, different strategies of textual and visual hegemonic propaganda in the Aramaean sphere of northern Syria are located very close to one another in both temporal and spatial terms. They constitute an expression of a multicultural and multilingual society in which Aramaean components were able to assert themselves despite a loss of political power. However, the difficulty facing an archeological method that attempts to reconstruct history purely on the basis of material artwork remains. In the case of Til Barsib, it would be unable to recognize the Aramaean components at work without reference to additional, written sources.

#### 2.4 *Hamath*

The monumental buildings of the citadel of Hamath bear structural similarities to the citadels of Zincirli, Tell Halaf, and Tell Tayinat. These buildings are thus fundamentally linked to urban development in the Luwian and Aramaean city-states in northern Syria.<sup>79</sup> The walls of the central buildings in Hamath were also clad with stone orthostats, but in contrast to other sites, these orthostats had no reliefs—with the exception of a few geometric decorative elements on basalt orthostats not found in situ.<sup>80</sup> Figurative architectural sculpture only exists in the form of the lion orthostats flanking the building entrances. W. Orthmann distinguishes between the two stylistically older lions at the northeast and northwest corners of the entrance to building I and the younger lions that once stood at the corners of the main entrance to the same building and to building III.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>78</sup> See the extensive argument by Galter 2004b: 175f, 182–184.

<sup>79</sup> See Matthiae 2008 as well as M. Novák’s contribution in this volume.

<sup>80</sup> Fugman 1958: fig. 257.

<sup>81</sup> Orthmann 1971: 102f; Hama A/1–2 (“Late Hittite” I) and Hama A/3–4 and B/1–3 (“Late Hittite” II); on the context of the finds and additional illustrations, see Fugman 1958: 149–191 figs. 188, 189, 215.

Additional lions or fragments of lion sculptures attributable to this stylistic group were found in the secondary context in the area in front of building II.<sup>82</sup> Compared to the older lions, all of these pieces show a clear tendency toward an fully sculptured execution of the body and a natural design of the mane and whiskers—a development also observable, for example, in the lions in Zincirli (see section 2.1.2).

The buildings at which the lion orthostats once stood all belong to period E at Hamath. This is why even E. Fugmann assumed that the two stylistically older lions from building II were originally associated with a building from period F.<sup>83</sup> Period E at the citadel of Hamath dates approximately to the 9th and 8th century B.C. The last kings of the long-established Luwian-Anatolian dynasty of Hamath, Urhulina, and Uratami ruled in the early part of this period, before the Aramaeans assumed power under King Zakkur in the late 8th century B.C.<sup>84</sup> There were no radical architectural changes or acts of destruction at the citadel as a result of this change of rule. The arrival of Zakkur in Hamath seems only to be linked to the restoration of existing buildings.<sup>85</sup> Consequently, the lion orthostats, which unfortunately do not include any inscriptions that would allow absolute time classifications, cannot be assigned to a particular reign. Most probably, though, they were part of the earliest building plan, which was based on models from the preceding period F in the 10th and 11th centuries. Under the Aramaeans, the lion sculptures remained in the same publicly accessible space in the architectural ensemble of the citadel. There was no reason to remove them as a sign of the Aramaeans' assumption of power. This was consistent with developments in other places with a growing Aramaean presence: once the Aramaeans arrived, visual art did not take on any fundamentally new form, but adapted to the structures of existing traditions.

Hamath is the southernmost of the Aramaean cities where a significant number of monumental artworks have been excavated. Due to the lack of such works in Aramaean centers farther to the south, particularly in Damascus, it is impossible to assess the development of art there. The only indication that there were similar forms of monumental art in these

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<sup>82</sup> Orthmann 1971: 102f; Hama C 1–3 (“Late Hittite” II); Fugman 1958: 191–208 figs. 245, 256, 261.

<sup>83</sup> Fugman 1958: 145.

<sup>84</sup> Despite the rulers' Luwian and Hurrian names, Lipiński 2000a: 252f argues that it was an Anatolian dynasty.

<sup>85</sup> Sader 1987: 228.

areas comes from two chance finds, the basalt orthostat with a representation of a sphinx from the site of the large mosque of Damascus<sup>86</sup> and the well-preserved lion orthostat from Sheikh Sa'ad in the Hauran.<sup>87</sup> The lion orthostat can be seen as part of the series of Syro-Hittite lions from cities farther to the north (Hamath, Zincirli, Sakcagözü, Maraş)—though the high quality and three-dimensional execution of the lion's body and coat is particularly striking. The sphinx from Damascus has unmistakable Egyptianizing elements, attributable to the Phoenician influences that are otherwise primarily seen in ivories (see below).<sup>88</sup>

### 3. FREE-STANDING SCULPTURES

From a thematic and functional perspective, the free-standing sculptures can be divided into three main groups: (1) dedication statues and stelae for the gods, (2) stelae and statues of rulers, and (3) funerary monuments for royals and non-royals.

#### 3.1 *Statues and Stelae Dedicated to the Gods*

##### 3.1.1 *Statues*

Probably the best-known monument portraying an Aramaean deity is the colossal 2.85-meter statue of Hadad found in Gerçin, seven kilometers to the northeast of Sam'al. According to the West Semitic inscription that King Panamuwa I had carved into the statue in the period before 750 B.C. (KAI 214), the site served as a necropolis and ancestral memorial for the dynasty of Sam'al/Yādiya. The statue was dedicated to the storm-god Hadad, the highest deity of Sam'al, and provides important iconographic evidence of how the local inhabitants imagined this god's appearance. Unfortunately, this evidence is incomplete—the god's two forearms have been broken off and the attributes that he probably held in his hand have not survived. Still, we see striking differences to the older representation of the storm-god on an orthostat from the outer citadel gate in Zincirli.<sup>89</sup> Whereas the storm-god on this orthostat wears a short kilt and a high pointed cap from the Neo-Hittite tradition, the god Hadad is

<sup>86</sup> Orthmann 1975: fig. 419.

<sup>87</sup> Contenau 1924: 207f pl. LII.

<sup>88</sup> See also Sader 1987: 269.

<sup>89</sup> Orthmann 1971: Zincirli B/14.



clothed in a long undergarment and wears a round cap with flat horns as a sign of his divine nature. The design of the robe and the execution of the beard, in several rows of spiraling curls, can also be seen in the male figures in stylistic levels II–III in Zincirli and reveal an Assyrian influence in both cases.

The statue of Hadad not only underscores his central importance in the pantheon of Sam'al,<sup>90</sup> but also provides clear evidence of the link between the cult of the storm-god and that of the deceased ruler. In the commemorative inscription on the statue, Panamuwa requests communal offerings for himself and the storm-god, which emphasizes the ruler's divine status in the afterlife.<sup>91</sup> This conceptual link between the funerary repast and the provision of food for a deity has long been recognized and interpreted in the archaeological context of the statues from the so-called cult room in the lower town of Tell Halaf.<sup>92</sup> The cult room contained a double figure of a seated man and woman (pl. VIII) on a pedestal next to the statue of a god (pl. IX). In front of the two statues were an altar and a basalt slab for receiving libations. The offerings brought to the cult room were thus meant for both the statue of the god and the effigies of the apparently deceased royal (?) couple.<sup>93</sup> The statue of the deity (pl. IX), which holds a curved object in its hand, resembles the column figure on a bull at the entrance to the Western Palace at Tell Halaf; like this figure, it is probably a representation of the storm-god.<sup>94</sup> Consequently, there is an even closer link between the presentation of statues in the cult room of Tell Halaf and the design of the memorial to the dead in Gerçin. Since other fragments of monumental statues were found in Gerçin<sup>95</sup>—most likely statues of rulers—it can be assumed that joint offerings to the effigies of deceased rulers and the statue of the storm-god were also at the heart of the ritual acts performed there.

With the exception of the column figures at the entrance to the Western Palace at Tell Halaf, the statues from Gerçin and Tell Halaf are the only sculptures in the round of gods from Aramaean centers. The one-meter-tall

<sup>90</sup> Niehr 2004b: 306.

<sup>91</sup> Niehr 1994b: 59f, 72.

<sup>92</sup> Orthmann 1971: 378; Voos 1986: 158–160; Niehr 1994b: 66f; Bonatz 2000a: 152; on the context of the find: Müller 1950: 357–360, pls. 1, 2–74, 70, and recently Niehr 2010a: 128–132.

<sup>93</sup> On the monuments to the deceased, see section 3.3.

<sup>94</sup> Von Oppenheim 1955: 121 pl. 149 (here pl. IX) and Orthmann 1971: 242, 378.

<sup>95</sup> Orthmann 1971: 75f. The torso of a statue found in Tahtalı Pınar (see 3.2, below) probably also originated in Gerçin; cf. Orthmann 1971: 76, Tahtalı Pınar I; Niehr 1994b: 67.

statue of the storm-god from the cult room of Tell Halaf is notable among these pieces because it comes from an architectural context with unmistakably sacred connotations. Like this statue of stone, other statues of gods made of precious materials were doubtless among the furnishings of shrines and temples, but none has survived. Testifying to their existence are only a few inscriptions<sup>96</sup> and a relief of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III that shows statues of the gods being deported from the Philistine city of Gaza.<sup>97</sup> By contrast, in the case of the colossal sculpture of Hadad in Gerçin, there exist two parallel works from the Luwian regions in the northwest of Sam'al. One is the statue of Ba'al/Tarḥunzas from Karatepe, which bears a Phoenician inscription (KAI 26), and the other is a statue of the storm-god from Çineköy near Adana, which shows a hieroglyphic Luwian-Phoenician bilingual on its base.<sup>98</sup> Since both of these statues were found with a double-bull base, it must be assumed that the statue of Hadad from Gerçin once stood on a comparable base. Additional double-bull bases from Carchemish, Maraş, and Domuztepe (across from Karatepe) confirm that colossal statues of storm-gods were widespread.<sup>99</sup> Based solely on the fact that the statue from Gerçin was referred to as the Aramaean god Hadad, it must be accorded a special status among these works.

### 3.1.2 *Stelae*

The number of stelae with divine representations far exceeds the number of sculptural works in the round. However, it is difficult to interpret the function of these stelae from an architectural perspective because none were found in situ. The places where they once stood—temples, palaces, city gates, and even public spaces—remain hypothetical. The inscriptions indicate that the monuments were generally dedicated to a deity and often served to legitimize a ruler and give an account of his achievements. The stelae erected for the storm-god in his various regional and transregional forms stand out due to their numbers alone. His strong visual presence

<sup>96</sup> E.g., the mentioning of a cult image for the goddess Ištar in the temple of Hadattu (Galter 2004b: 180).

<sup>97</sup> Uehlinger 2002: fig. 5; for a critical review of the Assyrian sources on the deportation of gods, see *ibid.* 112–115.

<sup>98</sup> Çambel – Özyar 2003: 114f pls. 218–220 and Aro 2003: 288, 327. For a discussion of the bilingual on the statue from Çineköy, see Tekoğlu – Lemaire 2000.

<sup>99</sup> Summarized in Çambel – Özyar 2003: 138.

reflects his leading role in the panthea of northern Syria—a role he continued to play in the context of Aramaean religious policy.<sup>100</sup>

From the perspective of religious history and iconography, an interesting problem arises when the sculptural works depicting the storm-god in the Luwian-Hittite tradition were created in places heavily influenced by the Aramaeans. There are at least five stelae from Til Barsib that portray the storm-god with the traditional iconography of a smiting god with an axe and a trident-like thunderbolt, a short kilt, a short sword, a long pigtail with a curling point, a square beard, and a horned tiara (pl. X).<sup>101</sup> These stelae also show him under a winged disk and in least two cases (Tell Aḥmar 1 [= pl. X] and 6) he appears on a bull above a guilloche. This type of smiting storm-god under the winged disk, which has been found elsewhere in northern Syria, can be identified as “Celestial Tarḥunzas,” that is, as the “Storm-god of the Skies.”<sup>102</sup> Despite the transregional presence of the storm-god, he performed the function of a city-god in Til Barsib.<sup>103</sup> If it is true, as has recently been supposed (see section B.3), that the local ruling dynasty descended from Semitic-Aramaean tribes in the first half of the 9th century B.C., the stelae dating from this period would have to be seen as a reflection of the worship of the storm-god in a non-Luwian ruling family. While it is true that the inscriptions on the stelae mention the Luwian name of the storm-god together with his epithet (e.g., Celestial Tarḥunzas), it is also known that this manifestation of the deity, in particular, was associated with the Aramaean Ba‘alšamayin.<sup>104</sup> Just as there was complex religious identification on the linguistic level, the same identification could have occurred on the visual level. This is why—to emphasize the point once again—the style and iconography of sculptural

<sup>100</sup> Novák 2004b: 333; see also Hutter 1996 and Schwemer 2001: 612–626.

<sup>101</sup> Tell Aḥmar 1 (= pl. X), 2, 6; Aleppo 2, with a hieroglyphic Luwian inscription; Til Barsib B/3, with the image of the storm-god without an inscription. Illustrations in: Orthmann 1971: Til Barsib B/1, B/2, B/3; Hawkins 2000: Tell Aḥmar 1 pls. 99–100; Tell Aḥmar 2 pls. 91–92, Aleppo 2 pls. 97–98; Bunnens 2004: Tell Aḥmar 6 fig. 1A and Bunnens 2006: fig. 7 and 8 (drawing) for the same stele (Tell Aḥmar 6). Tell Aḥmar 4 also bore a relief showing the storm-god, but it was completely destroyed; cf. Hawkins 2000: 231 pls. 95–96. Hawkins argues that the stele “Borowski 3” cannot have come from Tell Aḥmar; cf. Hawkins 2000: 230, contra Bunnens 2004: 58.

<sup>102</sup> Bunnens 2004: 61f. See below for a discussion of the concrete symbolism of the winged disk on the stelae from Tell Aḥmar. This symbolism was apparently associated with the moon-god.

<sup>103</sup> Galter 2004b: 179f.

<sup>104</sup> Bunnens 2004: 61f.

works provide no conclusive evidence of the ethnic linguistic identity of the rulers who had them erected.<sup>105</sup>

A clear Assyrian influence can be seen in the stele from Arslan Tash (Hadattu) that depicts the storm-god striding on a bull, holding the trident-like thunderbolts characteristic of north Syrian iconography (pl. XI).<sup>106</sup> The Assyrian elements include his cylindrical hat crowned by a disk, his long, slit robe, and his powerfully defined leg muscles. The erection of this monument in the 8th century in an Aramaean city ruled by the Assyrians reflects a differentiation between local visual traditions and the traditions shaped by new rulers. In this work it is the figure of the storm-god who creates a thematic bridge spanning these different traditions: as Adad-Hadad, Tarḥunzas-Teššub, and Ba'al(-Šamayin), the storm-god managed to defend his position as the leading god in the Syro-Mesopotamian region in a process of continuous assimilation. But since different iconographic concepts were used to represent this deity in a rather small area,<sup>107</sup> we can conclude that the concepts resulted in part from chronological developments but were also determined by the cultural disposition of their commissioners and the availability of local workshops.

It must be assumed that sculptural concepts were frequently reinterpreted in the context of the culturally and politically heterogeneous development of Syrian society. In the case of individual works such as the stele from Tell Ašara (pl. XII), these reinterpretations can be linked to specific events in history. This stele is the only significant historical and archaeological monument dating to the Iron Age in Tell Ašara, a period in which the town was called Širqu and served as the residence of the Aramaean tribes of Laqe in the central Euphrates region.<sup>108</sup>

The stele, which bears reliefs on three sides and an Akkadian inscription, shows the storm-god facing to the right. He holds an axe in his raised right hand and with his left is grasping the throat of a serpent. This type of

<sup>105</sup> Dalley illustrated a similar problem of textual evidence, pointing out that the form of a person's name that is transmitted in writing cannot serve as a criterion for his or her affiliation with a linguistic group; cf. Dalley 2000: 80f.

<sup>106</sup> See also Thureau-Dangin et al. 1931b: pl. II.1, rendering in Börker-Klähn 1982: n. 250.

<sup>107</sup> Section 3.3 referred to the geographic proximity between Hadattu (Arslan Tash) and Tell Aḥmar (Til Barsib), both of which were located in the tribal area of Bit Adini. It must also be noted that an additional fragment of a stele with the storm-god comes from Arslan Tash. However, only its lower section with the bull and the storm-god's feet has survived; cf. Thureau-Dangin et al. 1931b: pl. II.2. This sculpture can be linked stylistically to the stelae from Tell Aḥmar; see also Galter 2004b: 179.

<sup>108</sup> Masetti-Rouault 2001: 89–133 fig. 9 (drawing), figs. 11–14. For the history of the territory of Širqu/Laqe, see Lipiński 2000a: 77–108.

smiting storm-god generally belongs to the iconographic tradition of the Syro-Hittite storm deities, but his slit robe, with its netlike structure, and the snake he is threatening to kill with his axe are details that allude to an extremely old motif in his mythology.<sup>109</sup> A much smaller male figure in fish garb stands in front of him, the so-called fish-*apkallu*, who recalls representations in Middle- and Neo-Assyrian glyptic art. A second male figure holds ears of wheat in his left hand as his only attribute. He appears to be just as tall as the storm-god, but does not wear a horned helmet. He has been interpreted as a ruler or a portrayal of the tutelary deity Dagan, who was worshipped in the central Euphrates region in the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C.<sup>110</sup>

The difficulties associated with interpreting the iconography of the Tell Ašara stele are compounded by the fact that the Akkadian inscription suggests that the portrayed figures be viewed as the Assyrian kings Adad-nirari and Tukulti-Ninurta.<sup>111</sup> Adad-nirari II (911–891 B.C.) was the first Neo-Assyrian ruler to demand tributes from Širqu and other cities in Laqe during his campaign in the central Euphrates region in 894 B.C. The figure of the storm-god may stand for this ruler, who, according to line 4 of the inscription, struck off the “bad horn” of the snake as a symbol of the subjected Aramaean tribes in Laqe.<sup>112</sup> But this interpretation only makes sense if the Assyrian king had been revered as a god after his death. There are a number of reasons why we can rule out that the person responsible for this deification was his son and successor Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 B.C.), who led a renewed campaign against Laqe in 885/884 B.C. It is

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<sup>109</sup> On the basis of the Eblaitic texts written in the 3rd millennium B.C., Masetti-Rouault 2009: 144f interprets the storm-god’s netlike robe as a symbol of the hail that this deity uses like a net to overcome the enemy snake. There are only a few Iron Age representations that take the mythological battle between the storm-god and the snake as their central theme. They include the Neo-Hittite relief with the rolling snake on the orthostat from the Lions’ Gate in Malatya (Orthmann 1971: Malatya A/8) and the fragment of a Neo-Assyrian relief from Dūr-Katlimmu/Tell Šēḫ-Ḥamad (Kühne 2009: 52f fig. 11). Apart from its different style, the latter fragment is similar to the combat scene on the Širqu stele. Although this motif is rare, its recurrence at three sites with culturally diverse influences illustrates the existence of a shared pool of mythological and iconographic traditions, cf. Masetti-Rouault 2009: 146.

<sup>110</sup> See also the extensive treatment in Masetti-Rouault 2001: 100–103, including a discussion of the various interpretations. Nevertheless, Otto’s new analysis of Dagan’s iconography (Otto forthcoming) does not address the stele from Tell Ašara. The argument that it is a ruler is strengthened by the historical parallels to Syro-Hittite representations of rulers in similar attire, sometimes holding a bundle of grain (e.g., Bonatz 2000a: C2, C7).

<sup>111</sup> A new translation of the inscription can be found in Tournay 1997 and a slightly different version in Masetti-Rouault 2001: 104.

<sup>112</sup> Masetti-Rouault 2001: 102f.

also uncertain whether Tukulti-Ninurta II commissioned the stele and its inscription.<sup>113</sup> In an effort to shed light on the supposed irregularities and discrepancies between the text and visual messages, M.-G. Masetti-Rouault proposes that the stele be regarded as a product of the local urban élite in Širqu and the inscription as a subsequent addition by the same élite, who not only wanted to protect themselves from harm at the hands of the Assyrians, but, more importantly, also hoped to win powerful partners in their struggle against neighboring tribes.<sup>114</sup> If their aim was really to have the Assyrians view the text and its visual message in relation to themselves, the stele would have to be seen as an unusual example of the intellectual and political shrewdness of Širqu's inhabitants.<sup>115</sup>

Regional variations can be seen in the few other stelae with representations of an anthropomorphic god that were discovered by chance at different locations in Syria.<sup>116</sup> They also show the great adaptability of Aramaean religious art.

On the stele from Tell Breġ near Aleppo, which was dedicated by King Bar-Hadad of Aram in the 9th century B.C. (KAI 201), elements of different iconographic and stylistic traditions coalesce in the image of the god Melqart.<sup>117</sup> The fenestrated axe in his left hand and the symbol in his right—interpreted as an *ankh* and positioned directly above a lotus symbol—reflect the Phoenician milieu in which Melqart, the Ba'al of Tyre, was originally at home. But the physical appearance of the god, who holds his weapon on his shoulder and wears a thigh-length garment, corresponds to a mode of representation that was typical of gods in the Syro-Anatolian region beginning in the Late Bronze Age.

The so-called stele of Amrit, which was in fact found on the banks of the Nahr el-Abracheh and is believed to have been erected in the region of Simyra (Tell Kazel), the capital of the kingdom of Amurru, shows a smiting god wearing a short kilt and an Egyptian crown with an attached *uraeus*.<sup>118</sup> The god holds a mace and a small lion and is shown striding over a larger lion in the mountains. As a whole, the iconography seems

<sup>113</sup> Masetti-Rouault 2001: 128.

<sup>114</sup> Masetti-Rouault 2001: 105–110. As is well known, even in the Aramaean dynasty of Sam'al, loyalty to the Assyrians was a means to maintain Aramaean autonomy and gain greater power in the conflicts with local rivals (see section 2.1, above).

<sup>115</sup> Masetti-Rouault 2009: 144.

<sup>116</sup> What follows is basically consistent with my explanations in the IDD dictionary (Bonatz forthcoming a: 17f).

<sup>117</sup> Orthmann 1975: 485 fig. 420 and Bonnet 1988: 132–137 fig. 6.

<sup>118</sup> Yon – Caubet 1993: 58f n. 17; Cecchini 1997: 83–98 fig. 1; Gubel 2000: 186–188 fig. 3.

to suggest a rendering of the storm-god in the Late Bronze Age tradition of the smiting Ba'al Šaphon. However, the dedication inscription on this monument addresses, not the storm-god, but the healing god Šadrafa, a Syro-Phoenician deity of the Persian period. If this inscription was a later addition,<sup>119</sup> we can assume that the stele was erected in the 9th century B.C., appropriated at some later date, and still used in the 5th century B.C.

A second monument from the territory of Amurru is the stele from Qadbun, a sanctuary in the hinterland of Tartous in the Alawi Mountains.<sup>120</sup> It probably shows the god Ba'al being worshipped in one of his mountain shrines (pl. XIII).<sup>121</sup> He strides over a lion with a spear in his left hand and a figure-eight shield in his right. As on the Amrit stele, the Egyptianizing tendency of this representation can be seen in the god's head covering, a kind of *atef* crown with a horn in front and a long band whose curved end hangs down from the top. These elements have much in common with the artistic vernacular of Late Bronze Ugarit and to some extent appear anachronistic in an Iron Age monument. They make it likely that the monument originated no later than the 10th century B.C.<sup>122</sup>

The last three examples demonstrate that, despite different regional characteristics and syncretic forms, almost all of the surviving stelae with representations of an anthropomorphic deity center on the storm-god.<sup>123</sup> This god's prominence in the images and inscriptions can be explained by the protective and legitimizing function he apparently performed for the monarchy. The cult of the storm-god of Aleppo, which emerged in the 2nd millennium B.C., probably exerted a special influence on the transformation of this god into a divinity of transregional political significance.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Gubel 2000: 187.

<sup>120</sup> Concerning the site of Qadbun, see Bounni 1997.

<sup>121</sup> Abou-Assaf 1992 and Bounni 1992.

<sup>122</sup> Abou-Assaf 1992: 252; Gubel 2000: 186, contrary to Bounni 1992: 145 (late 9th or early 8th centuries B.C.).

<sup>123</sup> The goddess Ištar is portrayed on a stele from Til Barsib (Börker-Klähn 1982: n. 252; Green – Hausleiter 2001: 150–160 fig. 8). Although this stele was probably produced locally, the iconography of the goddess as a warrior and astral deity surrounded by a wreath of stars and standing on a lion is clearly Neo-Assyrian. According to the inscription by the high-ranking Assyrian official Aššur-dur-pania, the stele was consecrated to Ištar of Arbela. According to Galter (2004b: 181), it therefore demonstrates that the cult of Ištar in Bit Adini had been imported from Assyria. A temple of Ištar was located in the city of Hadattu. It was built under the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III and contained a cult image of the goddess that is mentioned in written sources (Galter 2004b: 180).

<sup>124</sup> Luwian and Aramaic texts testify to the worship of the "storm-god of Aleppo" (Hutter 1996: 118). The city of Aleppo was ruled by the Luwian dynasty until the 9th century, and it was not until the 8th century that it was ultimately integrated into the territory of

The storm-god of Aleppo figures as the leading Aramaean deity in the official Aramaic inscriptions from the 9th and 8th centuries B.C., in which he combines elements of fertility, military power, and justice.<sup>125</sup>

Apart from the storm-god, the only significant divine figure on stelae in the Syro-Aramaean region is the moon-god. But in contrast to the anthropomorphic depictions of the storm-god, those of the moon-god are predominantly aniconic. The stele from Til Barsib with its Assyrianizing elements is the only example of an image of an anthropomorphic moon-god on the roof of a temple (pl. XIV).<sup>126</sup> The structure is flanked by towering standards with a crescent moon on top and two attached tassels. These crescent moon standards are a distinctive symbol of the moon-god and serve as a central visual motif on numerous stelae from Harran and areas farther to the west.<sup>127</sup> In this context, they clearly represent the “moon-god of Harran,” whose cult was adopted by the Aramaeans in the 1st millennium B.C.<sup>128</sup> Since this cult also flourished under the Assyrians, it is no surprise that the anthropomorphic moon-god and his symbol appear together on the above-mentioned stele from Til Barsib, testifying to both an Assyrian and Aramaean religious ideology. The Assyrians’ advanced contract culture encouraged the worship of the moon-god of Harran, since he was seen as the guarantor of the contracts that the Assyrians entered into with the Aramaean states. It has even been suggested that the two tassels on the moon crescent standard represent two parties involved in concluding a contract.<sup>129</sup>

In many cases, the moon- and storm-gods were also closely associated in Luwian and Aramaean inscriptions. Their close relationship is reflected in two visual concepts that apparently resulted from the interplay between the divinities. The first concept pertains to the symbol above the image of the storm-god on the stelae from Til Barsib, which upon closer inspection is recognizable as a combination of a crescent moon and a winged lunar

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the Aramaean state of Bit Agusi; cf. Sader 1987: 148 and Lipiński 2000a: 203. The question of Aramaean influence therefore has no relevance to the sculptural works that were unearthed in the temple of the storm-god on the citadel and that date earlier than the 9th century.

<sup>125</sup> Schwemer 2001: 612–625; see also the commentary on the statue from Tell Fekheriye in section 2.2 of this overview.

<sup>126</sup> Green – Hausleiter 2001: 157 fig. 10 (= pl. XIV).

<sup>127</sup> Kohlmeyer 1992 and Keel 1994: 138–144 figs. 1–8. Other works of monumental art, including the orthostats from Zincirli, show the crescent standard above Bar-Rakkab sitting on his throne (Orthmann 1971: Zincirli F/1). It is also a motif in glyptic art (see section 4.1).

<sup>128</sup> Theuer 2000: 373–376, 387–390.

<sup>129</sup> Staubli 2003: 65 and Galter 2004b: 177f.



disk.<sup>130</sup> This is clearly the symbol of the moon-god (or the lunar cycle in its two phases), which the stelae set in relation to the storm-god.<sup>131</sup> The other concept is based on the bull as the animal symbolizing both the storm- and moon-gods.<sup>132</sup> The moon-god was associated with the bull as early as the temple cult in Harran.<sup>133</sup> In the visual arts, we encounter this link on a number of stelae from the Hauran in southern Syria, Palestine, and the region near Harran. Monuments such as the famous stelae from Betsaida in the Golan Heights show an image of a standard with anthropomorphic features and a bull's head.<sup>134</sup> The bull's oversized horns resemble a crescent moon, and the gods on these stelae represent variations of the moon-god, although a more or less deliberate merging of the moon- and storm-gods seems to be intended as well.<sup>135</sup>

The combinations of the crescent moon and other astral symbols common in Iron Age glyptic art in Syria (see section 4.1, below) have otherwise only been seen on a stele from the Aramaean city of Tell Afis that shows a star above the crescent moon. It has been suggested that this constellation also symbolizes the storm-god.<sup>136</sup>

### 3.2 *Statues and Stelae of Rulers*

As regards the statues and stelae of rulers, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between monuments that were commissioned during a ruler's life and those that were erected in a funerary context after his death. There was frequently a fluid transition between prestigious images of rulers and those intended to commemorate ancestors or the dead. This is illustrated by the context of many representations of rulers: as "images of the past," they remained permanently engraved in social memory as part of either the monumental relief programs (see above, 2.1) or the sculptural design of public places (see the following section). Inscriptions like the one on the Kulamuwa orthostat from Sam'al (see above, 2.1) also underscore the commemorative character of many royal images. And, finally, Panamuwa's statue of Hadad (see 3.1) teaches us that the commissioning

<sup>130</sup> Green – Hausleiter 2001: 154f figs. 1–5; see the explanations above regarding the figure of the storm-god on these stelae.

<sup>131</sup> See also Theuer 2000: 349 and Novák 2001: 438f.

<sup>132</sup> For an extensive discussion, see Ornan 2001.

<sup>133</sup> Novák 2001: 447–450 and Ornan 2001: 19–26.

<sup>134</sup> Bennett – Keel 1998: 34–40 figs. 1c–e, 11–13.

<sup>135</sup> Staubli 2003: 69.

<sup>136</sup> Mazzoni 1998b: 14 pl. 1.

of a statue—even if, as here, it is dedicated to a god—must be explicitly understood as an act in the here and now to ensure the commemoration and continued existence of a ruler in the afterlife.

### 3.2.1 *Statues*

One of the most significant sculptural works from this group is the colossal 2.50-meter statue of a ruler that was found at the southeast wall of building J at the citadel in Zincirli (pl. XV).<sup>137</sup> The figure has crown-shaped hair and wears a long robe girded at the waist by a wide, tasseled belt.<sup>138</sup> A sword is stuck in his belt and it is evident that he once held a long staff in his (now broken off) right hand. This ruler was probably an early representative of the Aramaean dynasty in Sam'al, but it is impossible to identify him historically since the sculptural work has no inscription. To judge by its stylistic elements, it was probably erected in the late 10th or early 9th century B.C.<sup>139</sup> It is unclear whether the statue depicts a living or a deceased ruler, but there is much to support the view that it was intentionally erected to honor a royal ancestor.

The column-like design of the statue, whose central vertical axis is stressed by the belt tassel, strengthens the work's colossal impression. A 75-centimeter base with lions on both sides and a male figure in front "elevates" the monument in both a physical and symbolic sense. There are clear parallels to the colossal statues of gods that are mounted on double-bull bases (see 3.1, above), and they point to the supernatural, timeless, and even divine character of this royal statue from Sam'al.<sup>140</sup> Due to these parallels, it seems even more likely that the statue was deliberately designed as the effigy of an ancestor. Like the storm-god, this ancestor was accorded a place in the dynastic cult.<sup>141</sup> The cup marks that were carved into the lions' and male figure's heads to receive offerings suggest that ritual acts were performed in the statue's presence.

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<sup>137</sup> Bonatz 2000a: A 6; concerning the context of the find, see von Luschan 1911: 289 pls. 49–50.

<sup>138</sup> The long belt tassel is found in the representation of a ruler on an orthostat at the outer citadel gate (Orthmann 1971: Zincirli B/5), but this does not make it an exclusive feature of Aramaean rulers in Sam'al. The statue of the Luwian ruler Halparuntiyas of Gurgum from Maraş (Maraş 4) has the same type of tassel (Bonatz 2000a: A2).

<sup>139</sup> In terms of style, Orthmann groups the statue with the artworks in stylistic group "Zincirli II," which date to the second half of the 10th century B.C. (Orthmann 1971: 69).

<sup>140</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 25f.

<sup>141</sup> Niehr 1994b: 67 and id. 2004b: 313.

This cult was practiced in public for a long period of time, at least in the inner area of the citadel of Sam'al. The same is true of the commemoration of dynastic ancestors. These practices are clearly reflected in the archaeological finds. The statue stood for more than two centuries at its original site, though the immediate surroundings constantly changed due to the construction activities of subsequent rulers. Building J was constructed behind the statue in the late 9th century and the work remained visible and freely accessible in front of its southeastern wall until the building was destroyed around 876–670 B.C. At that time the statue was toppled from its base and apparently desecrated deliberately (as suggested by the damage to the eyes, nose, and royal staff). Finally, it was more or less buried next to its base.<sup>142</sup>

This eventful history makes the statue from the citadel in Sam'al a highly informative source of information about the commemoration of rulers in an Aramaean dynasty, but it is evidently not the only such work. In Carchemish, for example, fragments of a nearly identical colossus were found with matching double-lion base.<sup>143</sup> The continuation of this tradition in Sam'al has been confirmed by the discovery, in nearby Tahtalı Pınar, of the torso of an additional larger-than-life statue of a ruler. In the Aramaic inscription, King Bar-Rakkab (ca. 733/732–713/711 B.C.) affirms that he erected the statue for his deceased father Panamuwa II.<sup>144</sup> This is unequivocal written proof of the monumental commemoration of a deceased ruler in the form of a statue.

There is striking iconographic similarity between the above-discussed statue from the citadel in Sam'al and the nearly contemporaneous statue of a ruler from 'Ain al-Arab, near Arslan Tash, on the Syrian-Turkish border (pl. XVI).<sup>145</sup> If these two sculptural works produce different effects, it is because of their different sizes—the statue from 'Ain al-Arab is just 1.77 meters tall—and also because this second statue lacks a base. Nevertheless, the royal attributes—the staff, sword, tasseled belt, and crown-like hair—are identical. A feature unique to the statue from 'Ain al-Arab is the simple band with a crescent-shaped pendant that it wears around its

<sup>142</sup> For an extensive reconstruction of these events, see Gilibert 2011: 114f; for their interpretation, Bonatz 2000a: 154, 165 and Voos 1986: 29.

<sup>143</sup> Bonatz 2000a: A 7. See also the 3.18-meter statue of a ruler from the Lions' Gate in Malatya (Bonatz 2000a: A 13).

<sup>144</sup> KAI 215. For a discussion of the statue and an interpretation of the inscription, see Bonatz 2000a: 161.

<sup>145</sup> Bonatz 2000: 24f A1.

neck. Due to the site's location on the former territory of Bit Adini, it is likely that the statue shows a ruler of this Aramaean state.

The statue from Tell Fekheriye, which Haddayis'i, the Aramaean king of Guzana, dedicated to the storm-god Hadad, differs in important ways from the above-mentioned royal statues. A provincial Assyrian work from the late 9th century B.C., it shows a local ruler with his hands folded in front of his breast in the style of Assyrian royal statues.<sup>146</sup> But it is only in the Aramaic version of the statue's bilingual that Haddayis'i refers to himself as king (*mlk*). In the Akkadian version, he has the title of an Assyrian "governor" (*šaknu*).<sup>147</sup> The statue and its inscription reveal a dual identity: on the one hand, Haddayis'i presents himself as an Aramaean and the legitimate successor to the royal family of Guzana;<sup>148</sup> on the other, he identifies himself as a servant of the Assyrian power in Guzana. Seen in this context, the statue can be considered an avowal of the cultural symbiosis with Assyrian forms of representation.<sup>149</sup> But it also reveals a deliberate political strategy. The Assyrian appearance of the statue seems intended to protect and legitimize its commissioner in his role as a local king. Without the accompanying inscription, the question would probably never arise as to whether its commissioner had an Aramaean identity. Comparable statues without inscriptions—like the statue of the "governor" of Til Barsib<sup>150</sup>—can also be seen as possible examples of the roles played by local rulers under Assyrian control. Here, the appropriation of a foreign style is an effective method for transforming, not the identity, but the status of its commissioner.

### 3.2.2 *Stelae*

As the limited number of stelae with representations of rulers show, the works essentially have the same characteristics as the statues. Although the male figures look to the side and are most often—though not always—shown in profile, they are intended to be viewed from the front. In other

<sup>146</sup> Abou-Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982: 9f pl. I. For comparison purposes, see the statue of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.); cf. Orthmann 1975: fig. 3.

<sup>147</sup> On the inscription, see Abou-Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982: 61–85 and Sauer 1996: 125f.

<sup>148</sup> On the Aramaean identity of Haddayis'i, "son of Šamaš-nūri, the king of Guzana," see Abou-Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982: 103–113 and Sauer 1996: 127.

<sup>149</sup> See also Kühne 2009: 48.

<sup>150</sup> Roobaert 1996: fig. 2. The statue dates to the 8th century B.C. and the period of Assyrian rule over Til Barsib. The fact that the figure is beardless and thus identifiable as a eunuch is not an argument against the high status of the portrayed person, who is probably one of the "governors" in Til Barsib; see also Roobaert 1996: 86.

words, as in the case of the statues, the figures face the viewer with outstretched forearms and the staff symbolizing royalty.<sup>151</sup> On one stele of this type from Maraş, which bears a hieroglyphic Luwian inscription, there is a strong resemblance to the representation of a ruler on a stele with no inscription from Tell Aḥmar (Til Barsib).<sup>152</sup> In the case of these two works, the phenotypic resemblances also span large geographic areas.

Despite its rudimentary execution, the stele (or orthostat?) from Tell es-Salihiye near Damascus, which is much farther to the south, differs only slightly from this type of representation.<sup>153</sup> It portrays a bearded figure holding a long staff in his outstretched left hand (though only the shaft is clearly visible). His right fist is clenched around a disproportionately large, wilted, clover-like blossom at chest height. Flowers often appear as royal symbols in the images on orthostats and stelae in Sam'al.<sup>154</sup> Depending on whether they are drawn vertically or portrayed as wilted blossoms, they signify a flourishing reign or have sepulchral connotations.<sup>155</sup> Galling asserted that this stele from Tell es-Salihiye shows a strong Aramaean influence, but he assumed it was a divine representation. His view is relativized by the other possible comparisons discussed here.<sup>156</sup> The image generally reflects the conventions governing the representation of rulers throughout the Syro-Hittite region in the early 1st millennium B.C.

### 3.3 *Funerary Monuments*

The widespread diffusion of funerary monuments across the territories of Gurgum, Kummuh, Melid, Que, Sam'al, Carchemish, Bit Adini, Bit Agusi, and Bit Baḥiani attests to the existence of another coherent group of monumental sculptures on Luwian and Aramaean territories between the 10th and 8th centuries B.C.<sup>157</sup> They fit into the tradition of the royal Syro-Anatolian death and ancestor cult, which was accompanied by the erection of ancestral images in the 2nd millennium B.C. However, these monuments must be seen as a new expression of personality since they

<sup>151</sup> See also Bonatz 2000a: 32.

<sup>152</sup> See also Bonatz 2000a: C1 and C2.

<sup>153</sup> Contenau 1924: 210f pl. LIII; Galling 1953: 183–185; Börker-Klähn 1982: 225 n. 249 (drawing).

<sup>154</sup> Orthmann 1971: 292. See, in particular, the Kulamuwa stele (Zincirli K/1), the orthostats of Bar-Rakkab (Zincirli F/1a, K/1, K/11), and the stelae Zincirli J/2 and K/2. Concerning the latter, see also section 3.3.

<sup>155</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 100–102.

<sup>156</sup> Galling 1953: 185.

<sup>157</sup> For a comprehensive study of these monuments, see Bonatz 2000a.

were the first to commemorate the names and images of non-royals as well. As such, they are the most clearly visible and archaeologically traceable evidence of subjects who acted outside the world of the royal élite. The monuments were also the means by which these subjects became inscribed in social memory.<sup>158</sup>

In brief, we can describe the main characteristics of the funerary stelae as follows: The male and female dead are presented either alone or in pairs (in the latter case, they are most often husband and wife). The visual focus is on the table and emphasizes the food and drink near the cup in the seated figure's hand (e.g., pls. XVII, XIX). This type of scene points to an essential memorial act: providing food for the dead. On the stelae, the attributes that the dead hold in their hands often symbolize the significance of the repast as renewal. The ear of corn and the grapes allude to the generative power of bread, beer, and wine, which is confirmed by their numerous citations in offering lists. The distaff and spindle carried by women might be symbols of constant rotation in the sense of regular regeneration, but they are also the personal attributes of the women. Some of the objects that appear in the scenes or that are held by the figures may also have been intended to communicate the status or occupation of those depicted, such as writing implements, balances, musical instruments, spindles, distaffs, mirrors, horses, falcons, staffs, and folded cloths.

The funeral service was performed by the members of the deceased person's family, mainly the son or legal heir of the *pater familias*. Several stelae depict this figure standing in front of the table and waving a fan—and thus attending to the offerings (e.g., pl. XVII). It may be argued that this figure can be firmly identified as a descendant or even the heir of the deceased. This interpretation is confirmed by other scenes that clearly depict a family group involved in the ritual. The iconography and the inscriptions of the funerary monuments thus emphasize the immediate family's integrity and continuity—whether by indicating the relationship of the person who had the monument erected to the deceased or by showing the heir embracing his or her mother or serving the deceased as a fan bearer.

In studies of "Aramaean art" the question inevitably arises as to whether there are special characteristics distinguishing the funerary monuments in the Aramaean territories from those in the Luwian territories.

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<sup>158</sup> See Bonatz 2000b.

The concept of the funerary repast is also embodied in the two monumental grave statues that were found buried under the terrace of the Western Palace in Guzana.<sup>159</sup> Both of these statues depict a woman sitting with a cup in her right hand and presenting her flattened lap like a table in order to receive mortuary provisions (pl. XVIII).<sup>160</sup> The statue of a seated couple found next to the image of the storm-god (see above, section 3.1.1) in the cult room in the town of Guzana was apparently also designated to receive regular offerings.<sup>161</sup> There are unmistakable parallels to the ancestral cult statues created in the Middle Bronze Age in northern Syria. Nevertheless, the special role of women, which is demonstrated by the seated statues discovered in Guzana, could signal a change in social consciousness, the causes of which might lie in the Aramaeans' nomadic legacy.

A stele found at the southwest corner of *hilani* I in Sam'al also focuses on a woman, probably a member of the royal family.<sup>162</sup> A young beardless male waves a fan over the table and is apparently responsible for preparing her offerings. A winged disk above the table and an arch-shaped frame bordering the scene may indicate some sort of sacred architectural setting for the ritual, as exemplified by the two aforementioned female statues in Guzana. Each of these statues was placed in a small mortuary chapel, but the find spot of the stele next to *hilani* I in Sam'al suggests that it was erected over a grave in the public area of the citadel.<sup>163</sup>

The Kuttamuwa stele (pl. XX), found during the renewed excavations in Zincirli in 2008, is distinct from this other monument since it was discovered in a small room of a building situated in the lower town of Sam'al.<sup>164</sup> The room is thought to have served as a mortuary chapel with the stele as the focus of the mortuary ritual but not connected to a grave.<sup>165</sup> The fact that the stele was not erected at the citadel but in the lower town of Sam'al is important for understanding elite spaces in an Aramaean city. The owner of the stele, Kuttamuwa, clearly identifies with the elite of

<sup>159</sup> On the context and the link between the statues and cremation burials, see the recent work by Niehr: Niehr 2006: 123–128 figs. 5–6.

<sup>160</sup> Von Oppenheim 1955: 7f pls. 1–9 and Bonatz 2000a: 28f, 154f B4 and B5.

<sup>161</sup> Von Oppenheim 1955: 28f pls. 146–149 and Bonatz 2000a: 29, 152 B9.

<sup>162</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 39 C46.

<sup>163</sup> Koldewey 1898: 140 pls. 19–22 and Niehr 2006: 116. There is no indication that a chamber-like structure existed to host the stele but a chest grave was discovered very close to it.

<sup>164</sup> For a discussion of the archaeological context and the first comprehensive interpretation of the stele, see Struble – Herrmann 2009.

<sup>165</sup> Struble – Herrmann 2009: 37–39.

Sam'al since the image showing him seated in front of the feasting table is strikingly similar in terms of both its relative proportions and the arm and hand gestures to the orthostat reliefs from *hilani* IV ("Northern Hall") with representations of King Bar-Rakkab (see 2.1.1). Like the king and the other members of the royal court, Kuttamuwa wears a cap with a pointed tip and a long tunic with a fringed wrap. From the Aramaic inscription on Kuttamuwa's stele, we learn that he was the "servant of Panamuwa" and thus lived during the reign of Panamuwa II (ca. 743–733/732 B.C.), who was Bar-Rakkab's father. Kuttamuwa's visual self-representation is thus consistent with the royal service mentioned in the stele's inscription. The cult of the deceased Kuttamuwa, however, displaces him from the official sphere of the royal court at the citadel. Instead, the cult is set in the domestic sphere of the lower town, where we can speculate that it was firmly connected to the living world of the family clan.

The inscription on the Kuttamuwa stele, which can be not discussed in detail here, is of great importance since it provides explicit information on the rituals that were performed in the stele's vicinity, including information on the nature and the quantity of the offerings, as well as their recipients, practitioners, timing, and source.<sup>166</sup> The inscription is key to understanding the ontological meaning of the funerary stela. Line 5 of the inscription reads, "... a ram for my 'soul' that [will be] in this stele," and lines 10–11 continue: "He is also to perform the slaughter in (proximity to) my 'soul.'" These lines provide a clear indication that the mind or the soul (*nbš*) of the deceased was thought to take up residence in the stele, transforming it into an object to which offerings could be brought.<sup>167</sup> These lines help us see that the representation of a funerary repast had an appellative character and that the provision of food for the dead was a ritual act performed in real life before the images. This was also the case with the stele of the priest Si'gabbar, found in Neirab (near Aleppo), which also portrays a funerary meal (pl. XVII).<sup>168</sup> An important element in the inscription on the stele is the phrase calling for protection of the deceased priest's monument and grave (KAI 226). It does not contain a request for food for the deceased, since this request is implied by the complementary function of the image (*šlm*) as the seat of the dead man's

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<sup>166</sup> For a translation and commentary, see Pardee 2009a and Niehr's chapter on religion in this volume.

<sup>167</sup> See also Niehr 2010b: 54.

<sup>168</sup> Bonatz 2000a: C35.



“soul,” as well as by the visual representation of food.<sup>169</sup> The inscription on the stele of Sin-zera-ibni, the second funerary monument to a priest from Neirab (pl. XIX), also invokes the protection of the deceased man’s image and last resting place—in this case a sarcophagus (KAI 225). But the deceased priest is shown, not seated at a repast, but standing with his hand upraised in greeting or blessing.<sup>170</sup> The stele can thus be placed in the category of funerary monuments that depict the dead standing alone, often with the attributes of their profession.<sup>171</sup>

Sin-zera-ibni and Si’gabbar refer to themselves as priests of the god Šahr, who was identical with the moon-god Sin of Harran. Like the stele of Kut-tamuwa in Sam’al, their stelae and inscriptions provide clear testimony of the preservation of their names. Furthermore, from an art historical and iconographic perspective, there is no reason to view these monuments as different from the other funerary monuments dating to the Iron Age in Syria. Rather, they are a vivid expression of the cultural symbiosis in the Aramaean and Luwian city-states.<sup>172</sup> In both areas the funerary monuments served to endorse a life that was secured by family, progeny, and religion. The efforts undertaken to enable the dead a continued existence in the afterlife are only one of the many important aspects of the shared process of collectivization and identity formation in the world of the Aramaean and Luwian states.

#### 4. SEALS AND MINOR ARTS

##### 4.1 *Seals*

Attempts to define Aramaean glyptic art are problematic for several reasons. First of all, very few seals and seal impressions have been found in an archaeological context. The few surviving cylinder seals were clearly fashioned in a Neo-Assyrian style,<sup>173</sup> as can be seen by the finds from Tell Halaf. The stamp seals that are typical of the Iron Age in Syria must be categorized as local products, but like the cylinder seals, they rarely come

<sup>169</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 150 and most recently Niehr 2010b.

<sup>170</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 34 C11, see also Niehr 2010b: 51f.

<sup>171</sup> Bonatz 2000a: 32–34, *Stelenbildtyp 1*, C1–C11; in this context Niehr sees Sin-zera-ibni’s upraised hand as a gesture with which the priest blesses those who guard his grave (Niehr 2010b: 51f).

<sup>172</sup> See also Bonatz 2000a: 172.

<sup>173</sup> Von Oppenheim 1962: pls. 23.9–10, 24.11–22, 25.23–42, 26.37–53; see also the Neo-Assyrian cylindrical seal from Zincirli (von Luschan 1943: pl. 39m–n).

from regular excavations.<sup>174</sup> As a result, the initial situation is extremely unfavorable for any attempt to identify Aramaean seal-cutting workshops. B. Buchanan and P. R. S. Moorey are the only scholars who have endeavored to systematically classify Syro-Palestinian stamp seals. They conclude that, based solely on the seals' iconography and form, it is impossible to distinguish between Aramaean and Neo-Hittite (Luwian) groups.<sup>175</sup>

Another approach to defining Aramaean glyptic art is based on examining the motifs on inscribed seals. In their work *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, N. Avigad and B. Sass classify 106 seals as Aramaic using name inscriptions as the main criterion.<sup>176</sup> A major difficulty is that a person's name does not necessarily identify his or her ethnic or cultural identity (as is demonstrated by the several Aramaean rulers of Sam'al who had Luwian names). Since only a limited number of seals with Aramaic name inscriptions come from excavations in Aramaean cities,<sup>177</sup> categorizations remain hypothetical. A prominent feature of these seals is the preponderance of motifs in the style of the Assyrian-Babylonian glyptic art of the late 9th and 8th centuries B.C. This feature distinguishes them from Phoenician seals and generally also from the seals in Hebrew glyptic art.<sup>178</sup> Representations of worshippers in front of anthropomorphic gods and divine symbols are especially popular.<sup>179</sup> The god most frequently shown in this context is the anthropomorphic moon-god in a crescent moon,<sup>180</sup> while the storm-god is seldom seen in glyptic art.<sup>181</sup> Generally speaking, the moon-god's popularity on seals reflects his importance in the region of northern Syria—and is consistent with the fact that, under Assyrian rule, many members of the Aramaean administrative élite used the moon-god's

<sup>174</sup> Concerning the stamp seals found in Tell Halaf, see von Oppenheim 1962: pls. 27.54–65, 28.66–73 and Elsen-Novák 2009: figs. 6-1, 6-2. Some of these seals bear astral symbols that are common for North Syrian, Neo-Assyrian, and Neo-Babylonian glyptic art, particularly during the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. (cf. Elsen-Novák 2009: 65).

<sup>175</sup> Buchanan – Moorey 1988: 34.

<sup>176</sup> Avigad 1997: 280–319 nos. 750–856.

<sup>177</sup> Aside from the Bar-Rakkab seal (see below), these include the impressions of stamp seals from Hamath that show a cow suckling a calf and are reproduced in the work by Avigad (1997: nos. 760 and 768). This motif is quite common in Syrian ivory art (see below).

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Ornan 1993: 53.

<sup>179</sup> E.g., Avigad 1997: nos. 751, 754, 759, 763, 767, 777, 779, 782, 783, 789, 795, 802, 803, 805, 806, 814, 816, 822, 825, 826, 835, 838, 845, 848, 849, 850, 855, 856. Cf. Ornan 1993: 60–64, nos. 23–54.

<sup>180</sup> Avigad 1997: nos. 767, 779, 795, 816, 838, 848, 850, 856.

<sup>181</sup> Avigad 1997: no. 814 and Ornan 1993: 60 no. 27 (standing on his bull and holding a lightning fork).

name as a theophoric element in their own names.<sup>182</sup> It is therefore not surprising that Aramaean officials chose the Assyrianizing image of the moon-god for their seals.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, the typical astralization of the moon-god in Assyria, which began in the 8th century B.C., is encountered on many seals that have Aramaic name inscriptions and that incorporate the crescent as a visual element.<sup>184</sup> One specific group is formed by the seals bearing a crescent standard, the symbol of the Sin of Harran (see 3.1.2). Nevertheless, the widespread use of this motif on stamp and cylinder seals—with or without inscriptions—speaks against classifying them as specifically Aramaean. The crescent standard is just as common in Neo-Assyrian and Palestinian-Israelite glyptic art, perhaps even more.<sup>185</sup>

The winged sun disk, the second prominently represented astral symbol in glyptic art, is one of the two divine symbols seen in the impression of the Bar-Rakkab seal from Zincirli (pl. XXI). This impression, which comes from an archaeological context, is the only evidence of a royal Aramaic seal existing today. The inscription mentions the names of both Bar-Rakkab (without his royal title) and his father Panamuwa. The symbols that appear above the inscription—the winged sun disk on the left and the yoke on the right—are interpreted as symbols of the sun-god Šamaš and the dynastic god Rakkab'el.<sup>186</sup> They also appear together with other divine symbols on the orthostat reliefs of Kulamuwa and Bar-Rakkab. While the yoke is a highly specific symbol from the local pantheon in Sam'al, the winged sun is a nearly omnipresent icon of visual religion in the Iron Age in western Asia.<sup>187</sup> Its close association with the king and kingship is particularly evident in the visual syntax of the Bar-Rakkab seal, on which the winged sun serves as a royal emblem combining the idea of solar protection with that of delegated royal authority. We can conclude that a similar concept underlies the representation of the winged sun on stamped jar handles from Judah, which also bear the inscription *lmlk*, “belonging

<sup>182</sup> Theuer 2000: 361–364 and Galter 2004b: 178. See also section 3.1.2 concerning the representation of the moon-god in monumental sculptural art.

<sup>183</sup> But correspondences between the motif on the seal and the name of its owner are an exception (see also Avigad 1997: 309f no. 828).

<sup>184</sup> Avigad 1997: nos. 758, 761, 762, 778, 783, 786, 793, 801, 802, 804, 806, 817, 822, 823, 825, 826, 836 (crescent standard), 845, 849, 853, 855.

<sup>185</sup> Buchanan – Moorey 1988: 54 and Ornan 1993: 64, contra Spycket 1973. For a good selection of Palestinian-Israelite, Syrian, and Assyrian stamp and cylinder seals depicting the crescent moon standard, see Staubli 2003: 78–87 nos. 81–103.

<sup>186</sup> Tropper 1993: 24–26; for a discussion of the identification of divine symbols in Sam'al, see Niehr 2004b: 310.

<sup>187</sup> E.g., Parayre 1993: 30–34.

to the king.”<sup>188</sup> On these handles, though, the diagrammatic rendering of the winged sun with upward-curving wing tips links it stylistically to Anatolian prototypes, while the motif on the Bar-Rakkab seal shows a sun with feathered wings and tail and two pairs of protuberant strokes with rounded ends. These connect it to the Syrian tradition.<sup>189</sup> There are only a few other inscribed stamp seals that show the Sam’al type of sun disk.<sup>190</sup> By contrast, the Mesopotamian or Assyrian model is seen in the representation of the winged sun featuring an anthropomorphic body. Usually this solar configuration is supported by either two atlantid bull-men or a single kneeling man.<sup>191</sup> A remarkable artwork that is considered to be of Syrian origin is the very finely cut stamp seal with a kneeling man who holds a Sam’al-type winged sun (pl. XXII).<sup>192</sup>

Another motif that deserves special attention in the corpus of Aramaic inscribed seals is that of the roaring striding lion,<sup>193</sup> especially since it recalls the portal lions in cities such as Sam’al, Hadattu, Til Barsib, and Hamath (see sections 2.1.2, 2.3, and 2.4, above). But this motif appears to be generally characteristic of West Semitic glyptic art and draws on north Syrian and Assyrian prototypes.<sup>194</sup> It is also part of the long tradition of Syrian lion representations from the Bronze and Early Iron Ages, which appear in an emblematic and/or protective relationship to the kingship.<sup>195</sup> Like the other motifs that are not typically Aramaean, it was selected from the widely available iconographic repertoire that institutions and subjects used to create powerful images demonstrating status, authority, and identity.

#### 4.2 *Ivories*

The fact that large quantities of ivory circulated in many cities in Syria as both a raw material and a finished luxury product is indicated by the Assyrian annals that describe ivory as a coveted prize of war and a tribute during the Westward expansion of the Assyrian Empire. Furthermore,

<sup>188</sup> Lemaire 1981 and Buchanan – Moorey 1988: nos. 38–45.

<sup>189</sup> Parayre 1993: 30f.

<sup>190</sup> E.g., Avigad 1997: nos. 756, 790, 828.

<sup>191</sup> Avigad 1997: nos. 782 (without supporting figures), 783, 784 (without supporting figures), 845, 849; cf. Ornan 1993: 56–60.

<sup>192</sup> Avigad 1997: no. 763.

<sup>193</sup> Avigad 1997: nos. 770, 781, 843 (but from Khorsabad), 851.

<sup>194</sup> E.g., Lemaire 1990b; Keel – Uehlinger <sup>2001</sup>: 214f, and most notably the seal of “Shema, servant of Jeroboam” from Megiddo (Avigad 1997: no. 2).

<sup>195</sup> Bonatz forthcoming b.

the strong impact that this luxury item had on the Assyrian élite is confirmed by the large number of images of imported ivory furniture on Assyrian reliefs and the impressive finds of high-quality ivory carvings from Calah and, to a lesser extent, Dūr-Šarrukin.<sup>196</sup> Yet it is difficult to draw on this secondary evidence and use of ivory to determine where the ivory originated from.

In their comprehensive studies of western Asian ivory in the early 1st millennium B.C., R. Barnett, G. Herrmann, and I. J. Winter have nonetheless managed to distinguish a Phoenician, north Syrian, and south Syrian (or “intermediate”) group.<sup>197</sup> They date the peak of Syrian ivory production to the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.<sup>198</sup> As G. Herrmann and I. J. Winter emphasize, stylistic criteria are of central importance in identifying ivory-cutting workshops or schools, since iconography and themes can appear in different media and cross linguistic and political boundaries.<sup>199</sup> Furthermore, I. J. Winter persuasively argues that there were at least two centers of ivory production in the Aramaean cities of Sam’al and Damascus—one for the north Syrian stylistic group, the other for the south Syrian group.<sup>200</sup> More recent finds of ivory from Til Barsib suggest that large amounts of ivory goods were also produced—or at least “hoarded”—in Bit Adini.<sup>201</sup> This view is confirmed in the annals of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.), which list large amounts of ivory dishes, couches, chests, and thrones among the tributes from Bit Adini.<sup>202</sup>

Since a more detailed discussion of the ivory production in the Aramaean territories would go beyond the scope of this survey, the discussion will be confined to important characteristics and trends.

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<sup>196</sup> For a comprehensive study of the written, iconographic, and archaeological evidence, see Bär 1996. For a discussion of the Assyrian context of Syrian ivory carvings, see also Bonatz 2004: 393–396.

<sup>197</sup> See esp. Barnett 1982; Herrmann 1986; ead. 1989; ead. 1996; Winter 1976a; ead. 1981. Herrmann favors the term “intermediate style” as an alternative to “south Syrian style” (Herrmann 1986: 52).

<sup>198</sup> Production probably ceased as a result of the final Assyrian occupation in the late 8th century. The works were increasingly replaced by Phoenician ivories (Winter 1976a: 19f; Herrmann 1986: 50).

<sup>199</sup> Herrmann 2000: 268; Winter 2005: 25; cf. Winter 1988.

<sup>200</sup> For Sam’al, see Winter 1976b: esp. 53; for Damascus, see Winter 1981: 129f. One issue that was heatedly debated was whether Guzana was an additional center of ivory production. Whereas Winter claims it was not (Winter 1989: 331 and in response to Herrmann, Winter 1998: 150f), Herrmann considers it highly likely that the “flame and frond” style that she identified in ivory art had its origins in Guzana (Herrmann 1992 and in response to Winter, Herrmann 2000: 275f).

<sup>201</sup> Bunnens 1997a.

<sup>202</sup> Grayson 1991: A.O.101.1 iii 61.

North Syrian ivory carvings are generally characterized by frontality, bold oval faces, and the fuller use of space, while the south Syrian or “intermediate” style combines these characteristics with Egyptianizing elements, attention to detail, and the great technical skill (e.g., cloisonnée) of Phoenician ivories. The south Syrian group, in particular, vividly documents the permeability of stylistic borders in the diffusion of ivory art.<sup>203</sup> The ivory from Arslan Tash (Hadattu) includes numerous prestigious pieces from this group, including a set of three à-jour sphinx plaques that show the characteristic design of a south Syrian work (pl. XXIII). To cite I. J. Winter, “The heads of the sphinxes are turned outward, so that faces and collars confront the viewer. While they wear the ‘Phoenician’ bib and collar, in the turned heads, the shortened and somewhat grossly defined wings and heavy paws, these sphinxes seem rather a cross between Phoenician and North Syrian types.”<sup>204</sup> A similar mixed style can be seen in the numerous plaques of a cow suckling a calf from Arslan Tash, which were fashioned in both à-jour relief and high relief on solid ground (pl. XXIV).<sup>205</sup> This motif originated in the Minoan culture of the Aegean region and the Middle Kingdom of Egypt and was long considered typically Phoenician.<sup>206</sup> The plaques indicate that it was adopted by Syrian workshops in the early 1st millennium. The cross-media effect is not unusual in this context and the same motif was also used in glyptic art, as several seal impressions from Hamath show.<sup>207</sup>

There are strong arguments for identifying Damascus as the origin of much of the ivory from Arslan Tash. One of the undecorated ivories is inscribed with the name of Hazael, who is probably identical with the king long known to have ruled Damascus in the late 9th century. Furthermore, it is quite probable that ivory was seized by the Assyrians as booty in Damascus and taken to the recently conquered territories in northern Syria, including the city of Hadattu (Arslan Tash).<sup>208</sup> This arbitrary transfer of a prestigious luxury item and the raw material used to make it (i.e., elephant tusks) provides a good explanation of how styles and motifs spread and how regional workshops and schools formed far from the places where these artistic styles originated.

<sup>203</sup> See also Winter 2005: 24.

<sup>204</sup> Winter 1981: 106 pl. 13a (= pl. XXIII).

<sup>205</sup> Winter 1981: 106f pl. 10a–b (a = pl. XXIV).

<sup>206</sup> Winter 1981: 106f.

<sup>207</sup> See section 4.1 n. 177.

<sup>208</sup> Concerning the Assyrian records and especially the role that the *turtān* Šamši-ilu (mid-8th century B.C.) might have played in the transfer of ivory goods to Hadattu, see Winter 1981: 122f.

The small assemblage of ivories from Zincirli also includes works in the south Syrian style. In this case an historical explanation can be found in the actions of King Panamuwa II, who in 732 B.C. took part in a campaign against Damascus on the side of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III. It is possible that this ivory was taken to Sam'al as part of the booty.<sup>209</sup> However, Sam'al is also regarded as a city in which a distinct school of ivory production had emerged by the 8th century and continued to develop until the end of that century. All of the products from this school come from a secondary context: from the rooms SW 7 and SW 37 in Fort Shalmaneser and from well AJ in the Northwest Palace of Nimrud. They were brought to these places as tributes to the Assyrian kings.<sup>210</sup>

Two main stylistic groups, which themselves can be divided into sub-groups, are prominent among the several hundred pieces in the collections from Nimrud. The ivory plaques and panels in group SW 7 were once furniture components. They depict standing or seated men/women and genii in combination with plants and sometimes with the winged sun. I. J. Winter was the first to describe Sam'al as the provenance of this ivory, basing her view on the similarities between these pieces and the later reliefs from Sam'al and Sakçagözü.<sup>211</sup> These similarities pertain not only to style (e.g., hairstyle and the stylization of the winged sun) but also to realia (e.g., types of furniture). The second group was described by G. Herrmann as "roundcheeked and ringletted" on the basis of the finds from SW 37, whose special stylistic features are their round faces and tiny corkscrew curls.<sup>212</sup> Many excellent works have been assigned to this stylistic group from later finds at well AJ in the Northwest Palace, including a siren with vultures holding a gazelle in their claws, executed almost completely in the round,<sup>213</sup> and a cosmetics palette richly decorated with figures of sphinxes, winged lions, vultures, and rams.<sup>214</sup> The similar structure of the animals' fur and feathers and their voluminous bodies, which feature the notorious round cheeks and ringlets, establishes a clear link between these pieces and the stone sculptures in Sam'al.<sup>215</sup> The iconographic affinity between the motifs is revealed, for example, when we compare the frontally depicted courtiers on a panel from SW 37 (pl. XXV),

<sup>209</sup> Winter 1981: 129.

<sup>210</sup> Herrmann 1986 (for SW 37); Winter 1976b (for SW 7); Safar – al-Iraqi 1987 (for well AJ).

<sup>211</sup> Winter 1976b: 53.

<sup>212</sup> Herrmann 1986: 19, 28.

<sup>213</sup> Safar – al-Iraqi 1987: 83f figs. 69, 70.

<sup>214</sup> Wicke 2002.

<sup>215</sup> For a comprehensive discussion and additional parallels, see Wicke 2005: 85–91.

executed almost completely in the round, and the courtiers on the orthostats at *hilani* III in Sam'al (pl. IV). In a characteristic gesture, these figures hold the corner of the cloak that is draped over their right shoulders.<sup>216</sup> The stylistic resemblance to the sculptures of the youngest stylistic phase in Sam'al provides an argument for dating the "roundcheeked and ringletted" group to the second half of the eighth century B.C., while the group SW 7, based on the similarities to the reliefs from Sakçagözü, can be assigned to the first half of the same century.<sup>217</sup>

The wide range of motifs and the assignment of the above-mentioned ivory finds from Zincirli to temporally distinct stylistic phases can be taken as confirmation that a regional style existed in northwest Syria that was probably centered in Sam'al.<sup>218</sup> In addition, this group can be regarded as a typical artistic phenomenon in the Aramaean centers of Syria. Regional styles developed special characteristics in the interplay between minor and monumental art and in exchanges with neighboring cultures such as those of the Assyrians and Phoenicians. Aramaean art was characterized to a greater degree by the fragmentation of its artistic language than by its homogeneity. But the fact that ivories, in particular, emerged as a typical genre of art in the Aramaean regions<sup>219</sup> was a result of the growing need for prestigious objects in the 1st millennium, the specialization of workshops, and the availability of precious resources. All of these factors—which must be studied in greater detail—can only be explained against the backdrop of the far-reaching international integration of the Aramaean city-states on both an economic and political level.

### 4.3 *Metal Works*

It is widely recognized that north Syria was a bronze-working center in the early 1st millennium B.C.<sup>220</sup> A large number of metal luxury goods originated in north Syrian workshops during this time and circulated across extensive areas of western Asia and the Aegean. They include bronze bowls, cauldrons, equestrian ornaments, and decorated plaques.

<sup>216</sup> Compare e.g., Herrmann 1986: no. 891 pl. 230 (pl. XXV) with Orthmann 1971: Zincirli H/4–9; see also section B.1.1 in this overview.

<sup>217</sup> Wicke 2005: 85, 91–92 n. 137. Remember, however, the difficulties to date the reliefs from Sakçagözü (see above, introduction to chapter 2.1).

<sup>218</sup> See primarily Wicke 2005: 95–96, based on Genge 1979: 149–151.

<sup>219</sup> So far the only Luwian center that has been suggested is Carchemish (Winter 1989: 331 and ead. 2005: 34), but it is only likely if the "flame and frond" group dating to the 9th century originated there rather than in Guzana (Tell Halaf). On this debate, see n. 200.

<sup>220</sup> Winter 1988 and Mazzoni 2000a: 39.



A major problem in pinpointing the location of these workshops and reconstructing regional styles in north Syrian bronze production is that so few of the objects have been excavated in the area. For this reason it is extremely difficult for current researchers to identify the centers of Aramaean bronzeworking.<sup>221</sup>

The Aramaic name inscriptions on a number of the bronze bowls from the Northwest Palace in Nimrud confirmed R. D. Barnett in his view that it was possible to speak, for the first time, “of a group of products which might be termed an Aramaean school of art.”<sup>222</sup> The bowls are decorated with an incised central star pattern around which tiny stags or sphinxes are arranged. I. J. Winter later linked this distinctive group from the hoard in Nimrud to the style she defined for south Syrian ivories, affirming that, as in the case of the ivories, the bronze bowls could be broken down into a south Syrian or “intermediate” group, a north Syrian group, and a Phoenician group.<sup>223</sup> At any rate, it seems theoretically possible to use the stylistic affinities to ivory styles such as “flame and frond” and “roundcheeked and ringletted” as a basis for determining the provenances of the metal objects. However, in the case of the bowls found in graves and temples on Crete and in Greece, it is difficult to make specific classifications because these pieces exhibit not only Syrian, but also Phoenician and Egyptian characteristics.<sup>224</sup>

As regards the bronze sheets with relief decorations that were found in Olympia, U. Seidl has proposed—based on parallels to north Syrian art—that these sheets were created in three different workshops. She argues that one of the workshops was located in Sam’al based on the resemblances between the reliefs on two standing figures (*sphyrelata*) from Olympia and representations not only on the carved orthostats from *hilani* III and *hilani* IV in Zincirli, but also at the entrance to the palace in Sakçagözü.<sup>225</sup> Her comparisons focus on the “empty” background behind the figures, the clothing and hairstyle of the striding men, as well as the stylistic treatment of plants and animal bodies.

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<sup>221</sup> Even in the case of a possible Luwian center, the categorization remains hypothetical due to the lack of site finds. This is also true of Carchemish, which was suggested by Winter (Winter 1983: 184–186).

<sup>222</sup> Barnett 1967: 4 pl. IV.

<sup>223</sup> Winter 1981: 103, 108, 115.

<sup>224</sup> E.g., Braun-Holzinger – Rehm 2005: 104f.

<sup>225</sup> Seidl 1999: 273f, 278f figs. 1–2. She argues that a second workshop was located in Carchemish (Seidl 1999: 279–260). For a complete publication of the sheets with reliefs from Olympia, see Borell – Rittig 1998.

The finds from Sam'al include a large bronze cauldron,<sup>226</sup> a sarcophagus,<sup>227</sup> several mace heads,<sup>228</sup> horse blinkers with a lion sphinx,<sup>229</sup> a cauldron with a handle attachment in the form of a bull's head,<sup>230</sup> and two chariot pole ornaments, one with a nude woman holding a reversed lion in each hand, the other, in quite fragmentary form, featuring two rampant lions recognizable by their tails and hindquarters.<sup>231</sup> All these objects underscore the possible significance of Sam'al as a center for the production of precious metal products. These products also include sheets of silver with stamped decorations of sphinxes and rosettes that are possibly related to a similar piece from Olympia.<sup>232</sup> Finally, mention must be made of the bars of silver and the small bronze ingot that were found during excavations in Zincirli. Three of the silver bars are inscribed with the words "Bar-Rakkab, son of Panamuwa."<sup>233</sup>

Several of the above-mentioned objects, including the ivories, are among the orientalia found not only at holy places in Greece (e.g., Olympia in the Peloponnese, the temple of Apollo in Eretria, the Heraion of Samos, the temple of Athena at Lindos, the archaic temple of Athena in Milet, the Idaen cave on Crete), but also in cemeteries in Greece and Italy (e.g., the cemetery in the Kerameikos district of Athens, the necropolis of Lefkandi, and the necropolises in Etruria).<sup>234</sup> Together with their counterparts from Assyria and the Asian regions farther to the east, they testify to the enormous productivity and proliferation of the specialized craft workshops in the Syrian region, which reached their peak in the late 9th and 8th centuries B.C. The Aramaean city of Sam'al was just one of many such centers. The paths that these diverse groups of minor art took as they spread through these regions were quite complex and involved diverse combinations of factors such as trade, gift-giving, tributes, and looting.<sup>235</sup> The bronze horse frontlet discovered in the Heraion of Samos is just one example of how objects could enter new contexts and change ownership

<sup>226</sup> Von Luschan 1943: pl. 57a and Wartke 2005: fig. 82.

<sup>227</sup> Von Luschan 1943: pl. 57b and Wartke 2005: fig. 83.

<sup>228</sup> Von Luschan 1943: fig. 107 pl. 42 and Wartke 2005: fig. 91.

<sup>229</sup> Von Luschan 1943: fig. 152 pl. 54d.

<sup>230</sup> Von Luschan 1943: pl. 49g.

<sup>231</sup> Von Luschan 1943: figs. 90–91 pl. 40c–d.

<sup>232</sup> Von Luschan 1943: 112f fig. 155 pl. 55 and Wartke 2005: fig. 88. For comparable silver sheets from Olympia, see Seidl 1999: 279 n. 34.

<sup>233</sup> Von Luschan 1943: 120f figs. 170–172, pl. 58t–v and Wartke 2005: 83 fig. 87.

<sup>234</sup> Summarized in Braun-Holzinger – Rehm 2005. For the finds from Etruria, see also Muscarella 1970.

<sup>235</sup> E.g., Winter 1988: 206–212; Braun-Holzinger 2005: 181–183.

several times (pl. XXVI). In addition to representations of nude female figures under a winged sun, it bears an Aramaic inscription that identifies it as a prize of war that “Hazael” (probably identical with the like-named Aramaean king of Damascus) seized during his campaign against the Luwian state of Unqi.<sup>236</sup> Hazael’s booty was either confiscated by Shalmaneser III in 842 B.C., just after Hazael’s campaign, or it fell into Assyrian hands when Damascus was captured by Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 B.C. The frontlet with Hazael’s inscription was brought to Samos by seafaring traders, though it is unclear how they came into possession of this piece and whether it was still part of a complete, costly harness. Its eventful history illustrates how an object’s material value and visual characteristics were transported across diverse political and ethno-linguistic borders over a longer time frame. Objects like these offer great interpretative freedoms to researchers attempting to answer questions concerning the diffusion of motifs and styles, new owners, and changing contexts of reception.

#### 4.4 *Stone Vessels*

The most distinct classes of minor art in the early 1st millennium B.C. include the delicately carved and incised cosmetic or oil containers (*pyxides*), as well as the so-called hand-lion bowls (or spoon bowls) that were probably used to present offerings during rituals. Most of these containers and vessels were made of precious stones such as greenstone, steatite, and serpentine. Only a few were made of ivory or Egyptian blue. A recent review of both groups of objects points to their wide diffusion in the Luwian and Aramaean city-states and beyond.<sup>237</sup>

The stone *pyxides* date from the 10th to the early 8th centuries B.C. The style and iconography of the earlier pieces have been linked to the stone sculptures in Zincirli and Carchemish.<sup>238</sup> The later series consists primarily of the finds from Tell Afis, Tell Deinit, and Rasm et-Tanjara. Found in an Aramaean production area, they were probably products of the same workshop.<sup>239</sup> More numerous and formally diverse are the hand-lion bowls and spoons that were made during the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. (pl. XXVIIa–b). The hand is generally shown on the exterior of the base as

<sup>236</sup> Kyrieleis – Röllig 1988: pls. 9–15 (here pl. XXVI); for the edition of the inscription and historical commentary, see Röllig, *ibid.* 63–75.

<sup>237</sup> For both groups, see Mazzoni 2005; for the *pyxides*, *ead.* 2001.

<sup>238</sup> Orthmann 1971: 163–164 and Winter 1983: 183f.

<sup>239</sup> Mazzoni 2001a: figs. 11, 13, 14 and *ead.* 2005: 49 figs. 2–3.

if it is holding the bowl, but there are a few exceptions on which a volute-palmette design is carved into the base. Many pieces have lion's forequarters projecting over the rim, and a few feature a bird's head in the same position.<sup>240</sup> The stylization of the lion's head and mane offers a good basis for comparison with the ivory carvings of the "flame and frond" style.<sup>241</sup>

A total of 67 steatite or greenstone hand bowls are said to have originated in the hoard at Rasm et-Tanjara (Orontes Valley in the eastern Ghab).<sup>242</sup> These pieces are similar in style and execution to the long-known examples from Zincirli, Carchemish, and Hazor, to which five more pieces from more recent excavations at Tell Afis can be added.<sup>243</sup> A common characteristic is the quite unrealistic rendering of the fingers, which are strictly parallel and spaced. In contrast, hand bowls from other sites such as the Yunus cemetery near Carchemish, Kinneret/Tell el-Oreimeh in Palestine, and the Heraion of Samos show a different treatment of the hand and fingers, as do a number of pieces from museum collections.<sup>244</sup>

In conclusion, the stone *pyxides* and hand-lion bowls are evidence of different artistic sources and production areas. In terms of their carving styles and techniques, they can be linked to sculptures in monumental art as well as to other object groups of minor art. They are not exclusively Aramaean but a typical outcome of what S. Mazzoni calls the "international orientaling" style<sup>245</sup> to which art production in the Aramaean centers evidently made a great contribution.

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<sup>240</sup> For a selection of these representations, see the pieces from Zincirli (von Luschan 1943: pl. 14 and here pl. XXVIIa–b). Recent excavations in Mishrife have yielded a new fragment of a lion, which was probably part of a lion bowl made from hematite, a material so far unattested in hand-lion bowls in Syria (Morandi Bonacossi 2009: 131f figs. 14, 15).

<sup>241</sup> E.g., the lion on two serpentine bowl fragments from Zincirli (von Luschan 1943: pl. 14a–e; here pl. XXVIIa–b) in comparison with the lion on an ivory horn found at well AJ in the Northwest Palace of Nimrud and other works from the "flame and frond" group (Herrmann 2000: 26–29 fig. 1c).

<sup>242</sup> Athanassiou 1977: 98–122, cat. nos. 1–67.

<sup>243</sup> Mazzoni 2005: 49–56 figs. 4–8, pls. XII.4, XIII–XV.

<sup>244</sup> Mazzoni 2005: 53 with bibliography.

<sup>245</sup> Mazzoni 2005: 62.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ARCHITECTURE

Mirko Novák

#### 1. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Aramaeans architecture can hardly be discussed in isolation from Luwian or “Neo-Hittite” architecture. As far as we can observe, Aramaeans and Luwians coexisted in most of the small political entities that had emerged after the collapse of the Late Bronze Age world with its huge empires. Sometimes, Luwian and Aramaean scripts and languages appear in one and the same region at the same time; in other cases it can be difficult to determine if the élites were Aramaean or Luwian in origin. Politically, the Luwo-Aramaeans world was fragmented into a number of relatively small kingdoms and chiefdoms, some of them urban, some still with a strongly nomadic component. A political or cultural center never existed, although there are some hints that Carchemish played a prominent role.

Another issue that modern scholars have to face when they are dealing with the culture of the Luwo-Aramaeans world is the rise of Assyrian influence, which we see beginning to emerge in the late 10th century in the east and slightly later in the west. As a result, Aramaean and Neo-Hittite characteristics were altered by Assyrian ones. The process accelerated after the incorporation of the principalities into the quickly growing empire.

In the following, the Aramaean architecture will be dealt with by categories rather than entities (these could also be a reasonable alternative). But it has to be taken into consideration that, due to the political fragmentation, regional differences may have been significant, even between neighboring entities.

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Alexander Sollee for improving the English manuscript.

## 2. CITY PLANNING

When trying to apply modern terms, it seems ridiculous to speak of Aramaean “city planning.” Not all Aramaean sites fulfill modern criteria for a “city,” nor can we prove any institutional “planning” e.g. of the alignment of streets in written sources. However, at least the capitals of the Aramaean principalities can be identified as real “cities” in an urban sense, being characterized by a stratified population with a non-agricultural economic subsistence; the existence of governmental, administrative, and cultic institutions; and a rural hinterland, which supplied the city with agricultural products in return for crafts and luxury goods. Some of the sites clearly show a planned layout. Moreover, even in smaller settlements and in cities with a seemingly organic and unorganized inner structure, some kind of regulation must have existed to prevent internal struggles such as the narrowing or blocking of streets by adjacent residents, thus inconveniencing their neighbors. Hence, it is justified to speak of “city (or rather town) planning” even when referring to long-lived settlements of reduced size and organic structure.

Two types of Aramaean cities can be distinguished: those with a long settlement history even before their (violent or peaceful) occupation by Aramaeans (or at least by Aramaean élites), and those that were newly founded after the consolidation of the principalities.

The first category is represented by Dimašqa (Damascus), Hamath, Hazrak, and Masuwari/Til Barsib. Unfortunately, little is known about their layout during the preceding periods of the 2nd millennium B.C.

Dimašqa (Damascus)<sup>2</sup> was the capital of the most powerful Aramaean principality, named *Aram* in the Bible and *Ša-imērišu* in Assyrian sources of the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.<sup>3</sup> The city is already mentioned by name both in the Mari (17th century B.C.) and the Amarna (14th century B.C.) letters, as the center of a land named *Apium/Upi*. As far as it can be traced within the Old Town of modern Damascus, the citadel, situated at the periphery of the fortified settlement close to the Barada River, may have already existed during the Aramaean period. The main temple of the city, dedicated to the storm-god Ba'al-Hadad, was the predecessor of the Roman Jupiter temple, the Byzantine cathedral dedicated to John the Baptist, and, today, the Great (Umayyad) Mosque. Thus, as far as can be

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<sup>2</sup> Sack 1989: 7–9 fig. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 347–407.

reconstructed from the available evidence, the temple was situated in the center of city. So far, the alignment of the fortification walls and streets is unknown.

Presumably, Hamath was under Luwian control until the late 9th or even early 8th century B.C.,<sup>4</sup> as the majority of inscriptions was written in Hieroglyphic Luwian.<sup>5</sup> However, this does not necessarily mean that the population was Luwian instead of Semitic, since neither the official language, nor the personal names indicate “ethnic” constitutions.<sup>6</sup> Hamath definitively fell under Aramaean rule in the late 9th or early 8th century B.C. during the reign of a certain Zakkur, a man who originated from ‘Anah on the Middle Euphrates and resided in a town called Hazrak, presumably modern Tell Afis (pl. XXVIII). His realm was named Lu’aš, known as Nuḥašše in the 2nd millennium B.C. However, it is unclear if the layout of Hamath changed significantly in the following decades. At the end of the 8th century B.C., it became the residence of an Assyrian governor. As indicated by its topographical situation, the heavily fortified and highly elevated citadel was situated directly on the bank of the Orontes River. The lower town appears to have extended below the Old Town of modern Hama south of the citadel mound. Thus, it is likely that the citadel was situated at the town’s periphery.

Hazrak, modern Tell Afis, shows an irregular outer shape, formed by its long settlement history through the Bronze Ages (pl. XXVIII).<sup>7</sup> The highest elevated area was a citadel, located halfway between its center and its northern periphery. As a prominent part of the city, it seems to have been called *Apīš*, the origin of the modern toponym.<sup>8</sup> No major break within the urban layout of the pre-Aramaean and the Aramaean period is visible.

Before and after its incorporation into the Aramaean entity of Bit Adini in the 11th or 10th century B.C., Til Barsib on the Euphrates<sup>9</sup> was known under its Hittite name Mazuwati/Masuwari (XXIX).<sup>10</sup> To what degree

<sup>4</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 254.

<sup>5</sup> Hawkins 2000: 398–423.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bunnens 2009 for the use of the Luwian language, script, and art by Semitic (Aramaean) élites in Til Barsib. The situation does not differ so much from Sam’al, where an adoption of Luwian patterns in art and onomastics can be observed (see below).

<sup>7</sup> Mazzoni 2008 and Soldi 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Soldi 2009: 108 n. 42 with further reading. The situation is reminiscent of Zion as the name of the citadel of Jerusalem.

<sup>9</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936a and iid. 1936b.

<sup>10</sup> Bunnens – Hawkins – Leirens 2006: 88 and Bunnens 2009.



the original layout was changed by the Aramaean dynasty is not clear at this point. The city was characterized by an extended semicircular lower town and a citadel on the bank of the Euphrates. Few remains of the Early Iron Age occupation preceding the Assyrian seizure have been excavated so far,<sup>11</sup> almost none of them within the lower town. Hence, it cannot be determined if the circular layout and the citadel at the town's periphery already existed in Luwian times or if they should be identified as either Aramaean or Assyrian additions.

Some of the sites, which were newly founded or at least re-founded by the Aramaeans once their rule had been established, are much better investigated than these towns.<sup>12</sup> The most prominent of these are Sam'al (modern Zincirli), Arpad (modern Tell Rifa'at), and Guzana (modern Tell Halaf), the capitals of Yādiya/Bit Gabbari, Bit Agusi, and Pale/Bit Baḥiani, respectively.<sup>13</sup> Aside from these large cities a number of medium- and small-sized towns, presumably of Aramaean origin, have been excavated, giving further information on Aramaean city planning. Among these are Tell Šaiḥ Ḥassan and Hadattu (modern Arslan Tash).

The outline of the city of Guzana<sup>14</sup> was rectangular, defined by a moat and a mud brick wall at its western, southern, and eastern flanks (pl. XXX).<sup>15</sup> The Ğirḡib, a branch of the Khabur River, protected its northern side. A strongly fortified citadel with a steep slope on its northern, western, and eastern side was situated halfway along the city's northern flank on the southern bank of the river. It was accessible via a main gate from the Lower Town to the south. Another entrance was the so-called "Quelltor" in the northeast of the citadel. It connected the citadel with the river and an important spring nearby.<sup>16</sup> Hardly anything is known about the alignment of streets in Guzana and the position of the city gates. The concept of city planning as represented by Guzana (rectangular with a citadel at its periphery) was known in Assyria since the 2nd millennium B.C., as

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<sup>11</sup> Mainly the east building, the neighboring walls from Stratum 5, and a building with pebble mosaic pavement. Cf. Bunnens 2009: 73f fig. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Mazzoni 1994 and Novák 2005a.

<sup>13</sup> On the history of these entities and the identification of the towns, cf. Lipiński 2000a: 233–248 (Bit-Gabbari/Yādiya with Sam'al), 195–220 (Bit-Agusi with Arpad) and 163–194 (Bit-Adini with Til Barsib).

<sup>14</sup> Von Oppenheim 1950; Baghdo – Martin – Novák – Orthmann 2009; iid. 2012; Martin – Novák 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Novák 1999: 192–196.

<sup>16</sup> However, it cannot be determined if the "Quelltor" dates back to the Aramaean period or if it was added during the Assyrian phase.

demonstrated by Kār-Tukulti-Ninurta.<sup>17</sup> Since Upper Mesopotamia had belonged to the Middle Assyrian Empire for at least two centuries, comparable cities may have already existed in this region before the founding of Guzana. So far, no other Aramaean city with a rectangular layout has been identified. This might be the result of the meager archaeological evidence. Other important cities in the region of former Middle Assyrian dominion such as Amida (Diyarbakır)<sup>18</sup> and Nasibina (Nusaybin)<sup>19</sup> have not been investigated yet.

At least three important Aramaean towns west of the Middle Assyrian sphere of influence show a tentative or almost perfect circular or semicircular layout: Sam'al (Zincirli),<sup>20</sup> Arpad (Tell Rifa'at),<sup>21</sup> and Til Barsib (Tell Aḥmar).<sup>22</sup> Some smaller settlements followed the same pattern.

The city of Sam'al had an almost perfect circular outline with three gates at regular distances from each other (pl. XXXI).<sup>23</sup> The public buildings, namely the palaces, were concentrated inside a strongly fortified citadel, which was situated almost precisely in the center of the city. As recent geophysical prospecting has demonstrated, the streets were laid out in a regular system of concentric and radial streets.<sup>24</sup>

The layout of Til-Barsib is reminiscent of Sam'al but it was only semicircular, and its citadel was situated on the bank of the river. The fact that Sam'al was not located on a river may be the reason its citadel was built in the city center.

As mentioned previously, we cannot judge if the semicircular layout of Til Barsib was created by the pre-Aramaean population, the Aramaeans, or the Assyrians. The same is true for the nearby town of Hadattu (modern Arslan Tash), which was mid-sized and had a circular layout.<sup>25</sup> There is no historical or archaeological evidence for its existence in the period preceding the Assyrian occupation of the territory between the Euphrates and Balikh. Still, its Aramaean name, meaning "the new (one),"

<sup>17</sup> Novák 1999: 124–128.

<sup>18</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 135–161 and Szuchman 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 109–117.

<sup>20</sup> Von Luschan 1898; Novák 1999: 196–202; Wartke 2005; Schloen – Fink 2009a; id. 2009b.

<sup>21</sup> Seton-Williams 1961 and id. 1967.

<sup>22</sup> Thureau-Dangin – Dunand 1936a; iid. 1936b; Bunnens 1994; id. 2009; Novák 1999: 183–188.

<sup>23</sup> Von Luschan 1898 and Novák 1999: 201f.

<sup>24</sup> Schloen – Fink 2009a: 4 fig. 3.

<sup>25</sup> On the layout, cf. Novák 1999: 173–175; on the inscriptions, cf. Galter 2004a and id. 2004b.

and its shape, which is not representative of Assyrian tradition, indicate an Aramaean origin. Another small-scale settlement of similar shape is Tell Šaiḥ Ḥassan on the eastern bank of the Euphrates south of Til Barsib (pl. XXXII), a likely candidate for the site of ancient M/Naubai.<sup>26</sup> If the excavated site represents the entire settlement and not just its fortified citadel, with an otherwise unknown lower town, it was a small but very well fortified stronghold of almost circular shape, controlling the road that followed the eastern bank of the Euphrates downstream. The town confirms the Aramaeans' affinity for circular layouts, at least in this region.

However, there are also divergent examples: close to Til Barsib the small stronghold Pitru (Tell Aušariya) overlooked the Euphrates from its western bank.<sup>27</sup> Its layout followed the natural landscape and does not show any planned geometric system. This is also the case with a mid-scale town of unknown ancient name, excavated at Tell Mastuma not far from Idlib.<sup>28</sup>

Conclusively, a variety of formal types can be observed: There are rectangular, circular or semicircular cities, and cities with a non-geometric layout, following natural conditions or preserving an organic morphology, the result of a long settlement history going back to the 2nd or even 3rd millennium B.C. There might have been regional preferences as attested by the concentration of circular shapes in the northwestern and northern parts of the Aramaean world, whereas rectangular shapes are more frequent in the east. Still, there are too few examples to further clarify the picture.

A striking similarity among most of the known cities is the existence of a strongly fortified citadel. Most often, the citadel is found situated at the urban periphery, close to the bank of a river and thus connected to a direct water supply. The only prominent exception is Sam'al, where the citadel is located in the city center, probably due to the lack of an available watercourse.

Little is known about the street alignments of Aramaean cities. Smaller towns, like Tell Mastuma, show an irregular system, obviously the result of organic growth. In contrast, Sam'al was well organized and consisted of concentric and radial streets. There is hardly any evidence to determine whether there were open plazas or not. Hopefully, the renewed

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<sup>26</sup> Boese 1995 and Bachmann – Boese 2006–2008.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. J. Eidem at <http://www.aushariye.hum.ku.dk>.

<sup>28</sup> Wakita – Wada – Nishiyama 2000.

excavations of Aramaean cities will produce more information for the reconstruction of their urban organization.

### 3. CITADELS AND FORTIFICATIONS

The Aramaean and Luwian cities were heavily fortified. In times of permanent military conflicts among the small principalities and the growing threat of the expanding Assyrian Empire, this is not surprising. These conflicts resulted in innumerable sieges, which are mentioned in the royal inscriptions<sup>29</sup> and depicted often in Assyrian art.<sup>30</sup>

The fortification systems consisted of a single or double wall with buttresses and towers more or less regularly distanced from each other. The walls were built of mud brick, sometimes resting on a stone foundation or protected by a stone curtain.<sup>31</sup> An example of a double-wall fortification with foundations of basalt stones and a moat was excavated in Sam'al.<sup>32</sup> In contrast, Guzana seems to have had only one wall, which was completely built of mud bricks.

Towers and buttresses are attested by archaeological evidence and depicted in Assyrian reliefs, which show that the towers were higher than the walls, and that both were crowned by merlons. From these structures, the defenders were able to fire upon the attacking enemies below.

Moats in front of city walls are occasionally mentioned in Aramaic and Assyrian sources, several times in the context of Aramaean cities under siege. Thus, they seem to have been an integral part of the fortification systems. Adad-nirari II (912–891 B.C.) describes two sieges of Aramaean cities in the land of Hanigalbat<sup>33</sup>: Gidara/Raqammatu and, shortly later, Nasibina.<sup>34</sup> In both cases, moats are explicitly mentioned. The one in Nasibina is described as having been extraordinarily wide and deep, reaching all the way down to the natural bedrock. In his inscription, Zakkur of Hazrak mentions how his enemies ran up against the moat.<sup>35</sup> Archaeological data is still scant, but at least in some cases, like Guzana, the moats are

<sup>29</sup> Cf. KAI 202: A9–10 in Delsman 1982–1985: 627.

<sup>30</sup> Eph'al 2009.

<sup>31</sup> On the building materials, cf. Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 33–54; on the building techniques, *ibid.*: 55–203.

<sup>32</sup> Schloen – Fink 2009b: 207.

<sup>33</sup> This is the Assyrian name of Upper Mesopotamia, in general, and the Khabur triangle, in particular.

<sup>34</sup> Hecker 2005: 63.

<sup>35</sup> KAI 202: A9–10 in Delsman 1982–1985: 627.

still visible. Archaeological evidence of the existence of steep *glacis* and revetment walls is not yet attested in Aramaean cities, but as both elements had been known in Mesopotamian fortification architecture since the 3rd millennium B.C.,<sup>36</sup> it is very likely that the lack of proof might simply reflect the need for additional research.

The gates of city walls and citadels were of significance.<sup>37</sup> They were the most vulnerable parts of the fortification, transmission points in the daily traffic from the inside to the outside of a city, contact zones and links between the urban community and the inhabitants of the hinterland, thus, symbolically, also between civilization and wilderness. Thus, it is not surprising that they were, on the one hand, strongly fortified with flanking buttresses, retaining walls, and one or more chambers inside, and, on the other hand, richly decorated with reliefs and statues celebrating either the city gods or the power of the king. Since Aramaean and Luwian cities were much more frequently besieged than Babylonian or Assyrian ones, their gates were more strongly protected and hence more defensible. While the gates in Assyria and Babylonia were extremely broad with straight axis passages, which gave a free view from outside deep into the city center, the gates in Aramaean cities were far less broad and monumental. In order to enhance security, bent axis accesses were preferred. Retaining walls in front of the gates forced any would-be intruder to approach not frontally but at a sharp angle. Hence, the visual axis of the urban layout was different as well.

An integral part of the fortification of an Aramaean or Luwian city was its citadel. A citadel is defined as an elevated area within a city, being separated from the residential sector both by its height and strong fortifications. In contrast to a castle, which is not necessarily connected to a larger settlement, it is a substantial urban element. Access to the fortified citadel by the population of the lower town was restricted. This indicates segregation, be it of ethnic, religious, or social nature. Furthermore, the citadel had a strong symbolic value: It was well visible from inside and outside the city due to its elevation, showing that there was an élite controlling the city and its hinterland from a heavily fortified stronghold.

In general, citadels were not Babylonian or Egyptian urban concepts. They do not appear in these regions until very late, in contrast to Anatolia,

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. in general Burke 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 288–302; Chadwick 2001. On the symbolic value of gates, cf. Maz-zoni 1997.

the northern Levant, and Upper Mesopotamia. The development of citadels appears to date back at least to the 2nd millennium B.C., as proven by such imperial Hittite cities as Hattusa, Alṣar, and Kuṣaklı. A few examples of 3rd millennium citadels are attested both in Anatolia and Upper Mesopotamia, like in Troy (Level II) and Armanum (Ĝabal Bazi within the Tell Banat compound),<sup>38</sup> respectively. However, citadels became a characteristic element of Mittanian cities, like Waššukanni (Tell Fekheriye), Ta'idu (Tell Ĥamidiya), Emar, Baširu (Tell Bazi), and Nuzi. This is not surprising, since the term for "citadel" in almost all cuneiform written languages was Hurrian *kerḫu* as opposed to *adaššu* "lower town".<sup>39</sup> In Carchemish, such a *kerḫu* is attested by literary sources for the Middle Syrian Period (14th century B.C.). After the seizure of the city by Šuppiluliuma I, only the lower town was plundered, while the citadel (*kerḫu*), including the temples, was spared.<sup>40</sup>

Almost every important Luwian or Aramaean royal city was characterized by a heavily fortified citadel, in which the main palaces and presumably also the central temples were situated.<sup>41</sup> Most of the citadels were located in the peripheral areas of the cities, preferably close to a watercourse. Prominent examples are Carchemish, Til Barsib, Guzana, Hamath, and Damascus. Only in Sam'al did the citadel occupy the center of the city, probably because a nearby watercourse was not present. The main advantage of a location close to the urban periphery was not only the supply of fresh water, but also the ability of the citadel's inhabitants to escape quickly in case of danger, without having to cross the dwelling quarters. Not only during the seizure of a city by foreign forces, but also in the event of an uprising by the local population, the option to flee might have been of value. As the Assyrian records mention, such rebellions did occur from time to time, often initiated by the Assyrians themselves.

Most of the Luwian and Aramaean citadels have only been sparsely investigated and thus are not very well known. Nevertheless, some examples help to reconstruct their layout and inner structure.

<sup>38</sup> Otto 2006: 10 fig. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Haas – Wegner 1995.

<sup>40</sup> Güterbock 1956: 95, DŠ, pl. AIII, lines 26ff.

<sup>41</sup> Huge citadels overlooking vast lower towns dominated the contemporary Neo-Assyrian cities, too. Whether they were a result of Neo-Hittite influence or of an indigenous development is still under discussion. Cf. Bunnens 1996b, who sees a Syro-Anatolian influence on Assyrian town planning (mainly the development of the citadel) and the present author in Novák 2005b, who pinpoints an autonomous Assyrian development.

As far as can be judged at present, the access from the lower town was only possible through a single gate. This was surely the case in Sam'al and Guzana, where the gates were situated in the south of the citadel. In Guzana, there was another gateway at the riverside, the so-called "Quelltor", which probably also served as a secret path of escape (pl. XXXIII).

Citadels seem to have been divided into two distinct areas, separated by an internal wall. After passing through the citadel's gate, a visitor coming from the lower town first entered an "exterior area" of the citadel. A second gate gave access to the interior zone. Examples of such a separation into two parts can be observed in Sam'al, Guzana, Kunulua, and Hamath (?). The pattern might have come from Carchemish: As W. Orthmann has convincingly suggested,<sup>42</sup> the "King's Gate" with the "Processional Entry" was the outer citadel's entrance from the lower town into a central plaza, which was enclosed by the "Temple of the Storm God," the "Long Wall of Sculptures," the "Herald's Wall," and the "Lower Palace." The "Great Staircase" between the "Temple of the Storm God" and the "Lower Palace" gave access to the inner and more elevated part of the citadel. Presumably, this was the location of the main palaces ("Upper Palace") and the temple of the city's tutelary goddess Kubaba. The situation in Kunulua (Tell Tayinat) is comparable: a gateway inside the citadel separated an outer area, in which the temples were located, from an inner area, which held the palaces. In Guzana the "Südliches Burgtor" was the outer citadel's gate, whereas the "Skorpionentor" gave access to the inner part of the citadel with the great *hilani* palace inside (pl. XXXIII). The structure of the citadel of Sam'al is the same (pl. XXXIV). There is no evidence so far that a temple was located in the exterior areas of the citadels of Sam'al and Guzana, as was the case in Carchemish and Kunulua (pl. XXXV). There is not enough information on the structure of the citadels of Hamath and Til Barsib,<sup>43</sup> but their layout might have been similar.

Summing up, the existence of a fortified and elevated citadel was not the only characteristic element of Aramaean and Luwian urbanism. Their location at the periphery of the city and their subdivision into an outer and an inner part followed some standardized pattern as well. The regulation of access to the buildings located both in the outer (if existent) and in the inner part of the citadel, and the accentuation of the entrances with the use of pictorial decoration, including ritual scenes, were expressions

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<sup>42</sup> Orthmann 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Bunnens 2009: 74 fig. 5.

of the elite's power. This was emphasized by the prominent visibility of the citadel from inside and outside the city. Nevertheless, the citadels provided safety and security, from both external as well as internal threats.

The high standard of Aramaean fortifications, consisting of citadels, walls and moats, buttresses, and the like, is reflected in the difficulties that even the superior Assyrian armies faced when they laid siege to the larger cities.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. PALACES

In general, a palace is defined as the residence of a ruler or his representative.<sup>45</sup> In size and decoration, it superseded all ordinary dwellings and primarily fulfilled secular functions, although it may have included rooms for religious or cult activities as well. As a governmental and administrative center and home of the royal family, it was both a symbol of power and a place for economic activities.

The common Aramaic expression for "palace" was *hekala'*, which derives from Sumerian É.GAL meaning "Great House". Through the Akkadian word *ekallu(m)*, it was borrowed by several West Semitic languages, as, for example, Ugaritic *hkl* and Hebrew *hēkal*. In Sumerian and Akkadian this word was almost exclusively used to denote palaces, whereas in West Semitic languages it may also have been used as an expression for a temple. Even in the cuneiform inscriptions from Guzana, where "É.GAL-*lim U*" means the "Temple of the Storm-God," this was the case.<sup>46</sup>

During the Late Bronze Age, two principles of palatial architecture were common in the Levant: (1) complex, multi-core buildings with a series of connected apartments, each of them centered around a courtyard, as represented by the palace of Ugarit; (2) relatively small units consisting of just a few rooms, often without an inner courtyard, as represented best by the palaces of Tilmen Höyük (Palace E, Middle Bronze Age) and Alalāḥ (Level IV, Late Bronze Age). The latter principle was the predecessor of a palace type that became predominant in the Luwian and Aramaean architecture of the early 1st millennium B.C.<sup>47</sup> Its spatial arrangement seems to have been quite standardized, as far as can be judged by the

<sup>44</sup> Fuchs 2008a.

<sup>45</sup> Postgate 2003–2005: 195–200 and Novák 1999: 313f.

<sup>46</sup> Dornauer 2010: 51 n. 104 with earlier references.

<sup>47</sup> Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 411–429 and Novák 2004a: 336–346.



limited number of known examples. The palace had a tripartite inner structure with a main hall, presumably the throne room, in its center. The monumental doorway was generally situated on one broad side of the building and characterized by one or more columns, supporting a wide lintel. It gave access to a broad entrance hall, which was flanked by two tower-like square rooms. Adjacent to it lay the throne room, behind which a row of small rooms formed the back of the tripartite ensemble.

The origin of this kind of palatial architecture is still disputed. Some scholars propose a Hittite origin,<sup>48</sup> others a north Levantine one.<sup>49</sup> At present, it seems most likely that it derives from the valley east of the Amanus Mountains. Here, in Tilmen Höyük, the earliest testimony can be traced; nearby Kunulua (pl. XXXV) and Sam'al (XXXVI) provide the majority of its Iron Age representatives.<sup>50</sup> Anatolian influence is merely testified by the arrangement of single buildings around a central plaza inside the citadel.<sup>51</sup>

Palaces of this type have been found both in Aramaean cities like Sam'al, Sakçagözü, Tell Šaiḥ Ḥassan, Guzana (pl. XXXVII), and Sikani (former Waššukanni = Tell Fekheriye), and in Luwian cities like Kunulua and Carchemish.<sup>52</sup> While an ethnic distinction in the layout of the palaces cannot be observed, presumably some regional differences did exist. Those from west of the Euphrates, for example, have staircases in one of the tower-like rooms flanking the entrance. In the palaces excavated further east, bathrooms were situated at this location.

The identification of this type of building as a palace is supported by the installations found inside such as movable hearths in some of the throne rooms. Hardly anything is known about the decoration of the interior rooms. Contrary to Assyrian palaces no bas-reliefs were found inside the buildings and it is not attested if there were wall paintings or curtains instead. However, the outside was often richly decorated with reliefs on basalt or limestone orthostats, clearly demonstrating the ritual importance and power of the inhabitant of the palace, the king.<sup>53</sup> In several cases, the column bases and the jambs of the monumental entrance

<sup>48</sup> E.g., Margueron 1980.

<sup>49</sup> Frankfort 1954.

<sup>50</sup> Novák 2004a: 342–344.

<sup>51</sup> The pattern of Ḥattuša is still visible when compared with Sam'al.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. on most of the examples Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 411–429 with further reading. On Tell Šaiḥ Ḥassan, cf. Bachmann – Boese 2006–2008: 554, on Sikani, cf. Pruß – Bagdo 2002: 314–316.

<sup>53</sup> Gilibert 2011.

consisted of stone statues, showing sphinxes, lions, bulls, griffins, and the like. The columns themselves were made of wood. Guzana is probably the only remarkable exception.<sup>54</sup>

Although the internal structure of Luwo-Aramaeian palaces was quite simple and is in no way comparable to the complexity of their Assyrian and Babylonian counterparts, some of their characteristics aroused the interest of the Assyrians and had a substantial impact on Assyrian palatial architecture. In Assyrian sources a “Palace of the Hatti-countries”<sup>55</sup> is mentioned frequently, which “was called *būḫilāni* in the language of the Amurrū.”<sup>56</sup> One of its predominant characteristics was the columned entrance. Much has been written on the identification of the *būḫilāni*,<sup>57</sup> the etymology of its designation,<sup>58</sup> and its adoption in Assyria.<sup>59</sup> However, it seems very likely that *būḫilāni* was the name of the tripartite Luwo-Aramaeian type of palace.

## 5. TEMPLES

Attestation of Luwo-Aramaeian temple architecture is sparse, since only a few examples have been excavated so far. In detail, only the temples in Ḥalab (Aleppo), ‘Ain Dara in the Afrin-valley,<sup>60</sup> Kunulua/Tell Tayinat, Carchemish,<sup>61</sup> and Hazrak (Tell Afis)<sup>62</sup> can be listed as well as some buildings from coastal sites.<sup>63</sup> Surprisingly, no important temple has come to light so far in the major Aramaean cities like Sam’al, Til Barsib, Guzana, Hamath, or Damascus. Whether this is an archaeological coincidence, or

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<sup>54</sup> It is not absolutely certain whether Max Freiherr von Oppenheim’s famous reconstruction of the caryatids representing the local triad standing on the attribute animals is really correct. The bases might have been supporting wooden columns instead of the so-called gods. Actually, there is no real proof that the statues were positioned on top of the animals, as recent investigations have shown. Cf. Cholidis – Martin 2010: 69–117.

<sup>55</sup> General Assyrian expression for what is nowadays northern Syria, including parts of southeast Turkey.

<sup>56</sup> Assyrian designation of the Western Semitic languages spoken in Syria and the Levantine.

<sup>57</sup> Frankfort 1954; Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 411–429; Novák 2004a: 336–346.

<sup>58</sup> Renger 1972–1975.

<sup>59</sup> Novák 2004a; Gillmann 2008; Reade 2008; Schmid – Novák 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Abou Assaf 1990 and Novák 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 470–472.

<sup>62</sup> Soldi 2009: 106–109 and Mazzoni 2010 with further reading.

<sup>63</sup> Mazzoni 2010: 363f with references.

the reflection of a specific Aramaean religious policy, at least in the newly founded towns, is still under debate and is therefore difficult to evaluate.<sup>64</sup> In written sources, at least, a temple of Ba'al in Damascus is attested. Further important sanctuaries known only from textual references include the temples of the moon-god in Harran and the storm-god in Sikani (Tell Fekheriye).

However, it is quite remarkable that all the known temples, with the exception of Kunulua, could already look back on a century-long history by the time that the Aramaeans entered the picture. This indicates that the new Aramaean (and Luwian) elites adopted the established, traditional cults.

The most prominent example is the famous temple of the storm-god of Ḥalab (Aleppo), which dates back to the late 3rd millennium B.C. (XXXVIII). It underwent several renovations, some of them quite smooth, others with wide-reaching changes of the inner structure and even the axis of the entrance. From the early 2nd millennium on, it was characterized by a broad cella. In front of it lay a rectangular vestibule, which was open to the outside along its full breadth and was flanked on both sides by two square buttress-like rooms with staircases. Thus, this building can be considered an early example of a so-called *miḡdol*, a tower temple.<sup>65</sup> Tell Afis, ancient Hazrak, has revealed a sanctuary with a very similar entrance, but in contrast to the temple of Ḥalab, its cella was a long room flanked by small chambers on each side (pl. XXXIX).

The temple of 'Ain Dara, a still unidentified ancient town in the Afrin-valley northwest of Aleppo, was presumably built in the 13th or 12th century B.C. (pl. XL). From its initial phase, it was situated on top of an artificial terrace. A gallery, circulating the proper sanctuary, was added later. At first, it was open to the outside, similar to a *peripteros* with pillars. Later, during the terminal stage of the temple, this gallery was closed by the addition of an outer enclosure wall. Both in its initial and its terminal layout the temple belonged to the well-known type of the *templum in antis*.<sup>66</sup> The lateral walls of such a building are prolonged on the façade side, thus forming an open, niche-like vestibule. In the case of 'Ain Dara, this *portico* between the two *antis* has revealed two circular basalt bases

<sup>64</sup> On some contrary arguments, cf. Niehr 2004b and Novák 2004b.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Kohlmeyer 2009: 194.

<sup>66</sup> On the early history of the temple *in antis*, cf. Castel 2010; on its further evolution, cf. Werner 1994.

of wooden columns.<sup>67</sup> It gave direct access to the inner rooms of the building: a rectangular antechamber and an adjacent square cella with a podium, presumably for a divine symbol or statue. Its layout looks like an illustration of the Biblical description of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 6).

The best parallels for the columned porticos of the 'Ain Dara temple are to be seen in the nearby temples in Kunulua. These are the only known Luwo-Aramaean temples without Bronze Age forerunners.<sup>68</sup> The main difference is that the cellae of the temples of Kunulua were long rooms, with lateral walls longer than the front and back walls. Furthermore, they were situated close to the palaces, just outside the inner area of the citadel, in contrast to the isolated temples in Ḥalab, Hazrak, and 'Ain Dara. It has been proposed that this difference reflects their decisive functions as dynastic temples (Kunulua) in contrast to the sanctuaries of the tutelary city gods (Ḥalab, Hazrak, and 'Ain Dara).<sup>69</sup>

Another temple was excavated in the lower part of the citadel of Carchemish: the sanctuary of the storm-god just beside the "Great Staircase," which was identified by an inscription. It is uncertain if the so-called *hilani* at the southeast of the triangular plaza south of the "Great Staircase" was a palatial or a sacral building.<sup>70</sup> At least the temple of the storm-god has some features in common with the known temples *in antis*. It has an entrance niche and an almost square cella, but lacks an antechamber. Neither of these two buildings can be identified as the central sanctuary of the tutelary city goddess Kubaba, which might have been located on the highest part of the citadel.

A distinctive type of sanctuary was devoted to the ancestor cult. The so-called "cult room" in the Lower Town of Guzana, a long room with a vestibule and three small adjacent chambers, has convincingly been identified as such. Some similar, though smaller shrines were situated immediately east of the outer entrance to the citadel.<sup>71</sup> Although no comparable buildings have been excavated so far, there is clear evidence for a similar ancestor's cult in other Aramaean cities.

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<sup>67</sup> Columned porticos in a *templum in antis*, giving the temple a similar appearance to the later Greek *megaron* buildings, go back to the 3rd millennium B.C. A testimony is the temple of ar-Rawda, cf. Castel 2010: 158 fig. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Harrison 2009b: 187.

<sup>69</sup> Mazzoni 2010: 362, following an idea of P. Matthiae.

<sup>70</sup> As has been already argued by Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 470–472.

<sup>71</sup> Orthmann 2011.

Irrespective of the question of whether or not there was an antechamber, if the portico was flanked by buttresses or simple *antis*, and if the cella was a long square or broad room, all the temples have some crucial elements in common. They had only a limited number of rooms, meaning that there was no decisive inner complexity, and they show a strict axiality (direct visual and passage axis from the outside into the cella and to the podium). The main feature, however, was an open portico, indicating a transparency similar to that of the palaces. All these elements were already characteristic of Bronze Age temples in the northern Levant and Upper Mesopotamia. New elements that were introduced by the Aramaeans cannot be traced so far and might have never existed.

Moreover, the position of temples within the urban landscape can differ strongly: There are sanctuaries situated on the highest point of the citadel (Ḥalab, Hazrak), at its periphery opposite to the gate of the citadel (‘Ain Dara), or inside the outer part of the citadel, separated from the inner part by a wall (Kunulua, Carchemish). These differences may reflect the temples' function rather than any ethnic or political diversity. Still, a satisfying explanation has not been brought forward so far.

## 6. HOUSES AND WORKSHOPS

Domestic architectural remains were occasionally excavated in Aramaean settlements, but no comprehensive investigation has been undertaken so far. Although examples are known from some of the major sites, like Sam'al,<sup>72</sup> Til Barsib,<sup>73</sup> and Guzana,<sup>74</sup> only fragmentary remains have been explored there. Some of the minor settlements, like Tell Mastuma (pl. XLI) and Çatal Höyük, have provided more substantial remains.<sup>75</sup> The variety of types of houses continued to be wide. Beside more advanced structures with central courtyards and standardized allotment houses consisting of a vestibule and a main room, buildings composed of an irregular agglutination of small compounds seem to have been the dominant

<sup>72</sup> Struble – Herrmann 2009. Further structures were detected by geophysical prospecting, cf. Schloen – Fink 2009a and iid. 2009b.

<sup>73</sup> Bunnens 2009: 69 fig. 1.

<sup>74</sup> Müller in von Oppenheim 1950. Note that the early phase of dwelling architecture discovered in the Lower Town dates to the Aramaean period and the later one to the Assyrian.

<sup>75</sup> An overview and a typology of domestic architecture was presented by F. Braemer 1997.

type. In general, the units were quite modest considering their sizes and inventories.

Artisan and craftsmen's quarters with workshops were excavated in Tell Mishrife, a town of unknown name covering the ruins of the famous Bronze Age city of Qaṭna (pl. XLII).<sup>76</sup>

## 7. CONCLUSION

A distinct Aramaean architecture cannot be identified. On the one hand, it cannot be distinguished from the Luwian (or "Neo-Hittite") style due to general difficulties with respect to political, linguistic, and cultural conditions. On the other hand, it did not provide any new features: Almost all its elements, like fortified citadels, the tripartite *bītḥilāni* palaces, and the temples *in antis* had already existed before the Aramaeans. Moreover, almost all important sanctuaries of the Aramaean world looked back on a long history and did not undergo significant changes in their layout.

Regional differences are evident with respect to city planning and variations of buildings. However, taking into consideration the political fragmentation of the Luwo-Aramaean world on the one hand and the different regional heritages that the new entities had to face on the other, the consistency of the architecture from the Amanus Mountains in the west and the Khabur triangle in the east appears astonishing. In some cases, elements like the *bītḥilāni* emerged in regions where they had no local tradition at all. This indicates a common cultural identity. How, when, and where it was developed is still difficult to see. But the recently awakened interest in Luwo-Aramaean archaeology might cast more light on this question.

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<sup>76</sup> Morandi Bonacossi 2009.



## CHAPTER NINE

### OUTLOOK: ARAMAEANS OUTSIDE OF SYRIA

#### 1. ASSYRIA

Martti Nissinen

##### 1. *Aramaeans and the Neo-Assyrian Empire (934–609 B.C.)*<sup>1</sup>

Encounters between the Aramaeans and the Assyrians are as old as is the occupation of these two ethnic entities in the area between the Tigris and the Khabur rivers and in northern Mesopotamia. The first occurrence of the word *ar(a)māyu* in the Assyrian records is to be found in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.), who gives an account of his confrontation with the “Aramaean Aḫlamaeans” (*aḫlamû armāya*) along the Middle Euphrates;<sup>2</sup> however, the presence of the Aramaean tribes in this area is considerably older.<sup>3</sup> The Assyrians had governed the Khabur Valley in the 13th century already, but the movement of the Aramaean tribes from the west presented a constant threat to the Assyrian supremacy in the area. Tiglath-Pileser I and his follower, Aššur-bēl-kala (1073–1056 B.C.), fought successfully against the Aramaeans, but in the long run, the Assyrians were not able to maintain control over the Lower Khabur–Middle Euphrates region. Assur-dān (934–912 B.C.) and Adad-nirari II (911–891 B.C.) managed to regain the area between the Tigris and the Khabur occupied by the Aramaeans, but the Khabur Valley was never under one ruler, and even the campaigns of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) did not consolidate the Assyrian dominion. Under Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) the area east of the Euphrates came under Assyrian control, but it was not until the

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, NJ, USA) for the opportunity of writing this article during a research visit in May–June, 2011. Thanks are also due to Marika Pulkkinen for her help in preparing the statistics, as well as to Francesca Rochberg, Mario Fales, and Simo Parpola for their helpful comments. Any errors, of course, remain my own.

<sup>2</sup> RIMA 2 23 (A.0.87.1): 46f; 34 (A.0.87.2): [28]; 37 (A.0.87.3): 29f; 43 (A.0.87.4): 34.

<sup>3</sup> See Lipiński 2000a: 45–50 for Aramaean tribes in the 13th century B.C.



reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) that the area was incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system.<sup>4</sup>

The Upper Khabur area around the city of Nisibis was conquered and annexed to Assyria by Adad-nirari II in 896 B.C.<sup>5</sup> The city of Guzana (Tell Halaf), according to E. Lipiński, “became *de facto* an Assyrian province under Assurnasirpal II, around 870 BCE,”<sup>6</sup> even though its governors maintained their traditional royal titles in relations with their local subjects. This becomes evident from the titles of the local ruler in the bilingual statue from Tell Fekheriyeh, which gives the title as *šakin māti Gūzāna* “governor of Guzana” in Akkadian, but *mlk gwzn* “the king of Guzana” in Aramaic.<sup>7</sup> Further north, in the Tur ‘Abdin area, there was a continuous Assyrian presence under Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 B.C.) and Assurnasirpal II, and toward the end of the 9th century, the area was probably integrated into the Assyrian Empire.<sup>8</sup>

As a result of the systematic expansion of the Assyrian Empire to the west during Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), Esarhaddon (681–669 B.C.), and Ashurbanipal (669–627 B.C.), the areas west and northwest of the Assyrian homeland, populated by Aramaeans, were to a large part gradually incorporated into the provincial system of the Assyrian Empire. Assyrian rule brought about significant demographic changes throughout the empire, not only because the Assyrians appointed their own people to govern the annexed provinces, but first and foremost because they moved massive amounts of people far away from their homes to other parts of the empire, replacing them with people likewise deported from long distances. Indeed, the policy of mass deportations was one of the basic strategies of the construction of the Assyrian Empire.

B. Oded has counted 157 cases of mass deportation, beginning with Assur-dān. The 9th-century and early 8th-century kings carried out mass deportations only occasionally, with the exception of Assurnasirpal II (13 deportations/12,900 people)<sup>9</sup> and Shalmaneser III (859–824 B.C.: 8/167,500). The deportations became a consistent imperial policy in the

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Lipiński 2000a: 98–108.

<sup>5</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 116; RIMA 2 150–52 (A.0.99.2): 54–104.

<sup>6</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 129.

<sup>7</sup> RIMA 2 A.0.101.

<sup>8</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 161.

<sup>9</sup> All figures are taken from Oded 1979: 20, whose calculations are based on Assyrian sources in awareness of the fact that that we can “never be certain whether this picture reflects or distorts (to a certain degree) historical reality” (ibid.: 19).

reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (37/368,543), continuing in full force during Sargon II (38/217,635) and Sennacherib (20/408,150). Even Esarhaddon instigated a mass deportation 12 times and Ashurbanipal 16 times. B. Oded makes a statistical estimate of 4.5 million deportees altogether during the three centuries from Assur-dān to Ashurbanipal.<sup>10</sup>

Deportees were moved from all parts of the growing empire, including Babylonia, and they represented virtually all ethnic groups represented in the conquered areas. The people were relocated in different parts of the empire.<sup>11</sup> The main destination of the mass deportations, however, was the Assyrian heartland, specifically the big cities Ashur, Calah, Nineveh, and Dūr-Šarrukin, as if the upsurge of population of the principal cities was due to a consistent policy.<sup>12</sup> This had a deep impact on the demography of Assyria, significantly increasing its population and turning the once monolingual and ethnically relatively uniform land into a multiethnic and multilingual entity. According to the estimation of R. Zadok, the percentage of individuals with non-Assyrian (mostly West Semitic) names rose to 20% after 800 B.C. and remained on this level until the mid-7th century, becoming slightly lower toward the end of the Assyrian Empire.<sup>13</sup>

The deportations were presented as a punishment for rebellious peoples, including their kings, who refused to submit themselves to Assyrian rule.<sup>14</sup> The royal inscriptions present a murky picture of the deportees as a labor force used for brick making, building works, stone cutting, and so on. Assurnasirpal, for example, says he made deportees dig canals;<sup>15</sup> Sargon used them as laborers in the construction of Dūr-Šarrukin;<sup>16</sup> Sennacherib claims to have deported Chaldaeans, Aramaeans, Mannaeans, and people from Que and Hilakku to drag the reeds from Chaldaean marshes to

<sup>10</sup> Oded 1979: 20f n. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. 2 Kgs 17: 6: "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria; he carried the Israelites away to Assyria. He placed them in Halah, on the Khabor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." This roughly corresponds to the contemporary onomastics of these areas, where Hebrew names appear frequently; see Zadok 1995a; id. 2002b.

<sup>12</sup> See Oded 1979: 27–32.

<sup>13</sup> Zadok 1997a: 215; see also Fales 1991.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the curse against Ba'al, king of Tyre, if he should violate the treaty they had made with Esarhaddon: "May Melqarth and Eshmun deliver your land to destruction and your people to deportation; may they [uproot] you from your land and take away the food from your mouth, the clothes from your body, and the oil for your anointing" (SAA 2 5 iv 14–17). Cf. also 2 Kgs 18: 32; Isa 20: 4.

<sup>15</sup> Wiseman 1952: 30, 33: 33–37.

<sup>16</sup> Lie 1929: 74: 8–10.

Nineveh,<sup>17</sup> and Esarhaddon carried out restorations in Calah using peoples of the conquered territories.<sup>18</sup>

While there is enough evidence to demonstrate that the fate of some deportees indeed was to work under slave-like conditions,<sup>19</sup> B. Oded stresses that, to all appearances, “the captives usually were not reduced to slavery, but continued to be employed in their professions and trades according to the needs of the empire.”<sup>20</sup> The empire needed much more than just slaves—the Assyrian military force in particular required a lot of manpower. Craftsmen of different kinds were constantly needed to serve the growing population and the construction works, and the savoir faire of skilled merchants was certainly appreciated, not to mention the need for scribes mastering the Aramaic language, which increasingly gained footing in the Assyrian Empire (see below, section 2).

In fact, as we shall see, people with foreign names are regularly found in high positions in the state bureaucracy, and even though it is impossible to know the background of each individual, it can be concluded that a significant number of the deportees or their descendants made a magnificent career in the service of the Assyrian king. This was possible because, even though the natives of the annexed lands usually maintained their ethnic identities, they were regarded as Assyrians and were not treated as a separate class of people.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, the deportees began to change the linguistic and cultural environment of their invaders.<sup>22</sup>

## 2. *Aramaic Texts and Language in Assyria*

Hard evidence of the penetration of the Aramaic language into Assyria is provided by a growing number of Aramaic texts from the 7th century B.C., unearthed not only in the ethnically Aramaean area that once constituted the western provinces of Assyria, but also in the Assyrian homeland. Excavations in present-day Syria have recently brought to light a considerable quantity of Aramaic clay tablets;<sup>23</sup> however, the number of

<sup>17</sup> Grayson – Novotny 2012: 97 (no. 1): 71f.

<sup>18</sup> Leichty 2011: 156 (no. 77): 40–44.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Oded 1979: 96, 110f.

<sup>20</sup> Oded 1979: 77. For the different positions of the deportees, see *ibid.*: 75–115.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Parpola 2004: 12–14.

<sup>22</sup> Beaulieu 2006: 188: “Therefore Assyria was faced with the paradoxical fact that, as the empire expanded and more and more people were made Assyrian, the conquered people were making Assyria less and less Assyrian culturally and linguistically.”

<sup>23</sup> According to Fales 2010: 191, the total number of Aramaic clay tablets at our disposal is currently ca. 250, while an equal amount is still to be published. For modern editions

Aramaic texts from the original heartland of Assyria is not very impressive, mostly consisting of very short texts and amounting to little more than 100, which constitutes but a tiny percentage of the contemporary cuneiform texts. Nevertheless, even this small corpus presents a variety of different writing materials and text types, enabling a typological and linguistic comparison with cuneiform material and providing information on the Aramaean population and the use of the alphabetic script in Assyria.<sup>24</sup> This evidence is complemented by the abundance of West Semitic onomastics in sources throughout the Neo-Assyrian period (see below, section 3).

A considerable part of the extant Aramaic texts is written on clay tablets, 45 of which derive from the area of the Assyrian political and religious capitals around the Tigris.<sup>25</sup> About two-thirds (32) of these tablets are legal documents from Nineveh, written in cuneiform and bearing incised or painted Aramaic epigraphs (the so-called “endorsements”) of the type “Deed of Il-malak of the land of Hamê”<sup>26</sup> in their margins.<sup>27</sup> The tablets are mostly sale or loan documents or conveyance texts written in Akkadian, and the Aramaic epigraphs have usually been understood as a summary of the contents of the tablet for those not able to read cuneiform and were written mainly for the purpose of distinguishing one document from another.<sup>28</sup> F. M. Fales, however, has suggested that the epigraphs have the same function as the seal, namely that of “a secondary notarization of the juridical document.”<sup>29</sup>

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of the Aramaic clay tablets, see Fales 1986 (= AECT) and Lemaire 2001b. New material from excavations in Syria has been published by Bordreuil – Briquel-Chatonnet 1996–1997 (Tell Aḥmar, ancient Til Barsib); Röllig 2002a; id. 2002b (Tell Šeh Ḥamad, ancient Dür-Katlimmu); Fales – Radner – Pappi – Attardo 2005 (Tell Shiukh Fawqani, ancient Burmarina); Lipiński 2010 (Ma’lana/Ma’allanate).

<sup>24</sup> For partial overviews of the Aramaic texts, see, e.g., Millard 1983; id. 2009; Röllig 2000a; Fales 2007: 100–105.

<sup>25</sup> For these texts, see Fales 2000: 92–102; for clay tablets found in Syria, see *ibid.*: 102–114. Cf. also the unprovenanced “Bordreuil tablet” (AECT 58).

<sup>26</sup> AECT 23 (SAA 6 217): *dnt.ʼlmlk.zy.ʼrq.hmʼ*. The terms *dnt* and *ʼgrt* used for cuneiform tablets in Aramaic epigraphs correspond to the Akkadian *dannutu* and *egirtu*; see Radner 1997: 52–67; Fales – Radner – Pappi – Attardo 2005: 611f.

<sup>27</sup> AECT 1 (SAA 6 154); 2 (SAA 6 59); 4 (SAA 6 196); 5 (SAA 6 111); 10 (NALK 5); 14 (SAA 6 284); 15 (NALK 198); 16 (SAA 6 334); 17 (NALK 146); 18 (ADD 387); 19 (NALK 208); 20 (SAA 6 250); 21 (NALK 23a); 22 (NALK 24); 23 (SAA 6 217); 24 (NALK 215); 25 (NALK 222); 26 (ADD 562); 27 (NALK 136); 28 (NALK 81a); 29 (ADD 522); 30 (NALK 124); 31 (NALK 125); 32 (NALK 128); 33 (NALK 122); 34 (NALK 408); 35 (ADD 156); 37; 38; 60, F1, and F2.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., Röllig 2005a: 124: “Ordnungsmittel für nicht-Keilschriftkundige.”

<sup>29</sup> Fales 2000: 118.

Another type of tablet on which Aramaic texts were written is the so-called “docket,” a triangle-shaped tablet that usually has a hole on the top edge for a string and may bear stamp sealings. These tablets were probably not independent documents in their own right but were attached to another tablet or to a scroll.<sup>30</sup> While very common in western areas, only twelve “dockets” have an Assyrian provenance (4 from Nineveh<sup>31</sup> and 8 from Ashur).<sup>32</sup> These tablets are typically loan documents, and they may be bilingual (Akkadian-Aramaic) or monolingually Aramaic. To these can be added two legal texts written on rectangular tablets.<sup>33</sup>

While ostraca were certainly used for alphabetic writing even in Mesopotamia, only a few potsherds with an Aramaic text have been discovered in Assyria, that is, apart from two small inscribed sherds,<sup>34</sup> the Ashur ostrakon bearing the text of a letter<sup>35</sup> (see below) and the Nimrud ostrakon containing two lists of West Semitic names.<sup>36</sup>

Akkadian personal names can also be found engraved in Aramaic letters on a few cylinder and stamp seals.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, four seal impressions bear alphabetic script: three bilingual bullae from Calah (Nimrud) with administrative or magical-apotropaic content,<sup>38</sup> and a bulla of the seal of the eunuch Pan-Aššur-lamur from Dūr-Šarrukin (Khorsabad).<sup>39</sup>

Short Aramaic epigraphs were also frequently incised on hard surfaces. The 15 bronze statuettes in the form of lions from Calah bear bilingual Akkadian-Aramaic texts indicating the weights of the objects, hence they probably functioned as an official standard for ponderal measures.<sup>40</sup> Another 16 bronze objects (bowls and mace-heads), likewise from Calah, bear Akkadian names of high Assyrian officials written in alphabetic script, as do two mace-heads from Dūr-Šarrukin, both with the text *l'srsršr* “belonging to Aššur-šarru-ušur.”<sup>41</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Radner 1997: 27–31.

<sup>31</sup> AECT 3 and 6 (Akkadian-Aramaic); AECT 13; Hug 1993: 19 (NinU 4) (Aramaic).

<sup>32</sup> AECT 46; 47; 48; 49; 50; 51; IM 96737 (Hug 1993: 24f) and a text yet to be published (cf. Fales 2000: 99 n. 53); all monolingual.

<sup>33</sup> AECT II (Nineveh) and 52 (Ashur); both monolingual.

<sup>34</sup> CIS II/1 44–45.

<sup>35</sup> Fales 2010: 195–197.

<sup>36</sup> Segal 1957.

<sup>37</sup> See Millard 1983: 103f.

<sup>38</sup> AECT 43; 44; 45.

<sup>39</sup> PNA sub Pān-Aššūr-lāmūr (4.), reading [*l*] *pn'sr[l]mr srs z'srgn*. For an earlier reading *pn'sr mr srsy srgn* and alternative readings, see Tadmor 1982: 450 with n. 23. See also Millard 1983: 103f.

<sup>40</sup> See Fales 1995a and Zaccagnini 1999.

<sup>41</sup> Curtis – Grayson 1982: 88–90.

Finally, a very special use of the alphabet in Assyria should be mentioned. The famous Nimrud ivories from Calah from the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. sometimes consist of composite pieces marked by the craftsmen with signs, often letters of the West Semitic alphabet, helping to ensure the correct assemblage.<sup>42</sup> The same technique was used when constructing a glazed brick panel in Fort Shalmaneser by bricklayers who used the sequence of the West Semitic alphabet as an aid for assembling a sequence of bricks.<sup>43</sup> These scrapings represent the oldest alphabetical writing found in Assyria, and their existence is not surprising with regard to the tangible presence of the Aramaean population in the contemporary onomastics. The absence of actual Aramaic *texts* from the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. may indicate that, at that time, all official writing was still done in cuneiform, but it is also possible that, to date, such texts have simply not been discovered.

As we have seen, the Aramaic documents are relatively few in number, constituting only a minute portion of the texts unearthed in Assyria and mostly deriving from the 7th century B.C. This is partly due to the time-honored tradition and practice of using cuneiform in all writing regardless of the language of the scribes and their audiences. Apart from this, one can reasonably argue for an additional explanation: the Aramaic documents were mostly written on perishable materials, such as papyrus, parchment, or leather, which have fallen prey to the ravages of time, leading to the loss of a considerable number of documents.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the somewhat meager evidence, the abundant production of Aramaic documents in the Assyrian Empire is beyond any doubt. The famous images on Assyrian palace reliefs depicting two scribes registering the booty on a battleground, one engraving a clay tablet and the other writing on a pliable scroll,<sup>45</sup> give the impression that Assyrian and Aramaic documents were produced (literally) side by side. The prominent featuring of Aramaean scribes in textual sources points to the same direction.

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<sup>42</sup> See Millard 2009: 210.

<sup>43</sup> Millard 1993; cf. id. 2009: 210f.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Fales 2010: 190 and Millard 2009: 208–210. Note, however, Fales's warnings against overestimating the significance of this documentary disappearance (Fales 2000: 123f; cf. id. 2007: 98).

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., Barnett – Bleibtreu – Turner 1998 pls. 83, 132, 143, 173, 186, 363 (Sennacherib) and 193, 213, 222, 244, 255, 256 (Ashurbanipal); see also the picture attached to SAA 17 p. 5. A stylized version of this motif is used as the cover image of volumes 1 to 13 of the State Archives of Assyria Studies series. Note also the alternative (in my view less plausible) suggestion that the person handling the pliable object is not a scribe but an artist sketching the scene of battle (thus Seidl 2007: 119 and Reade 2012: 708–712).

The practice of writing on scrolls is also known from cuneiform texts. The oracle queries very often refer to a person whom the query concerns and “whose name is written on this *niāru*,” that is, a slip of papyrus or another pliable material.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, there are references in cuneiform sources to letters written in Aramaic on a scroll, for instance, to a sealed letter in Aramaic,<sup>47</sup> and to a scribe conveying an Aramaic letter to the addressee.<sup>48</sup> Sin-iddina, a scribe from Ur, wanted to write to Sargon II in Aramaic but received the royal answer “why would you not write and send me messages in Akkadian?”<sup>49</sup>

While Sargon’s reaction testifies to the socially superior position of Akkadian as the preferred language of royal correspondence, it is noteworthy that the conventions of Assyrian epistolography were adapted even to Aramaic letter-writing. The evidence of this is provided by the Ashur Ostrakon, a private letter written in Aramaic by the Babylonian official Bel-eṭir to his brother.<sup>50</sup> This is the only specimen of an Aramaic letter from Assyria, probably a draft written on a potsherd in order to be subsequently copied on a scroll.<sup>51</sup>

The Ashur Ostrakon is an illustrious example of how much our knowledge of the use and status of the Aramaic language in the Assyrian Empire owes to the fortunate phenomenon of writing the alphabetic script also on clay and not only on soft materials. The use of clay for writing Aramaic is an Assyrian innovation, and the Assyrian impact on Aramaic writing can be observed throughout the Neo-Assyrian period. The Aramaic scribal conventions were previously influenced by the Phoenician tradition, as can be seen in the earliest Aramaic texts. It is only from the reign of Shalmaneser III on that the Assyrian impact becomes increasingly visible in Aramaic documents.<sup>52</sup> A prime example of this is the

<sup>46</sup> E.g., SAA 4 106 r. 9; 107 r. 3; 110: 5; 129 r. 6; 134 r. 6; 150 r. 2; 152: 3 and many other occurrences.

<sup>47</sup> ND 2686: 3–5 (Saggs 1952 = 2001: 154f): “I sent this Aramaic document (*kaniku annītu armītu*) by Nabu-šeḫib from inside Tyre.”

<sup>48</sup> SAA 16 99: 8–13: “The scribe Kabtī, a servant of Aššur-da”in-aplu son of Shalmaneser (III), who gave me the Aramaic letter (*egirtu armētu*) which I gave to the king, my lord, is saying to me: ‘– – –.’”

<sup>49</sup> SAA 17 2: 13–21: “[As to what you wrote]: ‘There are informers [... to the king] and coming to his presence; if it is acceptable to the king, let me write and send my messages to the king on Aram[aic] parchment sheets’—why would you not write and send me messages in Akkadian? Really, the message which you write in it must be drawn up in this very manner—this is a fixed regulation!” For discussion, see Fales 2007: 104f n. 47.

<sup>50</sup> See the new edition and discussion by Fales 2010: 193–199.

<sup>51</sup> Fales 2010: 198. Note that the letter was found at Ashur while its addressee lived in southern Mesopotamia.

<sup>52</sup> See Röllig 2000a: 178–181.

mid-9th-century B.C. bilingual Akkadian-Aramaic statue of Tell Fekheriye, in which the Assyrian style is noticeable enough for A. Millard to conclude that the scribe who composed the text was trained in Assyria.<sup>53</sup> We have just seen how Assyrian letter-writing conventions are discernible in the Ashur Ostrakon. Even the legal documents, represented by the mono- or bilingual clay tablets both from the Assyrian heartland and the western provinces, show a clear influence of the Mesopotamian legal tradition, sometimes blended with West Semitic legal terminology.<sup>54</sup>

Despite the paucity of Aramaic texts and their haphazard distribution, it can be argued on the basis of the existing documentation that Aramaic was used in virtually all levels of communication alongside Assyrian. Aramaic tablets were of the same legal worth as the cuneiform tablets; in the words of F. M. Fales: “*Aramaic was used as a fully alternative linguistic medium to Assyrian for writing out legal (and perhaps also administrative) documents* in many parts of the empire, and specifically in the north-western sector of Mesopotamia, during the seventh century B.C.”<sup>55</sup> Due to long-standing tradition, “the socially dominant linguistic variety—Assyrian—represented the reference point for the overall textual framework,” while “the socially subordinate linguistic variety—Aramaic—fulfilled the essential role of vehiculating a viable and running translation of all stylistic, rhetorical and lexical items which filled such a framework, such as to make all possible written utterances available to the general population.”<sup>56</sup>

The expansion of the Aramaic language was, somewhat paradoxically, one of the clearest repercussions of Assyrian rule in the west. The Assyrians did not impose their language and the cuneiform script on the annexed lands; rather, the policy of mass deportations caused the alphabetic script and the Aramaic language to proliferate throughout the empire.<sup>57</sup> The centuries-long symbiosis of the Akkadian and Aramaic languages left traces in the languages themselves: while the Aramaic language was for a long time exposed to Akkadian influences, the Neo-Assyrian language was also influenced by Aramaic, both lexically and grammatically.<sup>58</sup> What was more important, however, was Aramaic’s phenomenal takeover as the

<sup>53</sup> Millard 1983: 105; cf. Fales 1983; id. 2000: 90f; Röllig 2000a: 181f.

<sup>54</sup> See Fales 2000: 95–115.

<sup>55</sup> Fales 2000: 116 (italics original); cf. id. 2007: 102 and id. 2010: 191–193.

<sup>56</sup> Fales 2010: 200.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Millard 2009: 212.

<sup>58</sup> See Kaufman 1974; von Soden 1977; id. 1966; id. 1968; Tadmor 1982: 454f; Luukko 2004; Lemaire 2008a; Cherry 2009; Abraham – Sokoloff 2011.



language of everyday life and bureaucracy in the Assyrian Empire. The cuneiform script remained in use as long as it was upheld by the bilingual learned class and sponsored by the state; for instance, “official” texts such as royal inscriptions were written solely in cuneiform.<sup>59</sup> Along with the increase of the West Semitic population in Assyria, however, the Aramaic language gradually developed into the lingua franca of the empire and eventually replaced Assyrian as the vernacular even in the Assyrian heartland, including among the fully bilingual ruling class.<sup>60</sup> Thus, “Aramaic had won the vernacular battle without a fight”<sup>61</sup>—in fact the triumph of Aramaic is difficult to perceive as anything but the result of a conscious imperial policy.<sup>62</sup>

### 3. *Aramaean Population in Assyria*

Aramaic names feature prominently already in 8th-century documents, such as the Nimrud Wine Lists (including Aramaean scribes with Assyrian names),<sup>63</sup> and permeate the records of later periods until the end of the Assyrian Empire. The size and distribution of the Aramaean population in Assyria is difficult to estimate in exact figures, though. First of all, it is often very difficult to determine the actual language of a West Semitic name and, consequently, the ethnic background of the person thus called. Moreover, many ethnic Aramaeans have Akkadian names, either due to renaming when becoming Assyrian citizens, or (which may be more often than not the case) because they were given Akkadian names at birth. The Neo-Assyrian documents reveal that, especially in the families of the ruling class, it was a widespread practice to give Akkadian names to children of parents of West Semitic origin. On the other hand, there are also persons with Aramaic names whose parents’ names are Akkadian.<sup>64</sup>

That the Assyrians recognized the Aramaeans as an ethnic entity in their own right can be seen in texts where the Aramaeans are juxtaposed with “Assyrians, Akkadians, and Chaldeans”<sup>65</sup> or listed together with other

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Röllig 2005a: 121.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Röllig 2000a: 185f; Parpola 2004: 11f; id. 2007; Beaulieu 2006: 187–192; Fales 2010: 189f.

<sup>61</sup> Beaulieu 2006: 192.

<sup>62</sup> Thus Parpola 2007: 262.

<sup>63</sup> See Kinnier Wilson 1972.

<sup>64</sup> Parpola 2007: 268–274 has compiled a list of bilingual patronyms, including 66 cases of the son with an Aramaic/foreign name and the father with an Akkadian name, and 122 cases where the reverse is true. See also Zadok 1997a: 214.

<sup>65</sup> SAA 4 280 r. 12.

ethnic groups.<sup>66</sup> The exact demographic counterpart of the designation *ar(a)māyu/arumu* is difficult to discern, however, as it may cover the West Semitic population somewhat more broadly than the current scholarly definition of “Aramaean.”

The main reason for the emergence of a West Semitic population from the 9th century B.C. onward, as well as for the multiethnicity of the Assyrian Empire in general, including the Assyrian heartland, is often seen in the Assyrian practice of mass deportations. It is virtually impossible to know whether or not the presence of non-Assyrian populations in Assyria proper is due to deportations unless this is explicitly stated.<sup>67</sup> However, the estimate based on Assyrian sources of 4.5 million people having been deported by the Assyrian kings within three centuries<sup>68</sup> makes this assumption quite plausible, even though one should not rule out voluntary movements of people prompted by the empire’s growing multiethnicity and its assimilation and integration policy.

A thorough analysis of the Aramaean population in Assyria has not yet been written,<sup>69</sup> and cannot be accomplished within the confines of this article. The following sketch, based on the *Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (PNA)*<sup>70</sup> should be understood as a first attempt to outline the profile of the Aramaean population in the heartland of Assyria. My working principles have been the following:

- (1) In addition to the names whose bearers are expressly said to be Aramaeans, I have, for the sake of consistency, singled out all personal names designated as “Aram.” by the *PNA* editors. It is quite obvious that many—if not the majority—of the names designated as “WSem.” actually belong to Aramaeans.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, I have left them out because the ethnicity of their bearers is not certain.
- (2) As far as the people’s place of origin can be determined, I have only included names of persons from the Assyrian heartland and ignored

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<sup>66</sup> This is the case in many oracle queries, such as SAA 4 139: 11 listing Itu’eans, Elamites, Hittites, Gurraeans, Akkadians, Aramaeans, Cimmerians, Egyptians, Nubians, and the Qedarites; cf. SAA 4 142: 10; 144: [10]; 145: 6.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Oded 1979: 4f.

<sup>68</sup> Oded 1979: 20; cf. above, note 9.

<sup>69</sup> For an earlier attempt at a general picture of West Semitic names in Assyria, see Fales 1991.

<sup>70</sup> Radner (ed.) 1998–1999; Baker (ed.) 2000–2001; ead. 2002–2011.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Zadok 1997a: 212: “WSem., in practice mostly Aramaic.”

names coming from the ethnically Aramaean western provinces (for example, Harran, Dūr-Katlimmu, Guzana, and Ma'allanate).<sup>72</sup>

- (3) I have counted individuals, not names, in cases where several individuals appear in the *PNA* under the same name.

It is clear that this database does not enable a full inventory of the Aramaean population in Assyria. First of all, not all Aramaeans have Aramaic names, the Aramaic names are not always distinguishable from other West Semitic names, and second, Aramaic names have been given to people of non-Aramaean origin.<sup>73</sup> The actual number of Aramaeans should probably be multiplied from what is presented here. Third, a person's place of origin is not always certain and not every place name appearing in the documents can be localized with certainty. Fourth, the haphazard survival and discovery of the documents does not yield an accurate demographic description; cities where large archives have been discovered inevitably dominate the statistics, while important cities like Dūr-Šarrukin and Arbela remain almost entirely in the dark. All things considered, it is my hope that my sample is representative enough to draw a preliminary profile of Aramaeans in Assyria, to be completed by further research based on a complete and thoroughly analyzed database.

The *PNA* volumes include a total of 3,117 individuals whose names are recognized as West Semitic or Aramaic. Of these, 1,040 individuals (ca. 33%) are designated as Aramaeans, of whom 599 individuals (ca. 58%) can be located in the Assyrian heartland with some certainty. Of these 599 Aramaeans, only 32 (ca. 5.3%) are women.<sup>74</sup>

The personal names in the *PNA* corpus date from the entire Neo-Assyrian period. While a fair number of Aramaic names appear in undatable documents,<sup>75</sup> it may be observed that three-fifths, that is, 365 of the 599 Aramaeans, lived during the reign of the Sargonid kings (Sargon II: 67, Sennacherib: 69, Esarhaddon: 67, Ashurbanipal: 162); in addition,

<sup>72</sup> For the documents from Ma'allanate (Ma'lana), located somewhere in the Baliḫ region, see now the full-scale study of Lipiński 2010.

<sup>73</sup> E.g., Ta'lā, an Egyptian from Ashur, Zambālā, an Arab active in Ashur, Dala-ahī, military official from Samaria, and two members of a Samaritan contingent in Calah, both called Ahi-idri.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. the anonymous references to Aramaean women in SAA 7 24: 1 (36 Aram[ae]an women), 21 (three Aramaean women), r. 2 (six female Ar[amaean] scribes; see below, n. 146).

<sup>75</sup> According to Zadok 1997a: 211, it is "logical to assume that most of the undatable documents from Kuyunjik and Calah belong to the well-documented periods, viz. 704–648 BC at Nineveh and 744–705 at Calah."

35 individuals are mentioned in tablets with an approximate dating in the 7th century. The documents dating to pre-Sargonid times include 54 Aramaean individuals, while the documents written after the reign of Assurbanipal report as many as 85 individuals with an Aramaic name.

As far as the place of domicile of the 599 Aramaeans can be known, three major Assyrian cities clearly dominate the scene: 189 individuals come from Nineveh, 119 from Calah, and 130 from Ashur. Otherwise, fifteen people are located in Kannu', five in Imgur-Illil, four in Maganuba, and two in Dūr-Šarrukin. All other locations in the Assyrian heartland are represented by one Aramaean individual, if any. In the pre-Sargonic texts, as well as in those from the time of Sargon II, Calah is by far the most common domicile of the people (40/54 individuals before Sargon, 35/67 during his reign), while in the time of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, a slight majority of the Aramaeans come from Nineveh (86/136). The picture changes again in the time from Assurbanipal to the end of the Assyrian empire: Of the total of 247 individuals, 94 come from Ashur, 59 from Nineveh, and 29 from Calah. One should note, however, that these figures are, evidently and expectedly, dependent on the availability of archival material. The lack of Aramaeans in major cities such as Dūr-Šarrukin (2)<sup>76</sup> and Arbela (1) cannot possibly mean that there were no Aramaeans in these cities; the reason is rather that archives from these cities have not been discovered. This can be also taken as a warning against relying too heavily on statistics, which are inevitably exposed to the accident of discovery.<sup>77</sup>

As was stated above, the growth of the empire and the mass deportation policy caused even the Assyrian heartland to develop into a multiethnic society in which people of non-Assyrian origin occupied different positions and professions. This, of course was true even for the Aramaeans, as I would like to demonstrate in the following brief inventory. The individuals are listed in the footnotes by referring to the respective entries in the *PNA* where the textual references and other information can be found.<sup>78</sup>

*Slaves and workers* (25 individuals). Even though slavery was not the most typical fate of the deportees and the purpose of the deportations was

<sup>76</sup> Unless Maganuba may be taken as representing Dūr-Šarrukin.

<sup>77</sup> For the role of accident in our knowledge of the Ancient Near East in general, see Millard 2005.

<sup>78</sup> In order to save space, references are made directly to the entries, giving the names without page numbers, textual references, and the authors of the entries. Henceforth, the following abbreviations are used for the reigns of the Assyrian kings: Tig = Tiglath-Pileser III, Sar = Sargon II, Sen = Sennacherib, Esh = Esarhaddon, Asb = Assurbanipal.

not to acquire slaves in the first place, people with West Semitic names can regularly be found as slaves in purchase documents, including 21 Aramaean individuals, no fewer than eight of whom are women.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the sources mention three individuals belonging to 8th-century work forces in Calah, and one member of a work force at a temple in 7th-century Ashur.<sup>80</sup> That slavery was not a typical position for the Aramaeans either, can be seen in the fact that four slave owners appear among them.<sup>81</sup>

*Agriculture* (20 individuals). Farmers with Aramaic names are well-represented in Neo-Assyrian sources,<sup>82</sup> and even other agricultural workers such as gardeners,<sup>83</sup> gooseherds,<sup>84</sup> and fowlers,<sup>85</sup> are attested. As the ruling élite owned most of the land,<sup>86</sup> most farmers are not likely to have owned the land they cultivated and, hence, appear as dependent farmers. It was probably possible, however, for a family to eventually own the property that it had worked on for generations.<sup>87</sup> This becomes evident

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<sup>79</sup> Abi-iahia, slave woman from Nineveh (Esh); Addî (11.), slave from Nineveh (late Asb); Ah-abû (9.), slave from Nineveh (Sen); Aia-sûrî (2.), slave woman from Imgur-Ilil (Sen); Aia-sûrî (5.), slave girl from Calah (Asb); Akbarâ, slave woman from Nineveh sold to the harem (Sen); Bahî (5.), son of Isî and Attar-[...] sold by a Kummuhæan merchant to a cohort commander (Asb); Bar-ahu, slave and father from Nineveh, sold to an official (Sen); Daiânu-idrî, slave boy, son of Isî and Attar-[...], brother of Banî and Ramâ (post-Asb); Ekur-rahama, slave woman from Ashur (post-Asb); Gad-iata', slave woman from Ashur (Asb); Il-idrî (5.), tanner and slave (Asb); Il-sûrî, slave, brother of Hammunu and Addâ from Nineveh (Sen); Mâr-lihia (2.), slave from Nineveh (7th century); Marqihitâ, slave woman from Nineveh (Esh); Mâr-sûrî (2.), slave of the household of the crown prince from Nineveh (Esh); Mûmar-il, slave from Calah (Tig); Mûrâ, slave from Nineveh (Sen); Nikkal-šeiâgi, slave woman from Calah (Asb); Šamaš-immî (2.), slave from Ashur (Sar); Ūsêa' (3.), slave boy from Niniveh (Esh).

<sup>80</sup> Abdî (4.), Il-iâba (1.), and Šapûnu/Zabûnu (2.); Abi-dekîr (2.).

<sup>81</sup> Adda-dimri, individual from Ashur, buys a female slave (Asb); Adda-idrî (4.), owner of a slave, prob. from Nineveh (Esh); Bêssi-ṭalli, Woman from Calah, buys a slave (prob. Asb or later); Šakil-Aia/Šakilia (4.), slave owner from Calah (Asb).

<sup>82</sup> Adda-padâ (1.), dependent farmer (post-Asb); Ah-immê (3.), palace farmer from Šiddi-hiriti (Sen); Ah-immê (10.), dependent farmer from Mannu-lu-ahu'a (Asb); Ah-abû (23.), dependent farmer from Iseppe (Asb); Baiadi-il (3.), dependent farmer (Asb); Bî'â (3.), dependent farmer from [...] rani; Kabar-il (5.), dependent farmer from Asihi (Asb); Kabar-il (6.), dependent farmer from Irinnih (Asb); Mâriddi (2.), dependent farmer (Asb); Milki-nûrî (2.), dependent farmer (Asb); Šamaš-qanâ, dependent farmer in the Town of the Crown Prince's Shepherds (Asb).

<sup>83</sup> Arnabâ (1.), gardener, son of Se'-aplu-iddina from Hananâ (Sar); Iâli, dependent gardener in Halahha (Asb); Idrî-ahâ'u (3.), gardener in Barzanista (Asb); Zabînu, dependent gardener from Nabur (Sen).

<sup>84</sup> Abi-rahî and Birânu, both gooseherds from Ashur (7th century).

<sup>85</sup> Il-iadîni (2.), and Mâr-lihia (1.), both fowl-fatteners from Calah (Asb and later); Matî'-il-ilâ'î, fowler from Rapâ (Asb).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Parpola 2007: 263.

<sup>87</sup> Thus Oded 1979: 98f.

from the fact that sixteen persons with Aramaic names appear in legal documents as land-owners<sup>88</sup> and another eleven persons (including one woman) as house-owners.<sup>89</sup>

*Craftsmen* (23 individuals). Skilled professionals deported from all parts of the empire were needed to construct and maintain the empire in the most concrete sense, since the local Assyrian craftsmen could not possibly provide for the ever-growing population. All kinds of craftsmen, artisans, and other professionals are represented in the *PNA* corpus, twenty of whom have Aramaic names. This group consists of individuals working on metals,<sup>90</sup> ceramics,<sup>91</sup> textiles,<sup>92</sup> and leather;<sup>93</sup> yet others are occupied in construction,<sup>94</sup> the oil industry,<sup>95</sup> and in food production.<sup>96</sup> The skills of bow-makers<sup>97</sup> were called for by the army, whereas those of

<sup>88</sup> Addî (4.), landowner at Bet-Balati (Sen); Ah-abû (12.), owner of real estate probably in the area of Calah (Sen); Ah-abû (17.), owner of land prob. near Nineveh (late Esh); Ah-immê (2.), landowner (Sar); Bar-ahâti, landowner from Ti'î near Maganuba (Sen); Daniāti-il, owner of land in Maganuba; Idrāia (3.), landowner in Urulli (early Esh); Il-malak (2.), landowner in Hamê (Esh); Matî-Adda (4.), landowner from Nineveh (not dated); Rišišu, son of Qanuni, landowner in the Town of the Clergymen in Nineveh (Sar); Sē-dāli, landowner from Nineveh (post-Asb); Šakil-Aia/Šakilia (2.), landowner from Nineveh (Asb); Šēr-idrî (1.), landowner in the vicinity of Calah (Sar); Tēr-dalâ, landowner in the town of Hulî (Sar); Zabînu (1.), landowner in the vicinity of Calah (Sar); Zabînu (15.), landowner from Dur-Šarruken (7th cent.).

<sup>89</sup> Addî (3.), in Calah (8th–early 7th century); Addî (8.), in Nineveh (late Asb); Ah-abû (22.), in Nineveh (Asb); Attâr-sūrî (1.), in Nineveh (Sen); Ba'altî-iābatu, daughter of Bel-nadî, in Nineveh (post-Asb); Bahiānu (10.), in Maganuba (not dated); Bir-Attâr (2.), in Nineveh (Asb); Hazūgu (2.), in Nineveh (not dated); Il-manāni (1.), horse trainer and owner of a house in Nineveh (late Asb); Tābî (9.), house owner from Nemed-Issar (Asb); Zabdānu (4.), chariot driver and estate owner (Asb).

<sup>90</sup> Adda-idrî (9.), blacksmith from Nineveh (not dated); Birānu (1.), blacksmith of the royal court of Calah (Shalmaneser V); Adda-rahîmu (5.), individual from the circle of a goldsmith from Ashur (post-Asb); Ahūnu (16.), individual from Ashur associated with members of the goldsmith's guild (late Asb); Bassāl, goldsmith from Ashur (Asb); Mannuka-Sē' (1.), goldsmith from Nineveh (Asb); Kapara (4.), craftsman or official mentioned in an inventory of precious metals (probably Esh).

<sup>91</sup> Ah-immê (16.), probably a potter (7th century).

<sup>92</sup> Saġibî (5.), dependent weaver from Nineveh (Esh); Zabînu (2.), tailor from Nineveh (Sen).

<sup>93</sup> Abdâ (1.), Aramaean tanner at Calah (not dated); Il-idrî (5.), tanner and slave (Asb).

<sup>94</sup> Il-malak (1.) dependent carpenter from the village of the god Te'er (Sar).

<sup>95</sup> Irmulu, master of the oil pressers' guild from Ashur (Asb or earlier); Kabar-[...], oil-presser from Calah (Adad-nirari III).

<sup>96</sup> Adda-sūrî (3.), Aramaean baker from Calah (Sen); Kabar-il (7.), baker from Calah (7th century); Tābî (4.), baker from Nineveh (Sen); Šakil-Aia/Šakilia (9.), brewer of the Ashur temple from Ashur (not dated).

<sup>97</sup> Makkamê (2.), bow-maker from Nineveh (Sen).

camel-drivers<sup>98</sup> had a logistic and commercial function. Musicians from different parts of the empire were present already in the 8th-century court at Calah, and there is a reference to anonymous Aramaean musicians in the Nimrud Wine Lists.<sup>99</sup>

*Merchants* (8 individuals). The services of professional merchants were essential for the immense trade of the empire, the economic interests of which constituted one of the basic reasons and motivations for empire-building.<sup>100</sup> Merchants were naturally recruited from among deportees and other foreigners who had established contacts with different parts of the empire. The eight merchants with Aramaic names, mostly acting as witnesses in legal documents, are connected with the palace, the military, and the slave trade.<sup>101</sup>

*Military* (58 individuals). A large representation of Aramaeans is to be found in the service of the military.<sup>102</sup> The expansion of the empire was not possible without significant investments in the armed forces, which the Assyrian population was far too small to provide. Therefore, deportees and soldiers of the defeated armies were recruited and incorporated into the Assyrian military,<sup>103</sup> the result being a multiethnic army, in which non-Assyrians could rise to high positions. This is also true for Aramaeans, who can be found as commanders-in-chief,<sup>104</sup> cohort commanders,<sup>105</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Adda-idrī (6.), camel driver, dependent of the chief eunuch (Asb); Mannu-ki-ili (2.), individual responsible for camels (Sar); Matī'ī (2.), dependent camel driver (Asb).

<sup>99</sup> See Kinnier Wilson 1972: 77 and pls. 28/9 and 30/29.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Berlejung 2012.

<sup>101</sup> Addī (7.), merchant from Kišqa, is active in Nineveh and connected with Kakkullanu, a well-known cohort commander of the crown prince (Asb and later). Ba'alat-qāmu, merchant from Calah (Sen); Bir-šamaš (1.), merchant from Nineveh (Sen); Il-immī (3.), merchant from Nineveh (Asb) all act as witnesses in slave sale tablets. Il-ma'ādī (3.), Assyrian official or merchant, is said to report to the king about his whereabouts in Šimira (Esh). Nabūzā, merchant from Nineveh, acts as a witness for a "third man" who buys an estate (Sen). Sē<sup>2</sup>-gabbāri (1.), chief merchant from Calah, is named in a list of (military?) personnel (Tig or Sar); Ṭābī (1.), merchant (?) active in Calah (Tig/Sar).

<sup>102</sup> For an overview of West Semitic military personnel, see Fales 1991: 103–106.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Oded 1979: 108f.

<sup>104</sup> Aia-halū (1.), chief treasurer and commander-in-chief, eponym of 833, 824, and 821 (Shalmaneser III and Shamshi-Adad V); Mār-lārim (3.), commander-in-chief of Kummuhu, eponym of 668 (Asb).

<sup>105</sup> Aia-rapâ/Iarapâ (the name is either Aramaic or Arabic), cohort commander acting as go-between with the Arabs (Sar); Balasī (the name is either Akkadian or Aramaic) (8.), bodyguard and cohort commander of the crown prince (post-Asb); Ginnāia (the name is either Aramaic or Arabic) (1.), probably a cohort commander from Nineveh (Esh); Hašilānu, cohort commander dealing with fugitives and camels of the Arabs (not dated); Il-iadīni (3.), cohort commander from Nineveh (post-Asb); Kubābu-sūrī, cohort commander from

commanders-of-fifty,<sup>106</sup> team commanders,<sup>107</sup> recruitment officers,<sup>108</sup> and as “third men” (*tašlīšu*);<sup>109</sup> sometimes an officer appears in the texts without exact information about his position.<sup>110</sup> Apart from positions of command, soldiers of lower rank with Aramaic names can be found as chariot drivers,<sup>111</sup> chariot fighters,<sup>112</sup> staff bearers,<sup>113</sup> archers,<sup>114</sup> and ordinary members of contingents.<sup>115</sup> Non-military professionals who offered their services to the army include horse trainers,<sup>116</sup> a fodder master,<sup>117</sup> and a serf-master.<sup>118</sup>

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Arzuhina (Sar); Luqū (4.), cohort commander of the crown prince from Nineveh (Asb); Saḡīru, cohort commander from Nineveh (Asb).

<sup>106</sup> Ah-abu (27.), commander-of-fifty, prob. from Nineveh (not dated).

<sup>107</sup> Adda-immē (8.), team commander of Marduk-šarru-ušur (Sar); Ahi-dekīr, Chaldaean team commander active in Calah (Sar); Bahī (1.), team commander of the Samarian contingent from Calah (Sar); Bahī (2.), team commander from Calah (Sar); Gūwāia, team commander active at Calah (not dated); Kapara (2.), team commander active at Calah (Sar); Sabbūru (1.), commander of troops from Calah (Adad-nirari III or Shalmaneser III).

<sup>108</sup> Adda-hāti (the name may be Canaanite), recruitment officer of the chariotry in Calah (Sar); Bir-ammā (1.), recruitment officer at Calah (Sar).

<sup>109</sup> Adda-rahīmu (2.), “third man” from Nineveh (Esh); Adda-sannānī, “third man” from Nineveh (Sen); Bir-ammā (3.), “third man” from Nineveh (probably Asb); Harrānāiu (West Semitic, but probably an Aramaic name) (11.), “third man” from Ashur (not dated); Mašqaru, “third man” from Nineveh (Asb).

<sup>110</sup> Abi-dekīr (1.), high-ranking military officer at Calah, is in charge of another officer and 50 horses (Sar); Dādi-sūrī (2.), military official concerned with horses from Calah (Sar); Dalā-ahi, military official from Samaria active in Calah (Sar); Harrānāiu (a West Semitic, but probably an Aramaic name) (10.), military functionary active in Nineveh (7th century); Il-idrī (2.), military officer from Calah (Sar); Luqū (3.), military official from Nuniba (Sar or later); Mār-lārim (1.), military official from Nineveh (Sar); Mattī (1.), military official active in Calah (Sar).

<sup>111</sup> Addī (10.), chariot driver from Nineveh (late Asb); Hamnānu (3.), chariot driver (Esh); Hiri-ahhē (3.), chariot driver possibly from Nineveh (Asb); Zabdā (2.), chariot driver from Nineveh (Esh); Zabdānu (4.), chariot driver and estate owner (Asb); Zabdī (4.), chariot driver from Nineveh (Asb).

<sup>112</sup> Iglā, chariot fighter from Ashur (post-Asb).

<sup>113</sup> Adda-salamu (1.), staff bearer from Ashur (late Asb); Bir-il, staff bearer (Esh).

<sup>114</sup> Laqīsu, archer from Kapar (post Asb); Zabdī (7.), archer and landowner from Nabû-šimanni (late Asb).

<sup>115</sup> Adda-nūrī (3.), Gurraean under the command of the “third man” in Nineveh (not dated); Ahi-idrī (1. and 2.), both members of a Samarian contingent in Calah (Sar); Nūrī-iapa’, Chaldaean serving in the Assyrian military in Calah (Sar), Ṭābī (6.), recruit from Nineveh (Sen).

<sup>116</sup> Adda-atī (1.) horse trainer from [Arra...] (probably Asb); Adda-raqī (1.), horse trainer from Ashur (Sar); Iahūtu (1.), person responsible for horses, possibly from Calah (probably Sar); Il-manāni (1.), horse trainer and owner of a house in Nineveh (late Asb); Ilu-bī’dī, horse trainer in Inurta-ašared (Sar); Ukumu (2.), horse trainer active in Ashur (not dated); Zabīnu (6.), horse trainer from Nineveh (Asb); Zānbānu, horse trainer active in Ashur (Sar).

<sup>117</sup> Abi-qāmu (1.), fodder master at Calah (Tig or Sar).

<sup>118</sup> Saḡību (8.), serf-master of the commander-in-chief from Ashur (7th century).



*Palace personnel and civil administration* (64 individuals). The largest number of people listed in the *PNA* with Aramaic names belong to the realm of administration, many of them occupying important positions. The growth of the empire led to the creation of a new aristocracy dependent on the king alone, rather than belonging to the old Assyrian nobility. This new ruling class—including the royal élite—was multiethnic, and its emergence was not merely due to a natural development. The imperial policy was not to protect the Assyrian upper crust against foreign influences—on the contrary, it becomes evident that non-Assyrian elements were systematically incorporated into the aristocracy already in the 8th century B.C.<sup>119</sup>

The prominent presence of non-Assyrians can be seen in the list of Neo-Assyrian eponyms,<sup>120</sup> which includes a significant number of years within two centuries named after 20 non-Assyrian officials, five of them with Aramaic names:

- 833, 824, and 821 Aia-halu (Aram.), chief treasurer, commander-in-chief
- 764 Šidqi-ilu, governor of Tušhan
- 763 Bur-sagalê (Aram.), governor of Guzana
- 725 Ammi-hatî/Mahdie, governor of Nineveh
- 701 Hanana, governor of Til Barsib
- 700 Mitunu, governor of Isana
- 692 Zazaya, governor of Arpad
- 689 Gihilu, governor of Hatarikka
- 684 Manzarnê, governor of Kullania
- 677 Abi-ramu (Aram.), great vizier
- 676 Banbâ, second vizier
- 673 Atar-ilu, governor of Lahiru
- 668 Mar-larim (Aram.), commander-in-chief
- 667 Gabbaru, governor of Dūr-Sin-ahhe-riba
- 660 Gir-Šapunu
- 656 Milki-ramu, cohort commander
- 655 Awianu, governor of Que
- 651 Sagabbu (Aram.), governor of Harran
- 649 Ahi-ila'i, governor of Carchemish
- 620 Sa'ilu, chief cook

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<sup>119</sup> See Parpola 2007: 260f.

<sup>120</sup> For the eponyms, see Millard 1994.

To these should be added two undatable Aramaic eponyms.<sup>121</sup> Such a significant list of non-Assyrians worth an eponym—not including non-Assyrians with Assyrian names, who would probably make the list much longer—speaks volumes about the infiltration and representation of “foreign” elements in the Assyrian ruling class and helps to explain the triumph of the Aramaic language in Assyria.

Despite the fact that only one governor with a name designated as Aramaic and active in the Assyrian homeland can be found in the *PNA* corpus,<sup>122</sup> the eponym list shows that governors of provinces were frequently recruited from among non-Assyrians, including Aramaeans. The same can be said of local administrators in cities and villages, even in principal cities, who sometimes have Aramaic names.<sup>123</sup>

In addition to the civil administration, the intended permeation of non-Assyrian people into the imperial body becomes evident in the organization of the royal palace, where a significant number of the king’s attendants appear to be of non-Assyrian descent, Aramaeans among them. These include great viziers,<sup>124</sup> heralds,<sup>125</sup> bearded courtiers,<sup>126</sup> gate guards,<sup>127</sup> and a considerable number of officials and royal servants whose position cannot be specifically defined.<sup>128</sup> Royal bodyguards were

<sup>121</sup> Andarāni (2.), eponym of the village Kapar-Andarani (date lost), and Pāda, palace herald and eponym, attested in sources from ca. 700 B.C. Note also Šilānu, eponym of the Chaldaean tribe Bit-Šilani (Tig).

<sup>122</sup> Idrāia/Idrija/Idri-Aia (4.), governor of Hal [...] can be identified with Atarāia who follows Aššur-alik-pani as the governor of Barhalza (Esh and Asb); Aramaeans were also appointed governors of the western provinces, e.g., Bur-sagalē, governor of Guzana, eponym for 763, and Sagabbu (5.), governor of Harran, eponym of 651.

<sup>123</sup> Abi-rāmu (7.), city overseer in Ashur (Sen); Ah-immē (13.), possibly a mayor from Ashur (post Asb); Addi, (6.), village manager from Tille (Esh); Ammi-iata’ (the name is either Aramaic or Arabic) (1.), deputy and servant of the king (Sar); Bahiānu (5.), village manager of the temple stewardess from Nineveh (Sen); Bar-rakkūb, majordomo or member of his household from Ashur (Assur-dān III); Kubābu-satar, (2.), village manager of Sila [...] (not dated); Mannu-kī-ili (the name can be Akkadian or Aramaic) (1.) village inspector (late 9th–early 8th century); Mār-lārim (2.), village manager from Barhalzi (Esh); Mār-nūrī (1.), deputy of Maganuba (Sen); Mār-samsi, deputy from Nineveh (Sen); Sē’-sakā (4.), majordomo from Nineveh (Esh).

<sup>124</sup> Abi-rāmu (8.), great vizier, eponym of 677 (Esh).

<sup>125</sup> Aširē, herald, son of Abu’a, from Irbu (late Asb); Pāda, palace herald and eponym; cf. above, n. 122 (Sen).

<sup>126</sup> Adda-sūrī (1.), bearded courtier in Calah (Tig).

<sup>127</sup> Arzāni, gate guard from Calah (early Asb); Sagībī (1.), gate guard of the palace of Nineveh (Sen).

<sup>128</sup> Adda-barakka (1.), servant of the king (Sen); Adda-idrī (2.), servant of the chief eunuch (Adad-nirari III); Ahūnu (12.), messenger from the royal court of Nineveh (Esh);

regularly recruited from among deportees and foreigners, and even many Aramaeans can be found as members of the king's guard.<sup>129</sup> Eunuchs (*ša rēši*), among them a few Aramaeans, often feature as the Assyrian king's and queen's personal attendants.<sup>130</sup> The management of the royal women's quarters was likewise in the hands of women partly of non-Assyrian origin.<sup>131</sup>

*Temple* (4 individuals). In comparison with the royal court, ethnic Aramaeans are not often associated with Assyrian temples. The four individuals with Aramaic names connected to a temple include two priests, one prophet, and one staff member of a temple.<sup>132</sup> If not due to the accident of preservation, the most natural explanation for the conspicuous lack of Arameans in the field of worship is either that the Aramaeans did not adhere to Assyrian cult practices, largely maintaining their non-Assyrian religious traditions even in the Assyrian heartland,<sup>133</sup> or that the temples were more conservative than the royal court in their recruitment

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Arzāiu (1.), official (Sar); Bāia/Baiâ (3.), official responsible for transport of furniture (Sar); Balasî (4.), official of the palace (Esh); Baqî-Amri, official from Calah (Asb); Barûhu-il, official responsible for grain deliveries in Nineveh (7th century); Harrânāiu (1.), female member of the royal court at Calah (Ashur-nirari V or Tig); Harrânāiu (2.), member of the royal court at Calah (Tig); Harrânāin (3.), official active at Calah (8th century); Hazûgâ (1.), member of the royal court at Calah (Tig); Idrāia/Idrîja/Idrî-Aia (11.), servant of the Crown Prince (7th century); Ilâ-hāri, official from Ashur (Asb); Il-ma'adî, (3.), Assyrian official or merchant (Esh); Kapara (4.), craftsman or official (probably Esh); Kul-ba-iadi-il (2.), official in Ilgê (8th century); Lûqu (2.), official responsible for horses (Sar); Makkamê (1.), official (Sar); Matî, member of the royal court at Calah (Tig); Nargî, (15.), official stationed in Ilhini; Sagî, official active in Calah (Tig); Sagîb-Adda (1.), official active in Calah (Tig); Sê'-gabbāri (5.), official or professional from Nineveh (probably 7th century).

<sup>129</sup> Abi-rāmu (4.), royal bodyguard from Calah (?) (Tig/Sar); Adda-ladîm (1.), bodyguard of the king (Esh); Ah-abû (19.), bodyguard (and cook?) from Nineveh (Asb); Balasî (8.), bodyguard and cohort commander of the crown prince (post-Asb); Il-pādi (6.), royal bodyguard from Calah (Tig/Sar); Il-qatar (1.) royal bodyguard (Sen); Kabar-il (2.), king's stand-by of the personal guard (Asb); Qarhâ/Qarhāia (7.) personal guard of the crown prince at Nineveh (post-Asb); Sarsâ, king's personal guard (7th century); Şapûnu/Zabûnu (3.), royal bodyguard (Sar).

<sup>130</sup> Idrāia/Idrîja/Idrî-Aia (6.), royal eunuch from Ashur (Asb); Il-iāba (3.), eunuch (?) responsible for misappropriating a village (Asb); Milki-nûrî (1.), eunuch of the queen (Esh and Asb).

<sup>131</sup> Ahi-talli (1.), harem governess of the Central City of Nineveh (Sen). Other harem governesses include Amat-Astārti (Phoenician), harem manager in Calah (post-Asb), and Amat-Ba'al (West Semitic), harem manager in Calah (7th century).

<sup>132</sup> Hamnānu (2.), priest (Esh); Qinţāia, priest of Taşmetu at Calah (Adad-nirari III); Bāia/Baiâ (5.), prophet from Arbela (Esh); Ginnāia (the name may be Aramaic or Arabic) (4.), member of the staff of a temple (7th century).

<sup>133</sup> Note that the Assyrians themselves promoted the cult of the national deity of the Aramaeans, Amurru, who, in fact was a creation of the Sumerians rather than an indigenous deity; see Beaulieu 2005; id. 2006: 189.

policy. Again, it should be borne in mind that the Neo-Assyrian onomastics hides a significant number of ethnic Aramaeans behind Akkadian names, which makes it probable that the actual number of Aramaeans in Assyrian temples was not quite as insignificant as the meager number persons designated as Aramaic in the *PNA* would indicate.

*Scholars and scribes* (16 individuals). The most famous person featuring as an Aramaean scholar is the legendary Aḥiqar, known from the Book of Aḥiqar, the only ancient Aramaic wisdom text preserved to us.<sup>134</sup> The many titles given to him in the Aramaic Book of Aḥiqar include “seal-bearer of Sennacherib, king of Assyria” (1: 3), “wise scribe, counsellor of all Assyria” (1: 12), and “father of all Assyria, by whose counsel king Sennacherib and all the host of Assyria were guided” (4: 55).<sup>135</sup> Aḥiqar is also familiar from the book of Tobit (1: 21–22; 2: 10; 11: 19; 14: 10) which presents him, not only as Tobit’s nephew, but also as a high official in the court of Esarhaddon.<sup>136</sup> The possibility that these fictitious texts are based on a tradition of a historical personality has been backed up by the Seleucid-era Uruk List of Kings and Sages, according to which “during the reign of Esarhaddon, Aba-Enlil-dari was scholar (*ummānu*), whom the Aramaeans (*aḥlamû*) call Aḥiqar (*a-hu-’u-qa-ri*).”<sup>137</sup> This information is difficult to reconcile with other written sources, though: scholars called Aba-Enlil-dari or Aḥiqar are not known from any extant Assyrian source, and it is highly unlikely that a scholar belonging to the king’s inner circle would not have left traces in the royal correspondence and other documents, unless the tradition goes back to a scholar known by another name.<sup>138</sup> This is not to say that there could not have been Aramaeans among the Assyrian scholars; the fact is, however, that the *PNA* corpus includes only two scholars with Aramaic names, namely Balasî, the well-known astrologer of Ashurbanipal and Ukumu, a scholar from Nineveh.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>134</sup> The earliest textual evidence of the Book of Aḥiqar is a fragmentary late-5th-century Aramaic papyrus from Elephantine, and versions of the text exist in, e.g., Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, and Arabic. See Kottsieper 1990; Greenfield 1995; Contini – Grottanelli (eds.) 2005; Niehr 2007.

<sup>135</sup> Other designations include “wise and skillful scribe” (1: 1) and “wise scribe and master of good counsel (3: 42); see Greenfield 1995: 44f.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Niehr 2009.

<sup>137</sup> Edition: van Dijk 1962, 45 r. 19f; see also Lenzi 2008: 141, 143.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Beaulieu 2006: 190. Parpola 2005 suggests that the famous Assyrian scholar Adad-šumu-ušur served as the prototype of Aḥiqar.

<sup>139</sup> Balasî (3.), astrologer of Assurbanipal from Nineveh (Esh and Asb); Ukumu (1.), Babylonian scholar in the royal library at Nineveh (Esh). Otherwise, the list of the inner circle of scholars of the Assyrian kings consists of Akkadian names; see Parpola 1993: xxvi.

Aramaean scribes, however, feature prominently already in the Nimrud Wine Lists<sup>140</sup> and are attested throughout the Neo-Assyrian period. Whether the designation *tuṣšarru armāyu* should always be understood to indicate a scribe of Aramaean origin rather than merely a scribe of any ethnic origin able to write Aramaic,<sup>141</sup> cannot really be known, however.

The Nimrud Wine Lists recognize the three categories of Assyrian, Egyptian, and Aramaean scribes.<sup>142</sup> The lexical tradition makes a distinction between Assyrian and Aramaean scribes,<sup>143</sup> as does a Neo-Assyrian oracle query<sup>144</sup> and a late 8th-century letter from Calah.<sup>145</sup> Finally, the above-mentioned pictorial representations of two scribes, one engraving a clay tablet and the other writing on a scroll, point to the same conclusion. All this indicates that Aramaean scribes were needed to produce documents in Aramaic, and their number and prominence suggests that this need was a constant one. In addition to the anonymous references to Aramaean scribes in Neo-Assyrian sources,<sup>146</sup> perhaps including a reference to six female Aramaean scribes,<sup>147</sup> fourteen of them are known by name in the *PNA* corpus.<sup>148</sup>

*Queen and queen mother* (1 individual). The last person that remains to be mentioned comes from the very top of Assyrian society: the queen of Sennacherib, who is known both by her Aramaic name Naqia and her Akkadian name Zakutu, both names meaning 'pure.'<sup>149</sup> Even though her origin is not specified in any source, her Aramaic name makes it probable

<sup>140</sup> See Kinnier Wilson 1972: 62–64.

<sup>141</sup> Thus Garelli 1982: 439f.

<sup>142</sup> *NWL* 9: 18–20; see Kinnier Wilson 1972: 62f.

<sup>143</sup> *MSL* 12: 329 v 5–6: LÚ A.BA KUR.aš+šur-a-a LÚ A.BA KUR.ara-ma-a-a "Assyrian scribe, Aramean scribe."

<sup>144</sup> *SAA* 4 144:9.

<sup>145</sup> *NL* 86; see Radner 1997: 83.

<sup>146</sup> E.g., *SAA* 4 58 r. 10; 144: 9; *SAA* 14 318 r. 4; *SAA* 16 123: 8.

<sup>147</sup> Provided that the fragmentary word in *SAA* 7 24 r. 2: 6 MÍ.A.BA.MEŠ *ár-x*[*x x (x x)*] can be reconstructed as *armītu*.

<sup>148</sup> Abā-gū, palace scribe from Nineveh (Sen); Ah-abū (13.), palace scribe from Nineveh (probably Sen); Ah-abū (26.), Aramaean scribe, prob. connected to the army (not dated); Ahu-iddina (17.), Aramaean scribe; Ammāia/Ammā (1.), Aramaean scribe from Nineveh (not dated); Attā-sūrī, scribe from Nineveh (Asb); Baṭṭuṭānu (1.), scribe from Nineveh (Esh); Baṭṭūtu (3.), scribe from Nineveh, active in Ashur (post-Asb); Il-idrī (6.), scribe from Nineveh (7th century); Il-pādi (4.), scribe from Nineveh (Sen); Il-zabadda, scribe of the mayor of Nineveh (not dated); Nargī (4.), scribe from Nineveh (Asb); Nurāia (10.), Aramaean scribe of the crown prince (7th century); Šama' (1.), scribe from Nineveh (Sen). Note also Ahu-[...] Aramaean [scribe], in *SAA* 6 314 s. 1, [Sa']ilu, Aramaean scribe, in *SAA* 14 153 r. 8, and Ubrī, Aramaean scribe, in *SAA* 14 75: 3.

<sup>149</sup> Naqī'a, queen of Sennacherib, mother of Esarhaddon, grandmother of Assurbanipal (Sen, Esh, and Asb).

that she actually was an ethnic Aramaean. Naqia was an extremely influential personality both as a queen and as a queen mother during her lifetime, which spanned the reigns of her husband, son, and grandson.<sup>150</sup> She was not an exception as a queen of Assyria of foreign origin, however. Tiglath-Pileser III and his son Sargon II both had foreign wives, called Iabâ and Atalia, both found buried in the same coffin in a royal tomb at Calah. Even though the ethnicity of both queens is uncertain,<sup>151</sup> their names are distinctly non-Assyrian, indicating a practice of intermarriage of Assyrian kings with royal women of the conquered lands and vassal states. As much as this was an act of royal diplomacy, it also contributed to the growing influence of people of non-Assyrian origin in the Assyrian court.

#### 4. Conclusion

Throughout its period of growth from the 9th through the mid-7th century B.C., the Neo-Assyrian Empire became an increasingly multilingual and multiethnic political and cultural entity. It was composed of people of different ethnic backgrounds, among whom the West Semites, especially the Aramaeans, formed the biggest and culturally most significant group. Even the Assyrian heartland, the principal cities in particular, were replete with people of non-Assyrian origin. The main reason for this is the imperial practice of mass deportations, which brought about major demographic changes, not only in the countries conquered and annexed by the Assyrians, but also in the Assyrian homeland. In addition, the growing internationalization of the empire may have prompted non-coerced mobility of people.

The contributions of the non-Assyrian population were an absolute necessity for the maintenance of the empire, since the indigenous Assyrian population was too small to sustain the imperial military force and state bureaucracy. While their ethnic background was recognized, the non-Assyrians were nonetheless completely integrated into Assyrian society and identified as Assyrians.<sup>152</sup> The Aramaeans assumed a key position

<sup>150</sup> For Naqia, see Melville 1999 and Svärd 2008: 31–33.

<sup>151</sup> The *PNA* presents Iabâ as West Semitic or Arabic, while the origin of the name Atalia is given as “unknown” (note that the entry appeared as an appendix to Vol. 1/2, p. 433). Some scholars consider it probable that both names are Hebrew (cf. Queen Ataliah in 2 Kgs 11), and that the Assyrian kings, thus, had Judaeans wives (Dalley 1998b; cf. Zadok 2002b: 12); however, the Hebrew origin of the names and, hence, the ethnicity of the queens, is not certain (cf. Achenbach 2002; Younger 2002).

<sup>152</sup> Parpola (2004: 6f) compares this with the amalgamation of ethnic and national identities in the United States, where immigrants may maintain their ethnic identities and

among them, not only because of their large number but also because of their language and alphabetic script, which was much more functional and widely understood throughout the empire than the Akkadian language, written in cuneiform. The Aramaic language rapidly became the *lingua franca* of the empire, with an official status, and even the Assyrian ruling class became fully bilingual.

The above survey of the Aramaean population in the Assyrian heartland is based on an onomastic sample of ca. 600 names drawn from the *Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. It does not yield an exact demography of the Aramaeans in Assyria, but it sufficiently demonstrates that Aramaeans could be found at all levels of Assyrian society, from slaves to queens, gate guards to governors. On the basis of this sample it is evident that Aramaeans had access to any occupation in Assyrian society, including the highest positions in the state bureaucracy. They did not constitute a separate class of people with special privileges or restrictions.

According to the above sample, quite expectedly, the Aramaean population reached its peak in the time of the Sargonid kings, particularly during the reign of Assurbanipal, and remained significant even in the last decades of the Assyrian Empire. No clear diachronic pattern can be discerned with regard to the positions of the Aramaean people, although it appears that the number of Aramaeans in high military and governmental positions increased in the Sargonid period. This indicates a full assimilation of the Aramaeans into the Assyrian upper crust.

Keeping in mind that the onomastic evidence does not reveal the large number of Aramaeans who had been given Akkadian names, one can safely assume that the representation of ethnic Aramaeans in Assyria was much stronger than the sample discussed in this article. Whatever their exact percentage of the population in Assyria may have been, the sources make it evident that the Aramaeans contributed decisively, and more than any other ethnic group, to the building of the Assyrian Empire from early on, having a profound cultural impact on its ideology and practices.

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simultaneously identify themselves as Americans. Another good example could be taken from former Yugoslavia, where the Jews, recognized as a religious and national minority and maintaining their Jewish identity to a varying degree, primarily identified themselves as Yugoslavians. See Kerkkänen 2001: 93–99, 187–190.

## 2. BABYLONIA

Michael P. Streck

### 1. *Introduction*<sup>1</sup>

This section treats some aspects of the history of the Aramaeans in Babylonia during roughly the first half of the 1st millennium B.C. Section 2 presents the evidence for a clear distinction between Chaldaeans and Aramaeans in the Mesopotamian view. Section 3 gives references for the general names for Aramaeans in Babylonia, i.e., *Aramu*, *aḥlamû*, and *Sûtû*. Section 4 provides a gazetteer of Aramaean tribes in Babylonia explicitly designated as “Aramaean” in the cuneiform texts. Section 5 deals with the evidence for the lifestyle of the Aramaeans in Babylonia.

Instead of merely summarizing the previous secondary literature it seemed more useful to focus on the primary cuneiform evidence itself because many texts have been published or re-published during recent decades.<sup>2</sup>

When the Aramaeans spread to Babylonia during the 1st millennium B.C. the Aramaic script and language came into contact with Babylonian and cuneiform writing, the native language and script of Mesopotamia. Cuneiform texts provide much information on this contact between both languages and scripts: loan words and Aramaic names in Babylonian cuneiform texts, alphabetic influence on the cuneiform orthography, references for the use of the Aramaic language and script in cuneiform texts, representations of Aramaic scribes in reliefs, Aramaic epigraphs on cuneiform tablets, and so on. All this is beyond the scope of this article.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This section has been written in the frame of the *Sonderforschungsbereich* “Differenz und Integration. Wechselwirkungen zwischen nomadischen und sesshaften Lebensformen in Zivilisationen der Alten Welt” of the universities of Leipzig and Halle; see [www.nomad-sed.de](http://www.nomad-sed.de). I thank Marco Stockhusen, who collected most of the references and secondary literature used in this section, corrected the manuscript, and arranged the bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> Excellent earlier studies on the Aramaeans include Brinkman 1968: 260–287; Dietrich 1970; Lipiński 2000a.

<sup>3</sup> See instead the studies of von Soden 1966; id. 1968; id. 1977; Zadok 1978; Garelli 1982; Greenfield 1982; Tadmor 1982; id. 1991; Streck 1998–2001a; id. 2001; id. 2011; Abraham – Sokoloff 2011.



## 2. Chaldaeans, Aramaeans, and Babylonians

The name “Kaldu” is first attested in the inscriptions of the Assyrian king Aššurnasirpal II for the year 878 B.C.: *pulḫāt bēlūtija adi<sup>kur</sup>Karduniaš ikšud šuribāt kakkija<sup>kur</sup>Kaldu usahḫip* RIMA 2, 214: 23–24 “Fear of my dominion reached as far as Karduniaš. The terror of my weapons overwhelmed Kaldu.” Kaldu and Karduniaš are here synonyms for Babylonia.

Chaldaeans are neatly distinguished from Aramaeans and Babylonians in the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (cf. Frame 1992: 33): UN<sup>meš</sup> kurURI<sup>ki</sup> *kurKal-du<sup>kur</sup>A-ra/ru-mu* KUR *tam-tim* Borger 1996: 40: 97f. (translation *ibid.*: 233) “the people of Akkad, Kaldu, Aramu, the Sealand”; see also *kurURI<sup>ki</sup> kurKal-du<sup>kur</sup>A-ru-mu* A. Fuchs *apud* Borger 1996: 279: 111. Likewise, an extispicy report from the period between 652 and 648 B.C. mentions *lu-ú URI<sup>ki</sup> lu-ú<sup>lú</sup>Kal-da-a-a lu-ú<sup>lú</sup>Aḫ-lam-i* SAA 4, 280 r. 11f. “either Akkadians or Chaldaeans or Aḫlamû.”

Other texts, too, distinguish between Chaldaeans and Aramaeans. Šamši-Adad V fought against Marduk-balāssu-iqbi from Babylonia “who had mustered the lands Chaldaeia (*kurKal-du*), Elam, Namri, and Arumu (*kurA-ru-mu*)” RIMA 3, 188: 38f. Tiglath-Pileser III receives tribute from “the Aramaean and Chaldaean princes” (*malkī<sup>lú</sup>A-ri-me ù<sup>kur</sup>Kal-di*) Tadmor 1994: 172 Summ. 7: 24'. A broken passage in an inscription of Sargon II refers to the tribute of Aramu, and the two Chaldaean tribes Bīt-Amūkāni and Bīt-Dakūri.<sup>4</sup> See also Fuchs 1994: 171 Ann. 385: “when I defeated the Kaldu and the Aramu” and Fuchs 1994: 233 Prunk 149f: “when I defeated the land of Bīt-Yakīn (another Chaldaean tribe) and all the Aramaeans.” The letter SAA 17, 22: 6–18, written by Bēl-iqīša to Sargon (dated 710 B.C.), mentions Bīt-Dakūri, Bīt-Yakīn, and the Aramaeans, who have turned against the Assyrians. Note especially l. 14f: *lúki-zu-ú<sup>meš</sup> šá<sup>uru</sup>É<sup>m</sup>Da-ku-ri<sup>lú</sup>A-ra-mu ù<sup>ERIN</sup>meš šá<sup>uru</sup>É<sup>m</sup>Da-ku-ri* “the charioteers of Bīt-Dakūri, the Arameans, and the troops of Bīt-Dakūri.”

A passage in Sennacherib inscriptions distinguishes “Urbi, Aramu, Chaldaeans in Uruk, Nippur, Kiš, Ḫursagkalama, Kutha, Sippar” (Frahm 1997: 51 T 4: 10; cf. Isimu 6, 139: 52).<sup>5</sup> In another inscription Sennacherib lists Babylonian cities and the Chaldaean tribes Bīt-Yakīn, Bīt-Amūkāni,

<sup>4</sup> Fuchs 1994: 155 Ann. 315f.

<sup>5</sup> See Frahm 1997: 104f, for a discussion of the meaning of Urbu: “Arabs” or a kind of troops? He concludes that Urbu possibly are members of a specific Arab tribe who served as soldiers in different armies west and east of the Syro-Arabian desert. See also Retsö 2003: 155–157; Frahm 2003: 150; Bagg 2010: 206f.

Bīt-Ašilāni, Bīt-Ša'alli, and Bīt-Dakūri and summarizes them as “all the Chaldaeans” (<sup>lú</sup>*Kal-di* Isimu 6, 135: 10f), followed by 17 Aramaean tribes summarized as “Aramaeans” (<sup>lú</sup>*A-ra-mu* ib. 12–14).

An astrological report from 678 (SAA 8, 316 r. 1) distinguishes GAL<sup>mes</sup> šá <sup>lú</sup>*Ka-al-du lu-ú* <sup>lú</sup>*A-ra-mu* “the nobles of the Chaldaeans or Aramaeans.” Sennacherib deports “the people of the land of Kaldu, of the Aramaeans (KUR *Kal-di* <sup>lú</sup>*A-ra-me*)”<sup>6</sup> and of different countries (Frahm 1997: 55 T 4: 69). In a letter dated to the revolt of Šamaš-šum-ukīn (652–648 B.C.), Enlil-bāni and the Nippurians accuse Aramaeans and Chaldaeans (<sup>lú</sup>*A-ra-ru* <sup>lú</sup>*mu* <sup>lú</sup>*ù* <sup>lú</sup>*Kal-du*) of misinforming the king and making peace with the enemy (SAA 18, 199: 11–14).<sup>7</sup>

The letter SAA 17, 132: 11–13 mentions deserters, distinguishing between a Chaldaean and two members of the Aramaean tribe Ḫindaru (see section 4.13, below): “Ilu-bāni, [a Ch]aldaean ([<sup>lú</sup>*K*]al-da-a-a), Amēl-Enlil, [a Ḫi]ndaraean ([<sup>lú</sup>*Ḫi*]-in-dar-a-a), Il-palṭi, [a Ḫi]ndaraean ([<sup>lú</sup>*Ḫi*]-in-dar-a-a).”

Chaldaean tribal names are composed of the element *bītu* “house” + a second element: Bīt-Amūkāni, Bīt-Dakūri, Bīt-Yakīn, Bīt-Ša'alli, Bīt-Šilāni. Aramaic tribal names never show the element *bītu*. The chieftain of a Chaldaean tribe is called *ra'su* (plural *ra'sānu*), whereas the sheikh of an Aramaean tribe is called *nasīku*, a word rarely used for Chaldaeans (OIP 2, 47 iv 25, see Edzard 1976–1980: 294). Chaldaean personal names have the form PN *mār* TRIBAL NAME, e.g., *Ea-zēra-qīša mār Amūkānu*, whereas Aramaean personal names have the form PN + TRIBAL NAME + nisba, e.g., <sup>m</sup>*Na-ṭe-ru* <sup>lú</sup>*Ru-ú-a-a* (Brinkman 1968: 267 n. 1716; id. 1984: 13).

These facts demonstrate that in the Mesopotamian view Chaldaeans and Aramaeans were of different stock.<sup>8</sup> Whether they are also of different ethno-linguistic origin in a modern definition is unclear:<sup>9</sup> There is neither a clear indication for an Aramaean affiliation of the Chaldaeans, nor for a third Semitic group in Mesopotamia other than Babylonians and Aramaeans. The most likely scenario is that Chaldaeans and Aramaeans belonged to the same large Aramaean branch but, within this branch, to different tribal groups that infiltrated Mesopotamia at different periods.

<sup>6</sup> Frahm 1997: 60 translates slightly differently: “Ich deportierte Einwohner des Landes Kaldu, Aramäer . . .” In my view, *tenēšēt māt Kaldi Arame* is a construction with two genitives (*māt Kaldi* and *Arame*), both dependant on *tenēšēt*.

<sup>7</sup> SAA 18, 157, dated to the same period, mentions Arameans in a broken context (l. r. 10).

<sup>8</sup> Brinkman 1968: 266f.

<sup>9</sup> Edzard 1976–1980: 291f and Lipiński 2000a: 416–422.

In the following, we leave out the Chaldaeans and restrict ourselves to the Aramaeans in the Mesopotamian definition.

### 3. General Names for Aramaeans in Babylonia

#### 3.1 Aramu

The name *Aramu* first appears in the inscriptions of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.): 28-*šu arki* <sup>kur</sup>*Aḫlamê* <sup>kur</sup>*Ar-ma-a-ia*<sup>meš</sup> <sup>id</sup>*Puratta* MU 1<sup>kám</sup> *šiniššu lū ētebir ištu* <sup>uru</sup>*Tadmar ša* <sup>kur</sup>*Amurri* <sup>uru</sup>*Anat ša* <sup>kur</sup>*Suḫi u adi* <sup>uru</sup>*Rapiqi ša* <sup>kur</sup>*Karduniaš dabdâšunu lū aškun šallassunu maršissunu ana ālija Aššur ubla* RIMA 2, 43: 34–36 “I really crossed the Euphrates 28 times, twice per year, in pursuit of the Aḫlamû-Aramaeans. I brought about their defeat from the city Tadmar of the land Amurru, Anat of the land Suḫu, as far as the city Rapiqu of Karduniaš. I brought their booty (and) possessions to my city Aššur.” Although the geographical focus of the passage lies in the middle Euphrates area and the Syrian desert, Babylonia under its Kassite name Karduniaš is already mentioned as homeland of the Arameans.

Tiglath-Pileser III conquers 36 Aramaean tribes in Babylonia mentioned by name.<sup>10</sup> He summarizes the list of tribes as “all the Aramaeans (<sup>lú</sup>*A-ru-mu*) by the banks of the Tigris Euphrates and Surappi rivers, up to the Uqnû river by the shore of the Lower Sea. . . . I annexed the Aramaeans (<sup>lú</sup>*A-ru-mu*)” Tadmor 1994: 158–160 Summ. 7: 5–10. Similar but shorter lists of tribes explicitly called “Aramaean” are found in Frahm 1997–1998: 401 = Isimu 6, 135: 12–14 (18 tribes), Tadmor 1994: 194 Summ. 11: 5–8 (14 tribes), 130 Summ. 2: 4–9 (10 tribes), 42 Ann. 9: 6f (6 tribes), 122 Summ. 1: 5f (3 tribes), 12f (3 tribes), 150 Summ. 6: 5f (2 tribes including KUR *Lab-du-di*), 204 Summ. 14: 1' (only 1 tribe partly preserved).

The terms “Aram” or “Aramaean” frequently occur in the letters of the governor’s archive from Nippur.<sup>11</sup> The letter Cole 1996a: no. 4: 23 asks whether certain houses are “in Nippu[r] or in Aram (*A-ram*l).” According to no. 18: 8, the writers “used to write to the Arameans (<sup>lú</sup>*A-ram*),” who informed them about petty dealers selling plunder in Uruk. No. 96: 25 tells of farmers “who have come from Aram (<sup>lú</sup>*A-ram*).” The “flock of the Arameans (<sup>lú</sup>*A-ra-mu*)” occurs in no. 47: 5. See also <sup>lú</sup>*A-ram*<sup>meš</sup> in broken context in no. 15: 8, 62: 8 (?), and 105: 6. The letter no. 104: 5 mentions <sup>lú</sup>É *A-ram*l or LÚ É *A-ram*l, i.e., (*amíl*) *Bit-Aram*, either a general

<sup>10</sup> See the lists in Brinkman 1968: 270 and Frahm 2003: 153.

<sup>11</sup> Cole 1996a.

designation for “Aramaeans” or the name of a specific Aramaean tribe or a toponym in the expression “man/people of Bīt-Aram.”<sup>12</sup>

Assyrian royal inscriptions and letters from Babylonia mention the Aramaeans in the context of Sargon II’s campaigns against the rebellious Babylonian king Marduk-apla-iddina II (Merodachbaladan) in 710 B.C.:<sup>13</sup> *si-ti-it* <sup>lu</sup>*A-ra-me ek-šu-te a-ši-bu-ut na-gi-šú-nu šá* UGU <sup>md</sup>MES-A-AŠ! *ù!* <sup>m!</sup> *Šu-túr-<sup>d</sup>Na-ḥu-un-di TE-su-nu id-du-ma* <sup>id</sup>*Uq-nu-ú e-ḥu-zu šu-bat ru-uq!-ti da-<sup>Γ</sup>ád<sup>Γ</sup>-[me]-šú-nu [a]-bu-bi-iš as-pu-un-ma* GIŠ.NÍG.TUKU<sup>14</sup> *tuk-lat-su-nu* <sup>giš</sup>KI[RI<sub>6</sub>]<sup>meš</sup>-*ti [b]al-ti na-gi-šú-nu ak-kis-ma* *ù* <sup>Γ</sup>*qi<sup>Γ</sup>-ra-te-šu-nu um-ma!-ni* *ú-[šá-kil] a-na* <sup>id</sup>*Uq-né-e a-šar ta-ap-ze-er-ti-šú-nu* <sup>lu</sup>*[qu-r]a-di-ia ú-ma-<sup>Γ</sup>* *er!-ma* <sup>Γ</sup>BÀD!.BÀD!<sup>Γ</sup>-š[*u!-n*]u! *im-ḥaṣ-ṣu-ma* UN<sup>meš</sup> *a-di mar-ši-<sup>Γ</sup>ti<sup>Γ</sup>-šú-nu iš-lul-ú-ni* Fuchs 1994: 148f Ann. 288b–291: “The remainder of the rebellious Aramaeans who lived in their district (i.e., in Gambūlu), who had listened to Marduk-apla-iddina and Šutur-Naḥḥundi and had sought refuge at the Uqnû, a distant territory—I destroyed their settlements like a flood and cut down the date palms, their support, (and) the groves, the pride of their district, and f[ed] my troops with (the grain of) their granaries. I sent my [warr]riors to the Uqnû River, where they were concealed. They defeated t[he]m and carried off their people together with their property.” See also “all the Aramaeans (*nagab* <sup>lu</sup>*A-ra/re-me*) living at the shore of the Tigris, the Surappu and the Uqnû,” Fuchs 1994: 252 S2:10f and 256 S3: 13f and cf. the parallel references Fuchs 1994: 250 S1: 12–15, 273 S5: 19–21, and 77 XIV: 23f, which also refer to the Sutians (section 3.3, below).

In another passage in the inscriptions of Sargon II the designations *Aramu* and *Sūtû* (cf. section 3.3, below) are used side by side: *i-na* <sup>kur</sup>*ma-ad-bar šá-a-tú* <sup>lu</sup>*A-ra-me* <sup>lu</sup>*Su-ti-i a-ši-bu-ut kuš-ta-ri* . . . *šu-bat-sun id-du-ma* Iraq 16, 192: 57–60 “In that desert country Aramaeans, Sutians, tent-dwellers . . . had pitched their dwellings”; cf. also <sup>lu</sup>*A-ra-me*, *ibid.*: 70.

A letter written by Bēl-iqīša to the Assyrian king Sargon II, dated 710, reports that the Chaldaean Marduk-apla-iddina (Merodachbaladan) is doing repair work in the Babylonian city of Larak (situated in Bīt-Amūkāni) “and is settling Ḥasīnu, son of Yašumu, with his family and his Arameans there” (<sup>m</sup>Γ<sup>Γ</sup>*Ḥa-si<sup>Γ</sup>-ni* DUMU <sup>m</sup>*Ia-a-šu-mu a-di* <sup>lu</sup>*qin-ni-šú* *ù* <sup>lu</sup>*A-ra-mi-šú i-na* ŠĀ-*bi ú-šeš-šeb* SAA 17, 22 r. 7f). Ḥasīnu and Yašumu have West

<sup>12</sup> See the commentary in Cole 1996a: 214.

<sup>13</sup> See Fuchs – Parpola 2001: XIX for the behavior of different Aramaean tribes toward Marduk-apla-iddina II. The Puqūdu and other tribes supported him, the Gambūlu did not.

<sup>14</sup> Variant of <sup>giš</sup>GIŠIMMAR.

Semitic, probably Aramaic names,<sup>15</sup> and are likely Aramaeans. Ḥasīnu seems to be a tribal leader of the Aramaeans; “his Aramaeans” means Aramaeans under his control or following him.<sup>16</sup> In the letter SAA 17, 140 Nabû-ušallim advises the Assyrian king to deport a group of Aramaeans (ll. 4, 6) who came from the region of Uruk and settled on the shore of the channel of Marduk-apla-iddina II. (probably in Bit-Yakīn) because “they are not reliable” (*la-a ki-né-e šú-nu*). [1]úA-ra-mi are mentioned together with the king of Elam, the city of Dēr, and the Aramaic tribe Gambūlu in the fragmentary letter SAA 17, 176: 6’.

Sennacherib designates the following 17 tribes as “unsubmissive Aramaeans” (<sup>lú</sup>A-ra-mu la kan-šu) subdued by him (Frahm 1997: 51 T 4: 12f; Isimu 6, 135: 12–14; cf. also the summary in Isimu 6, 140: 55–56): on the Tigris, the Tu’mūna, Riḥīḥu, Yadaqqu, Ubūdu, Kiprê, Malīḥu; on the Surappu, the Gurūmu, Ubūlu, Damūnu, Gambūlu, Ḥindaru, Ru’ūya; on the Euphrates, the Ḥamrānu, Ḥagarānu, Nabātu, Li’ta’u. See Frahm 2003: 153 for a list of all tribes mentioned in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib together with their locations on the different rivers.<sup>17</sup> The Aramaeans (<sup>lú</sup>A-ra-me) are also found among his enemies in Babylonia in the text Frahm 1997: 131 T 62: 41’.

According to Zadok 1985a: 65 n. 238, all people designated by the nisba *Ar(a)māya* in Neo-Assyrian letters were probably Aramaeans from Babylonia.

For other references of the name “Aramu” in relation to Babylonia, see section 2, above.

### 3.2 aḥlamû

The word *aḥlamû* was last treated by Herles 2007.<sup>18</sup> This word is attested since the Old Babylonian period, first as a designation of Amorites<sup>19</sup> and later of Aramaeans. Note that, according to Cole 1996b: 24 n. 2, “members

<sup>15</sup> See for the latter name Frahm 2000. Contra Jas 2000, the second sign in the first name is not [š]i, see the collation in SAA 17, 213, and the name is not Akkadian.

<sup>16</sup> <sup>lú</sup>A-ra-m[u] are also mentioned in broken context in SAA 17, 25 r. 2’, another letter of Bēl-iqīša.

<sup>17</sup> This list also contains the tribes mentioned by name but not explicitly called Aramaean in the inscriptions of Sargon II.

<sup>18</sup> Herles 2007 does not take into account the references in SAA 3, 4, 8, 10, and 18 and the reference in OIP 114, 109. For the word *aḥlamû*, see also Postgate 1981: 48–50; Zadok 1991: 104–106; Dion 1997: 16f with n. 10f.

<sup>19</sup> Herles 2007: 320–322, 325.

of the tribe called Ḫīrānu are identified as Aḫlamû in the Kassite period (PBS 2/2 114) and as Arameans in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III.<sup>20</sup> In the Assyrian royal inscriptions the word *aḫlamû* and the name *Aramu* are sometimes combined to form a double designation for Aramaeans.<sup>21</sup> Herles concludes that *aḫlamû* is an appellative roughly meaning “nomad, barbarian”.<sup>22</sup>

Tiglath-Pileser III crossed the Zāb river “to subdue the *aḫlamû*-Akkadians (<sup>lú</sup>*aḫ-la-am Ak-ka-<di>*) (Tadmor 1994: 64 Ann. 19\*: 13). This unique double designation probably stands for Aramaeans east of the Tigris.<sup>23</sup> In the next line the Aramaeans (<sup>lú</sup>*A-ru-mu*) are mentioned.

In a letter from the governor’s archive from Nippur, it is said “No <sup>lú</sup>*aḫ-la-mu-ú* exists” (Cole 1996a: no. 109: 17f).

In the inscriptions of Sargon II the *aḫlamû*, who lived in southern Babylonia and supported the Babylonian king Marduk-apla-iddina II (Merodachbaladan) in 710 B.C., are mentioned: <sup>lú</sup>*aḫ-la-me-e ṣa-ab* EDIN *a-li-kut i-de-e-šu* “*aḫlamû*, desert-folk who went at his side” (Iraq 16, 186: 47f).

Sennacherib deports the <sup>lú</sup>*aḫ-la-me-e* <sup>lú</sup>*su-ti-i* “The Sutian *aḫlamû*” (OIP 2, 77: 13).

A letter from Babylon to Esarhaddon mentions Aḫlamite women (<sup>mi</sup>*Aḫ-la-mi-tú*) together with women from Elam and Tabal (SAA 18, 158: 5).

### 3.3 Sūtû

In the Old Babylonian period, *Sūtû* was the name of an Amorite tribe.<sup>24</sup> Later, in the second half of the 2nd millennium and in the 1st millennium B.C., the name was apparently used as an archaizing designation for different nomads.<sup>25</sup> Brinkman briefly treats the evidence for the early 1st millennium B.C. and concludes that the name “Sutians” usually occurs in contexts where Aramaeans are also mentioned and might designate the more mobile Aramaean population.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> For the Ḫīrānu tribe, see section 4.14, below.

<sup>21</sup> Herles 2007: 330, 333.

<sup>22</sup> Herles 2007: 337–339.

<sup>23</sup> Tadmor 1994: 64 n. 13 and Herles 2007: 334f.

<sup>24</sup> Kärger – Minx 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Fuchs 1994: 459.

<sup>26</sup> Brinkman 1968: 285–287.

Sargon II uses the name in connection with the Aramaeans living at the Tigris, at the Surappu<sup>27</sup> River east of the Tigris, at the Uqnû<sup>28</sup> River, and the nomads in Yadburu:<sup>29</sup> “all the Aramaeans (*nagab* <sup>lú</sup>*A-ra/re-me*) living at the shore of the Tigris, the Surappu and the Uqnû, all the Sutians (*gimir* <sup>lú</sup>*Su-ti-i/-te-e*), steppe-folk (*šāb šēri*) of the land of Yadburu,” Fuchs 1994: 250 S1: 12–15, 273 S5: 19–21, and 77 XIV: 23f. However, the reference leaves open whether *Aramu* and *Sūtû* are different names for the same population or designate different populations in different regions (e.g., *Aramu* the settled population and *Sūtû* the nomads?). Cf. the parallel references Fuchs 1994: 252 S2: 10f and 256 S3: 13f, which refer only to “Aramaeans” (see section 3.1, above), and Or NS 68, 37: 32 (Tang-i Var), which only has “Sutians”. See also section 3.1, above, for Iraq 16, 192: 57–60, where *Aramu* and *Sūtû* are used side by side.

Sargon II’s annals designate three Aramaean tribes mentioned by name as “Sutians” and “steppe-folk”: <sup>lú</sup>*Ru-u<sub>8</sub>-a* <sup>lú</sup>*Hi-in-da-ru* <sup>lú.kur</sup>*Ia-ad-bu-ru* <sup>lú</sup>*Pu-qu-du gi-mir* <sup>lú</sup>*Su-ti-i/-te-e* ÉRIN<sup>meš</sup> EDIN “The Ru’ūya, the Ḥindaru, the people of the land of Yadburu, and the Puqūdu, all the Sutians, steppe-folk,” Fuchs 1994: 136f Ann. 258f. More similar to the above-mentioned passage, Fuchs 1994: 250 S1: 12–15, 273 S5: 19–21, and 77 XIV: 23f, is Fuchs 1994: 195 Prunk 18–20 and 265 S4: 70–78, in which the designation “Sutians” seems to refer specifically to the population of Yadburu, whereas the Aramaean tribes at the shores of the Tigris, the Surappu, and the Uqnû are mentioned by name: “at the shore of the Tigris the Itū’u, the Rupū’u, the Ḥaṭallu, the Labdudu, the Ḥamrānu, the Ubūlu, the Ru’ūya, the Li’tayu, at the shore of the Surappu and the Uqnû the Gambūlu, the Ḥindaru, the Puqūdu, the Sutians (<sup>lú</sup>*Su-te-e*), steppe-folk (*šāb šēri*) of the land of Yadburu, as many as there exist.” In another passage, the Aramaean tribe Maršānu and the Sutians are mentioned side by side (Fuchs 1994: 228 Prunk 130).

Elsewhere in his inscriptions Sargon II accuses the Sutians of having taken away the fields of the Babylonian cities Sippar, Nippur, Babylon, and Borsippa (Fuchs 1994: 169 Ann. 375 and 229 Prunk 135f; Iraq 16, 186: 68–71; note [<sup>lú</sup>*Su-t*]*i-i ša-ab* EDIN “Sutians, steppe-folk”, *ibid.*: 71).

<sup>27</sup> For a possible location, see Fuchs 1994: 459: a tributary of the Uqnû River in the region of Gambūlu, perhaps identical with the Rūdāne-ye Čangūle.

<sup>28</sup> According to Fuchs 1994: 466f, the Uqnû was not the Kerḥa but the eastern arm of the Tigris.

<sup>29</sup> For the location at the border of Elam, see Fuchs 1994: 439.

Sennacherib notes among his enemies in Babylonia who supported Marduk-apla-iddina II the Sutilian (<sup>lú</sup>*Su-tu-ú*) Nergal-nāšir (Frahm 1997: 43 T I: 8).

#### 4. *Aramaean Tribes in Babylonia*

The following list contains only the 41 tribes explicitly called “Aramaean” by either Tiglath-Pileser III (Tadmor 1994: 158–160 Summ. 7: 5–10; Lipiński 2000a: 441f) and/or Sennacherib (Frahm 1997: 51 T 4: 12f) (see section 3.1, above), including the Puqūdu tribe designated as “Aramaean” in a letter (Cole 1996a: no. 27; see section 4.27, below). More than 40 tribes mentioned in different texts but not explicitly designated “Aramaean” are not listed, although many of them are probably Aramaean as well (see Zadok 1985a: 70–74).<sup>30</sup>

Under each tribe the most important literature,<sup>31</sup> with a focus on more recent works, is mentioned, followed by a remark on when the tribe was designated as Aramaean, details on the geographical distribution of the tribe, and a collection of new references or new editions of old references.

##### 4.1 *Adilē*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 272. Brinkman 1984: 41. Zadok 1985a: 75 no. 4. Lipiński 2000a: 452.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

##### 4.2 *Amātu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 272. Zadok 1985b: 22. Lipiński 2000a: 468–470.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: The city of Amatu lies on the Uqnû (Brinkman 1968: 272).

“Somewhere between the Wādī Tārtār and the Euphrates, east of the Sūḥu territory” (period of Ninurtra-kudurrī-ušur, about 770/760 B.C.,

<sup>30</sup> Zadok 1985a: 68f also includes the Labdudu (see for them also Zadok 1985a: 66, Brinkman 1980–1983, and Lipiński 2000a: 440f), the Nūḥānu (see for them also Weippert 1998–2001), and the Zamē among the Aramaean tribes, although they are never explicitly designated as Aramaeans. Lipiński 2000a: 470–472 deals with the Naqri and Tanē tribes; see also *ibid.*: 479–481 for the Ḥallatu and Yašilu tribes, and *ibid.*: 482–485 for the Gurasimmu, Udda, Ubayanātu, Daḥḥā, and Yaqimānu tribes. According to Frame 1992: 47, the Gurasimmu were likely an Aramaean tribe.

<sup>31</sup> See now also Zadok 2013: 271–299.



see Lipiński 2000a: 469). “In consequence of the defeat inflicted upon the ‘Ammatu tribesmen by Ninurta-kudurri-uşur . . . the tribe migrated to the southeast and crossed the Tigris” Lipiński 2000a: 469.

#### 4.3 *Amlātu*<sup>32</sup>

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 272. Cole 1996b: 70. Lipiński 2000a: 462f. Lipiński 2003: 345f.

Designated as “Aramaeen”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

#### 4.4 *Damūnu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 232, 270f, 276. Brinkman 1984: 20 n. 81. Zadok 1985b: 116. Lipiński 2000a: 463. Stockhusen 2013.

Designated as “Aramaeen”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 13, on the Surappu).

Geography: Near the Lower Zāb (Tiglat-Pileser III, see Brinkman 1968: 276). On the Uqnû southeast of Puqūdu (Fuchs 1994: 423).

References: SAA 15, 153: 8'. SAA 17, 96: 12; 97: 4'; 99: 16'; 120: 33e: <sup>uru</sup>*Da-mu-na-a-a*. SAA 18, 113: 4' and 9': “The Zanakians take wives from among the Damunaeans and Gambulaeans.”

#### 4.5 *Da* [...]

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270.

Designated as “Aramaeen”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

#### 4.6 *Dunānu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 272. Brinkman 1984: 41. Zadok 1985a: 76 no. 96. Zadok 1985b: 64. Lipiński 2000a: 458f. Cole 1996b: 26 with nn. 23 and 70.

Designated as “Aramaeen”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: Central Babylonia (?; see Zadok 1985a: 64). “To the north or to the northwest of Nippur” (Lipiński 2000a: 458).

References: See Cole 1996a: index p. 442. See also section 4.7 for the campaigns of Assurbanipal against Dunānu and Gambūlu and add the reference Or NS 74, 367: 11 (restored).

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<sup>32</sup> Note that Zadok 1985b: 22 has a cross-reference from Amlat to Ammat that does not belong here because the tribe is spelled <sup>16</sup>*Am-la-tu*.

#### 4.7 *Gambūlu*

Bibliography: Unger 1957–1971. Brinkman 1984: 13 and see index, *ibid.* 153. Zadok 1985a: 66. Zadok 1985b: 137. Frame 1992: 44f, 47f and see the index, *ibid.*: 355. Fuchs 1994: 423. Cole 1996b: index, p. 132. Lipiński 2000a: 472–479. Dietrich 2003: XXVif. Radner 2006–2008a: 65 no. 74. Kleber 2008: 312. Jursa 2010: 91, 95 with n. 508.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 13, on the Surappu).

Geography: Southern Mesopotamia between Ur and Uqnû, capital created by Sargon II Dūr-Abī-ḥarâ<sup>33</sup> = Dūr-Nabû, indigenous capital Ša-pī-Bēl; in the Arabian period the region between Wasit and Kufa on the Tigris had similar names (Unger 1957–1971). “Living in a marshy region (perhaps centered around modern Wasit) near the Elamite border” (Brinkman 1984: 13). In Yadburu along the Elamite border (Zadok 1985a: 66). Southeastern Babylonia (Zadok 1985b: 137). “Located in the Babylonian-Elamite border region” (Frame 1992: 45). On the Uqnû River northwest of Ḥindaru (Fuchs 1994: 423). The province of Gambūlu, established by Sargon II, including the region of the tribe Gambūlu, the land of Yadburu, and other Aramaic tribal regions, extends from the Uqnû to Elam (Radner 2006–2008a: 65 no. 74).

References: Or NS 68, 37: 32 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var). See Borger 1996: 38f A § 31 and F § 15; 105f B § 36; 107f B §§ 40f (translation *ibid.*: 226–228) for Assurbanipal campaign against Dunānu of Gambūlu; cf. Or NS 74, 367: 8 (Assurbanipal, restored). Cf. also Dunānu, son of Bēl-iqīša <sup>kur</sup>*Gambula-a-a* “the Gambulaean” A. Fuchs apud Borger 1996: 278: 105. SAA 1, 15: 3. SAA 4, 270 r. 8; 271: 4, 5, 7, r. 5, 9; 272: 5. SAA 10, 350 r. 7. SAA 11, 96: 4; 207 r. iii 4; 219 ii 27. SAA 15, 145: 6'. SAA 16, 136 r. 4. SAA 17, 176: 8'. SAA 18, 69: 2; 71 r. 8, 11; 111 r. 4, 6; 113 r. 9'. For later references see Jursa 2010: 95 n. 508.

#### 4.8 *Gulūsu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 272. Zadok 1985a: 76 no. 126. Lipiński 2000a: 447f. For the town Gilūšu in the 6th century B.C., see Jursa 1995: 220–223 and *id.* 1998: 95.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: “Originally a designation of the people of the governor Gulušu of Dēr” (Lipiński 2000a: 448), which is, however, very doubtful.

<sup>33</sup> For the reading of this name, formerly read Dūr-Aṭhara, see Parpola 2002: 567, and Stockhusen 2013: 213 with n. 57.

4.9 *Gurūmu*

Bibliography: Dietrich 1957–1971. Brinkman 1968: 270f, 276. Zadok 1985a: 63. Zadok 1985b: 143. Lipiński 2000a: 453–455. Lipiński 2003: 342–344.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 13, on the Surappu).

Geography: Near the Lower Zāb (Tiglath-Pileser III, see Brinkman 1968: 276; Dietrich 1957–1971). At the Babylonian-Elamite border at the bank of the Uqnû (Sennacherib, see Dietrich 1957–1971). On the Lower Zāb (Zadok 1985a: 63). “Beyond the Lesser Zab” (Tiglath-Pileser III) and “in relation with Babylon” (Sennacherib) (Lipiński 2000a: 453).

References: SAA 18, 170: 8', r. 7.

4.10 *Ḥagarānu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985a: 76 no. 130. Lipiński 2000a: 470.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 14, on the Euphrates).

4.11 *Ḥam(a)rānu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270. Brinkman 1984: 41. Zadok 1985a: 65. Fuchs 1994: 422f. Tadmor 1994: 159 n. 5. Lipiński 2000a: 442–444.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 14, on the Euphrates).

Geography: On the bank of the Tigris (Fuchs 1994: 422). The tribe was raiding caravans in the region of Sippar (Brinkman 1968: 269 n. 1734; Fuchs 1994: 423; Tadmor 1994: 159 n. 5; Lipiński 2000a: 443f).

References: Or NS 68, 37: 31 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var). SAA 1, 90: 11. SAA 15, 244: 7. SAA 17, 7: 10: “The tribe is starving for (lack of) bread.” SAA 17, 8 r. 9'.

4.12 *Ḥaṭallu, Ḥaṭalla*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 283f. Zadok 1985a: 63, 65. Zadok 1985b: 157 s.v. Ḥaṭallu and Ḥaṭallūa. Frame 1992: 221 n. 47. Fuchs 1994: 422f. Tadmor 1994: 159 n. 5. Cole 1996b: 25, 27 n. 30. Lipiński 2000a: 425–428. Fuchs – Parpola 2001: XVIII. Radner 2006–2008a: 64 no. 69.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: Northeastern Babylonia (?) (Brinkman 1968: 283f). The tribe is also found in the Assyrian province of Suḥu (Zadok 1985a: 63; Fuchs 1994: 422f; Cole 1996b: 27 n. 30). “In the steppe southwest of Assyria

proper and west of the Wādī Tārtār” (Lipiński 2000a: 426). For the Neo-Assyrian province of Ḥaṭallu, see Radner 2006–2008a: 64 no. 69: “Mit Sicherheit im Gebiet des Wādī Tārtar.”

References: Or NS 68, 37: 31 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var). SAA 15, 157 r. 7: The Tu’ mānu tribe “lives in the Ḥaṭalla tribe” (<sup>lu</sup>Ḥa! [ta] l-la). SAA 15, 167: 4’; 231: 9’, 12’. SAA 17, 7: r. 8; 17: 8, r. 4. Donbaz – Stolper 1997: no. 16: 2, 12, 20 (427 BC): mentions in lines 21f seven persons designated as <sup>umu</sup>Ḥa-ṭa-al-lu-ú-a; cf. Zadok 2002a: 873: “presumably named after an Aramean tribe. . . . Only one of these individuals bore a West Semitic name and such a patronym (Aramaic).” For the town of Ḥaṭallā, see Frame 1992: 221 n. 47 and Donbaz – Stolper 2002: 185.

#### 4.13 *Ḥindaru*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f, 274f. Röllig 1972–1975. Zadok 1985a: 66, 68. Zadok 1985b: 161. Fuchs 1994: 423. Lipiński 2000a: 455–457.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 13, on the Surappu).

Geography: On the lower Uqnû (Röllig 1972–1975). In Yadburu along the Elamite border (Zadok 1985a: 66). Mentioned in a letter from Uruk (Zadok 1985a: 66). On the Uqnû between Gambūlu in the northwest and Puqūdu in the southeast (Fuchs 1994: 423). “The area east of the Shaṭṭ al-Ḥay” (Lipiński 2000a: 457).

References: See Cole 1996a index p. 442. Or NS 68, 37: 32 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var). SAA 17, 92: 8, 11; 93: 8, 14; 132: 13f.; 146: 5’.

#### 4.14 *Ḥirānu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985a: 67. Zadok 1985b: 162. Cole 1996b: 24 n. 2 (cf. section 2.2, above). Lipiński 2000a: 446. Jursa 1998: 95.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: Identical with the city of Ḥirānu near Sippar (Brinkman 1968: 271; Jursa 1998: 95)? See also Zadaok 1985a: 67 and id. 1985b: 162.

#### 4.15 *Ḥudādu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985a: 77 n. 150. Zadok 1985b: 162. Frame 1992: 44 n. 74. Lipiński 2000a: 455.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: Identical with the city of Ḥudādu (Brinkman 1968: 271 n. 1745). There were, however, two Ḥudādu, one in northern Babylonia between Sippar and the Tigris and one in the Uruk region (Zadok 1985b: 164).

4.16 *Itū'ū, Utū'ū*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 269f, 283. Postgate 1976–1980. Brinkman 1984: index p. 154. Zadok 1985a: 63, 65. Zadok 1985b: 331 s.v. Utū'. Frame 1992: 242. Fuchs 1994: 422. Tadmor 1994: 159 n. 5. Cole 1996b: 27 nn. 30 and 70. Lipiński 2000a: 437f. Fuchs – Parpola 2001: XVII. Lipiński 2003: 339f.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: “Along the Elamite border near Der” (Brinkman 1968: 283). “The west bank of the Tigris north of Dur-Kurigalzu” (Brinkman 1968: 269 n. 1733). On the bank of the Tigris “at about the latitude of Samarra and the modern confluence of the river ‘Aḏaim” (Postgate 1976–1980). On the Tigris near Tagritayn; in the north the region of the tribe extends to the Lower Zāb (Zadok 1985a: 63). “In northern Babylonia near the border of Assyria proper” (Zadok 1985b: 331). In queries to the sun-god, the tribe is “always associated with the Elamites, which is an indication of their location” (Lipiński 2000a: 438).

References: First attested in the inscriptions of Tukulti-Ninurta II (911–891), see RIMA 2, 173: 49. See also RIMA 3, 232: 10 (Šamši-ilu). Or NS 68, 37: 31 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var). SAA 1, 32: 7; 93: 6; 95: 8; 97 r. 3; 176 r. 30. SAA 4, 139: 10; 142: 10; 144: 10. SAA 5, 3 r. 2, 10; 16: 5; 21 r. 10, 15; 32 r. 11; 36 r. 6; 72: 4: Itū'ēans return from the Euphrates; 97 r. 5, 10; 178 r. 1; 215: 22; 238 r. 2; 264: 2; 270: 13; 277: 10. SAA 6, 30 r. 5. SAA 7, 5 i 30, ii 11: *šaknu* “prefect” of the Itū'ēans, mentioned twice in a list of officials. SAA 8, 512: 4. SAA 10, 368 r. 4(?), 8(?). SAA 11, 1 i 14: a list of regions mentioning <sup>kur</sup>*I-tu-ū* between the city of Dēr and the tribe Labdudu. SAA 13, 33: 10, 12: mentions two *šaknu* “prefects” of the Itū'ēans. SAA 14, 421 r. 5. SAA 15, 14: 5; 60 r. 16'; 74: 7'; 136 r. 22; 166: 20, r. 8; 186: 10: SAA 15, 186: 12: the tribe “crossed” the Tigris together with the tribes of Li'tawu and Rupū'ū; 190 r. 2; 214 r. 11; 238: 7; 258: 9; 286 r. 5'; 367: 4'. SAA 16, 154: 10'. SAA 17, 75 r. 3: mentioned together with the tribes Riḫīqu and Yadaqu (cf. 4.41, below, and see Frame 1992: 242.).

4.17 *Kapīru*

Bibliography: Tadmor 1994: 159 n. 6. Lipiński 2000a: 451.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

4.18 *Karmā*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985a: 64, 77 no. 169. Lipiński 2000a: 461f. Lipiński 2003: 345.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: On the Tigris (?; see Zadok 1985a: 64).

#### 4.19 *Kiprê*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985b: 162. Lipiński 2000a: 452.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 12, on the Tigris).

References: SAA 15, 257: 3'; 258: 10.

#### 4.20 *Li'tawu, Li'ta'u*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985a: 64f, 67. Zadok 1985b: 213 s.v. Litamu. Röllig 1987–1990. Frame 1992: 44 n. 74. Fuchs 1994: 422. Lipiński 2000a: 467f. Lipiński 2003: 346f.

Fuchs – Parpola 2001: xvii. For the town of Li'tawu, see also Wunsch 2000, vol. 1, index p. 299, s.v. Litamu.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 14, on the Euphrates).

Geography: On the Euphrates (*Šamaš-šum-ukīn*) and in the province of Babylon (Darius), see Brinkman 1968: 271 n. 1738. In Southeastern Babylonia along the Elamite border (Zadok 1985a: 64), but probably also near Babylon and Dilbat (Zadok 1985a: 67). In southeastern Babylonia (Röllig 1987–1990). On the Tigris (Fuchs 1994: 422). It is “hard to understand how a relation can be established between these North-Babylonian records and the presence of the tribe in the area of the Uqnū river” (Lipiński 2000a: 468).

References: Brinkman 1989: 40: 10: <sup>m</sup>*Ka-bi-tu* DUMU <sup>m</sup>*Li-ta-me* “Kabitu, son of Litamu” (already quoted in Brinkman 1968: 271 n. 1738). Or NS 68, 37: 31 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var). SAA 15, 186: 12: the tribe “crossed” the Tigris together with the tribes of Itū'u and Rupū'u. SAA 17, 106: 9; 195: 7'.

#### 4.21 *Luhū'ātu, Lihū'ātu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985a: 67. Zadok 1985b: 212 s.v. Cole 1996b: 25 with n. 16. Lihuatatu. Lipiński 2000a: 444f. Lipiński 2003: 341f.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: Near Sippar (Zadok 1985a: 67). According to Cole 1996b: 25 n. 16, probably identical with the tribe Luhū'āya mentioned in inscriptions of the governor of Suḫu in the 8th century B.C. and active

in the Khabur region (BaM 2, 343f i 9–30): “...by a short time afterward these and other Aramean tribes had crossed the northern alluvium and the Tigris and had spread southeastward along both banks of the river as far as the Elamite plain.”<sup>34</sup>

References: SAA 15, 166: 9. SAA 17, 7: 11: “the tribe is starving for (lack of) bread”; 8 r. 8’; 172 e. 9.

#### 4.22 *Malīḫu, Malāḫu*

Bibliography: Zadok 1985a: 66. Lipiński 2000a: 482.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 12, on the Tigris).

Geography: On the Tigris (Zadok 1985a: 66).

References: SAA 15, 57 r. 7’.

#### 4.23 *Marūsu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 272. Zadok 1985a: 77 no. 189. Lipiński 2000a: 468.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

#### 4.24 *Nabātu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985a: 67. Zadok 1985b: 232. Tadmor 1994: 159 n. 6. Lipiński 2000a: 448–450. Knauf 1998–2001.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 14, on the Euphrates).

Geography: Near Babylon (Zadok 1985a: 67). Part of the tribe lived in the region of Babylon (Knauf 1998–2001).

References: SAA 1, 5: 3. SAA 15, 77: 5’.

#### 4.25 *Našīru*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 272. Zadok 1985b: 236. Lipiński 2000a: 447, 464. Jursa 1998: 97. Streck 1998–2001b.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: Identical with the town Našir near Sippar (see Jursa 1998: 97)?

#### 4.26 *Nilqu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 271. Zadok 1985a: 77f no. 201. Lipiński 2000a: 459.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

<sup>34</sup> Cole 1996b: 25.

4.27 *Puqūdu, Piqūdu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270. Brinkman 1984: 13 and see index, p. 155. Zadok 1985a: 64, 66f. Zadok 1985b: 251. Frame 1992: 44–48 and see index, p. 339. Fuchs 1994: 423. Cole 1996b: index, p. 134. Lipiński 2000a. Fuchs – Parpola 2001: xvi, xix, xxi. Lipiński 2003: 337–339. Radner 2006–2008b. Kleber 2008: 160, 260f, 312. Jursa 2010: 100–103.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 13, on the Surappu). See also the letter quoted in Cole 1996a: no. 27: 10–18: “... the entire Puqūdu tribe (<sup>lu</sup>*Pu-qu-ú-da*) is coming to Nippur for the festival. Let Mušallim-Marduk [c]ome and segregate all the Arameans (<sup>lu</sup>*A-ram*) in Nippur.” See also no. 105: 5f. mentioning *Pu-qu-d[u]* and <sup>lu</sup>*A1-ram*[<sup>mes?</sup>] in broken context.

Geography: “Active both along the Babylonian-Elamite frontier and in the vicinity of Uruk” (Brinkman 1984: 13). In southeastern Babylonia along the Elamite border (Zadok 1985a: 64). In Yadburu along the Elamite border (Zadok 1985a: 66). On the Uqnû River (Zadok 1985b: 251). “The marshy region in eastern Babylonia along the Elamite border. During the reign of Sargon II they appear along the Uqnû River” (Frame 1992: 44). On the Uqnû between Ĥindaru in the northwest and Damūnu in the southeast (Fuchs 1994: 423). “Roaming from Nippur to Uruk and eastward to the Elamite frontier” (Cole 1996b: 17). “In the Nippur area” (Lipiński 2000a: 431, see also 434). “Along the Babylonian-Elamite frontier” (Lipiński 2000a: 432). On the Uqnû and in the west in the region of Bit-Amūkāni, Nippur, and Uruk (Radner 2006–2008b: 113). The Puqūdu attack Ur (Radner 2006–2008b: 114). “To the east or northeast of Uruk along the Tigris, not extending further west than the Nār-šarri” (Jursa 2010: 100).

References: see Radner 2006–2008b: 113. Cole 1996a index p. 443. Or NS 68, 37: 32 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var).

4.28 *Qabī*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 272. Zadok 1985a: 78 no. 209. Lipiński 2000a: 467.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

4.29 *Rabbilu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Brinkman 1984: 41. Zadok 1985a: 67. Zadok 1985b: 257. Tadmor 1994: 159 n. 5. Cole 1996b: 70. Jursa 1998: 98. Lipiński 2000a: 446f. Da Riva 2002: 253. Radner 2006–2008d.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.



Geography: Identical with the city Rabbilu near Sippar (Zadok 1985a: 67; Jursa 1998: 98; Da Riva 2002: 253). Probably between Tigris and Diyāla (Radner 2006–2008d).

References: SAA 17, 7: 12: “the tribe is starving for (lack of) bread.”

#### 4.30 *Radê*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985b: 257. Frame 1992: 44 n. 74. Lipiński 2000a: 459f.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: According to Zadok 1985b: 257, the town of Radê, which was named after the tribe, was probably situated not far from the town of Talaḥ, probably located on the Babylonian-Elamite border (Zadok 1985b: 303).

#### 4.31 *Raḥīqu, Riḥīqu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Frame 1992: 242. Lipiński 2000a: 450f.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

References: SAA 17, 75 r. 5: Mentioned together with the tribes Utū’u and Yadaqu (cf. 4.41, below, and see Frame 1992: 242). SAA 18, 196 r. 15.

Remarks: According to Lipiński 2000a: 450f identical with Riḥīqu, which is hardly correct.

#### 4.32 *Rapiqu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985a: 63, 78 no. 222. Tadmor 1994: 159 n. 5. Lipiński 2000a: 445. Joannès 2006–2008: 245f s.v. Rapiqu(m) § 4.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: Identical with the city of Rapiqu in Suḥu.

#### 4.33 *Riḥīqu, Raḥīqu*

Bibliography: Zadok 1985a: 66, 78 no. 221. Lipiński 2000a: 450f. Zadok 2002a: 885–887.

Designated as “Aramaeans”: Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 12, on the Tigris).

Geography: On the Tigris (Zadok 1985a: 66).

References: SAA 15, 186 r. 4: mentioned together with the tribes Itū’u, Rupū’u, and Li’tawu. Zadok 2002a: 885: 11: <sup>uru</sup>É-ra-ḥi-ḥa-e (early 5th century B.C.); cf. Zadok ibid.: 886f: “may be named after the Aramean tribe . . . unless it is to be emended to <sup>uru</sup>É-ra-ḥi-<ḥa->>e, in which case it would be identical with Bit-Raḥê”

Remarks: According to Lipiński 2000a: 450f identical with Raḥīqu, which is hardly correct.

#### 4.34 *Rubbû*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270. Zadok 1985a: 65. Lipiński 2000a: 445. Lipiński 2003: 342. Streck 2006–2008a.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

#### 4.35 *Rummulûtu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 272. Zadok 1985a: 78 no. 225. Lipiński 2000a: 451. Lipiński 2003: 342.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

#### 4.36 *Rupû’u*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270, 283f. Zadok 1985a: 78 no. 224. Fuchs 1994: 422. Tadmor 1994: 159 n. 5. Cole 1996b: index, p. 135. Lipiński 2000a: 439f. Fuchs – Parpola 2001: xvii. Lipiński 2003: 340f. Streck 2006–2008b.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III.

Geography: Northeastern Babylonia (?) (Brinkman 1968: 283f). On the bank of the Tigris (Fuchs 1994: 422). “Ranging from the environs of Nippur northwest to the middle Euphrates” (Cole 1996b: 17).

References: For the Šamšī-ilu reference, see RIMA 3, 232: 10. See Cole 1996a: index, p. 443. SAA 15, 186: 11: the tribe “crossed” the Tigris together with the tribes of Itû’u and Li’tawu. Or NS 68, 37: 31 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var).

#### 4.37 *Ru’ûja*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270. Brinkman 1984: 13. Zadok 1985a: 64f; 68. Zadok 1985b: 261f s.v. Ru’a. Frame 1992: 44 n. 74, 46f. Fuchs 1994: 422. Cole 1996b: 17, 29, 39 n. 117. Lipiński 2000a: 464–466. Fuchs – Parpola 2001: xvii–xix. Da Riva 2002: 197 n. 485 and 378 n. 862. Lipiński 2003: 346. Streck 2006–2008c.

Designated as “Aramaean”: Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 13, on the Surappu).

Geography: “Near Nippur” (Brinkman 1984: 13). Members of the tribe were caught by Nippurians (Zadok 1985a: 65). In southeastern Babylonia along the Elamite border (Zadok 1985a: 64). On the bank of the Tigris (Fuchs 1994: 422). On the Tigris, in the regions of Nippur and Uruk (Streck 2006–2008c). “Die aramäische Siedlung von Ru’a liegt in der Nähe von Babylon” (Da Riva 2002: 378 n. 862).

References: Or NS 68, 37: 31 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var). SAA 10, 354 r. 4. SAA 15, 1: 4, 9: the king recalled a Ru'uan eunuch from Damascus. SAA 15, 146: 1'; 172: 2'; 202: 2'. SAA 17, 204: 9'.

#### 4.38 *Tu'mūna, Tu'mānu*

Bibliography: Zadok 1985a: 63, 66. Zadok 1985b: 314 s.v. Tu'mānu. Fuchs 1994: 422f. Cole 1996b: 26 n. 19. Lipiński 2000a: 425. Fuchs – Parpola 2001: xviii.

Designated as "Aramaeans": Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 12, on the Tigris).

Geography: Before Tiglath-Pileser III in Suḥu, in the period of Sargon II and Sennacherib, on the Tigris (Zadok 1985a: 63.66). On the Tigris, they belong to the northernmost tribes, mentioned in connection with the Turnu (Diyāla), also found in the Assyrian province of Suḥu (Fuchs 1994: 423). Mentioned in the inscriptions of Sargon II in connection with the battle of Dēr, east of the Tigris (Frahm 1997: 44).

References: SAA 15, 157 r. 76. The Tu'mānū tribe "lives in the Ḥaṭalla tribe" (cf. section 4.12, above).

#### 4.39 *Ubūdu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f, 283f. Zadok 1985a: 79 no. 259. Lipiński 2000a: 452f. Lipiński 2003: 342f.

Designated as "Aramaeans": Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib.

#### 4.40 *Ubūlu*

Bibliography: Brinkman 1968: 270f. Zadok 1985a: 65. Zadok 1985b: 317. Cole 1996b: 26, 63. Lipiński 2000a: 460f. Lipiński 2003: 344f.

Designated as "Aramaeans": Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 13, on the Surappu).

Geography: On the bank of the Tigris (Fuchs 1994: 422).

References: Or NS 68, 37: 31 (Sargon II, Tang-i Var). See Cole 1996a: index p. 444.

#### 4.41 *Yadaqu*

Bibliography: Röllig 1976–1980. Zadok 1985a: 66. Zadok 1985b: 185 s.v. Jādaqu. Frame 1992: 242. Lipiński 2000a: 481.

Designated as "Aramaeans": Sennacherib (Isimu 6, 135: 12, on the Tigris).

Geography: Mentioned in the region of Borsippa, in the inscriptions of Sennacherib, on the Tigris (Röllig 1976–1980). Zadok 1985b: 185: On the Tigris. Note that there is also a town of Yadaqu near Uruk (Zadok 1985b: 185).

References: SAA 17, 75 r. 4.: members of the tribes Utū'u (cf. 4.16, above), Yadaqu, and Riḫīqu (cf. 4.31, above) assist Nabû-šar-aḫḫēšu in guarding the mule stable of the house of Nabû-lē'i in Borsippa (cf. Frame 1992: 242).

### 5. *The Lifestyle of the Aramaeans*

In his inscriptions Sargon II designates the *aḫlamû* and the *Sūtû* as “steppe-folk” (*šāb šēri*).<sup>35</sup> Aramaeans and Sutiāns live *ina madbar* “in the desert” (Iraq 16, 192: 57).<sup>36</sup> Movement of Aramaeans is implied by the letter SAA 17, 140 (cf. 2.1, above), mentioning Aramaeans who “came from the region of Uruk” (*u[l-t]u UNUG<sup>ki</sup> ú-šu-ú l. 7*) and settled on the shore of the channel of Marduk-apla-iddina II. in Bīt-Yakīn. The governor is informed that the three tribes of the Itū'u, Rupū'u, and Li'tawu “[cr]ossed” (*[ēt]abrūni*) the Tigris (SAA 15, 186: 10–12); we do not know, however, the reason for this movement (transhumance or a military expedition?). Tukultī-Ninurta II captured the tents (*maškanāte*)<sup>37</sup> of the Utū'u tribe together with their villages (*kaprānišunu*), which were situated on the Tigris (RIMA 2, 173: 49f). Aramaeans and Sutiāns are *āšibūt kuštari* “tent-dwellers” (Iraq 16, 192: 57f; Sargon II). According to J. A. Brinkman, “in contemporary documentary evidence camels are more often mentioned in conjunction with their tribes than with Chaldeans,” which might be “another indication of less sedentary patterns for the Arameans.”<sup>38</sup> Therefore, it seems highly likely that some of the Aramaeans had a nomadic lifestyle.

When, on the other hand, Sargon II reports<sup>39</sup> that he destroyed the settlements (*dadmū*) of the Aramaeans in Gambūlu, cut down their date palms and groves and plundered their granaries (see section 3.1, above), we are obviously dealing with an at least partly settled Aramaean population. The same is true of the farmers “who have come from Aram”<sup>40</sup> and of the Sutiāns accused of having taken away the fields (*eqlētu*) of the Babylonian

<sup>35</sup> See sections 3.2 and 3.3, above, and for the Sutiāns also Fuchs 1994: 226 Prunk 123.

<sup>36</sup> Note that according to Lipiński 2000a: 451 the name of the tribe Rummulūtu (see section 4.35, above) derives from Arabic *raml* “sand (desert)”, an etymology that seems, however, improbable.

<sup>37</sup> For this interpretation, see Postgate 1976–1980: 221. *CAD M/1*: 370 and RIMA 2: 173 translate “settlements”. The translation “tents” is likely correct also for RIMA 2: 133: II (Assur-dān II, referring to the tribe of *Ia-ú-sa-a-ia*).

<sup>38</sup> Brinkman 1984: 13f n. 52.

<sup>39</sup> Fuchs 1994: 148f Ann. 288b–291.

<sup>40</sup> Cole 1996a: no. 96: 25.

cities Sippar, Nippur, Babylon, and Borsippa.<sup>41</sup> The Puqūdu tribe farmed the land and had smiths.<sup>42</sup> For “a predominantly barley-growing” region, Puqūdu, in the 6th century B.C., see Jursa 2010: 101.

When Sennacherib subdued the unsubmitive Aramaeans he took as booty from them “208,000 people, young and old, male and female, 7,200 horses and mules 1,173 donkeys, 5,230 camels, 80,100 oxen and 800,600 sheep” (Frahm 1997: 51 T 4: 14). A broken passage in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III lists thousands of people and cattle as booty of the Aramaeans (Tadmor 1994: 84 Ann. 8: 1f.).<sup>43</sup> The Puqūdu tribe had sheep (Radner 2006–2008b: 114). The Aramaeans provided Nippur with wool (Cole 1996b: 60). The “flock (*ṣēnu*) of the Arameans (<sup>lú</sup>*A-ra-mu*)” occurs in Cole 1996a: no. 47: 4f. The Ubūlu tribe is accused of having stolen camels (Cole 1996a: no. 32: 7–9). The Dunānu “supplied Nippur with cattle” (Cole 1996b: 26).

The Aramaeans had tribal structures (see section 4, above). The tribal leaders were called *nasīku*. The history of the word *nasīku* was treated by Brinkman 1968: 274f and later by *CAD* N/2 (1980) 27; see also Frame 1992: 44. The letter Cole 1996a: no. 27, 19f mentions “shaykhs of the Arameans (*nasīkāti ša* <sup>lú</sup>*A-ram*).” For the *nasīkus* in the inscriptions of Sargon II, see Fuchs 1994: 422. A new reference from the early Babylonian period is found in a legal text from the reign of Erība-Marduk (ca. 775 B.C.). The text mentions a person with the Aramaic name <sup>m</sup>*Il-ti-ḥa-ni* <sup>lú</sup>*na-si-ki* (Brinkman 1989: 40: 3).<sup>44</sup>

Aramaean tribes provided soldiers for the Assyrian army. This is especially true for the Itū’u tribe.<sup>45</sup> Note also the letter SAA 17, 75 r. 3–5, mentioning members of the Utū’u, Yadaqu, and Riḥīqu tribes stationed as guards in Borsippa.

<sup>41</sup> See section 3.3., above.

<sup>42</sup> Radner 2006–2008b: 114.

<sup>43</sup> For the economy of the Aramaeans see also Brinkman 1968: 275.

<sup>44</sup> The word *nasīku* is attested even earlier for Sutiāns in the Middle Babylonian period: see WVDog 102, 34: 10 (Ekalte) and cf. Streck 2009–2011 § 5; Kärger – Minx 2012 § 4.1.

<sup>45</sup> See Frame 1992: 45 with previous literature.

### 3. ANATOLIA

André Lemaire

Most scholars see the Euphrates as the border between Anatolia and Mesopotamia.<sup>1</sup> We shall not deal here with the importance of Aramaean culture in northern Mesopotamia, today southeastern Asian Turkey, with its Aramaean kingdoms: Nisibis/Nusaybin, Bit Baḥiani (Guzana/Tell Halaf), Bit Zamanni (Amida/Diyarbakir), Bit Aṣalli (around Harran?), and Qipanu (around Ḥuzirina/Sultantepe),<sup>2</sup> where there was also a strong Neo-Assyrian cultural influence.<sup>3</sup> Anatolia itself is a very large country with various territories and the influence of Aramaean culture was very different according to the various lands, as well as according to the successive periods of the 1st millennium B.C.<sup>4</sup>

#### 1. *Beginning of the 1st Millennium B.C.: Aramaean Culture in Southeastern Anatolia*

The kingdom of Carchemish on the Euphrates was already a center of Luwian culture by the end of the 2nd millennium B.C. It was still alive at the beginning of the 1st millennium B.C. and Neo-Hittite culture was also dominant in the kingdoms of Kummuh and Gurgum, northwest of Carchemish. However, Aramaean culture was important in all the kingdoms west and southwest of the Euphrates,<sup>5</sup> especially in the kingdom of Sam'al.<sup>6</sup> This kingdom, located just east of the Amanus Mountains and north of the Luwian and Aramaean kingdom of Pa(lis)tina/'Umq (Unqi),<sup>7</sup> was a cross-road of various cultures. In the 9th–8th centuries B.C. its kings are known by local West Semitic inscriptions as well as by Neo-Assyrian texts. The names of these kings are alternatively Luwian and Aramaic. Besides a few inscriptions in Hieroglyphic Luwian,<sup>8</sup> the monumental local inscriptions are essentially in three West Semitic languages:<sup>9</sup> Phoenician

<sup>1</sup> See Hawkins 1998: 63.

<sup>2</sup> See Radner 2006–2008c.

<sup>3</sup> See Dion 1997 and Lipiński 2000a: 109–232.

<sup>4</sup> See Greenfield 1998.

<sup>5</sup> See Hawkins 1982.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Schloen – Fink 2009a and *id.* 2009b.

<sup>7</sup> See Harrison 2001a; *id.* 2001b; *id.* 2009a; *id.* 2009b; Hawkins 2009.

<sup>8</sup> See Lemaire 2001a: 186 and Hawkins 2000: 276, 576; pls. 127, 329.

<sup>9</sup> See Tropper 1993; Lemaire 2001a; Young 2002.

(Kulamuwa),<sup>10</sup> Official Aramaic (Bar-Rakkab inscriptions, including a seal and inscriptions on three silver ingots),<sup>11</sup> and Sam'alian,<sup>12</sup> a local Aramaic dialect (Kulamuwa,<sup>13</sup> Ördekburnu,<sup>14</sup> Panamuwa I,<sup>15</sup> Panamuwa II,<sup>16</sup> Kuttamuwa<sup>17</sup>).<sup>18</sup> Phoenician was apparently used officially about the middle of the 9th century B.C., when Sam'al was under the political influence of the kingdom of Que (Cilicia).<sup>19</sup> However it seems that the main language used locally was an archaic dialect of Aramaic, which appears on monumental inscriptions from the end of 9th until the end of 8th century B.C. During the reign of King Bar-Rakkab (ca. 733–713/711 B.C.), under the strong political influence of Assyria, the language of the royal inscriptions became Official Aramaic, already before the integration of this kingdom into the Neo-Assyrian Empire under Shalmaneser V or Sargon II, ca. 720 B.C.

All the deities mentioned in the royal inscriptions are Semitic deities: El, Arq-Rešep, Ba'al Hammon, Ba'al Harran, Ba'al Šemed, Hadad, Rakkab'el (see also Ördekburnu), Rešep, and Šamaš. One can speak of an official pantheon of Yādiya/Sam'al, with Hadad as the first god, as shown by his statue and its inscription (KAI 214) as well as the Kuttamuwa inscription. Each dynasty seems to have had its own protective god, for instance, Rakkab'el from King Hayyan up to King Bar-Rakkab.<sup>20</sup> From this list of gods, Aramaean culture seems clearly dominant in the kingdom of Sam'al, at least from the second half of the 9th century B.C. However, the Sam'alian inscriptions of Ördekburnu and Kuttamuwa also reveal the importance of the goddess Kubaba.

The cult of ancestors played an important role in Sam'al, with special sacrifices taking place near the stele representing the deceased. Actually, the stele was thought to incorporate his *npš* (Kuttamuwa). The deceased, as well as the gods, could receive sacrifices and the dead king was more

<sup>10</sup> KAI 24; Tropper 1993: 27–46.

<sup>11</sup> KAI 216–221; Tropper 1993: 132–152.

<sup>12</sup> Dion 1974; Tropper 1993: 287–297; Noorlander 2012.

<sup>13</sup> KAI 25; Tropper 1993: 50–53.

<sup>14</sup> Lemaire – Sass 2012; iid. 2013; Lemaire 2013b.

<sup>15</sup> KAI 214; Tropper 1993: 54–97.

<sup>16</sup> KAI 215; Tropper 1993: 98–131.

<sup>17</sup> Pardee 2009a; Mazzini 2009: 505–507; Younger 2009a; Masson 2010; Kottsieper 2011; Del Olmo Lete 2011; Lemaire 2012; id. 2013a.

<sup>18</sup> Two other small Aramaic inscriptions, without provenance, on a shield and a seal, could also originate from Sam'al. See Lemaire 2001a: 187.

<sup>19</sup> Lemaire 2001a: 189.

<sup>20</sup> Tropper 1993: 20–26.

or less deified, according to Hittite/Luwian tradition. Furthermore, the Hadad inscription of Panamuwa I gives us the formula that the son had to proclaim in front of the statue of Hadad: “May the *npš* of Panamuwa eat with you and may the *npš* of Panamuwa drink with you” (KAI 214: 16–18, 21–22).<sup>21</sup> This ritual can be compared to the Akkadian *kispum*.

We have no indication of an Aramaean influence west of the Amanus in the kingdoms of Que, Hilakku, and Tabal, before their integration into the Neo-Assyrian Empire toward 700 B.C. During that period, the monumental inscriptions of southern Anatolia were engraved either in Hieroglyphic Luwian or in Phoenician (Hassan-Beyli,<sup>22</sup> Karatepe,<sup>23</sup> Çineköy,<sup>24</sup> Ivriz,<sup>25</sup> Cebelireis Dağı;<sup>26</sup> cf. also Incirli, north of Sam’al<sup>27</sup>).

Aramaic, however, could be used in the administration of the Neo-Assyrian Empire west and east of the Amanus.<sup>28</sup> Toward the end of the 8th century B.C., the Assyrian governor of Que, Aššur-šar-ušur, apparently had maces/scepters with his name engraved in Aramaic,<sup>29</sup> and a cylinder-seal inscribed *ḥtm mšry*<sup>30</sup> as well as a stamp-seal inscribed *gytw*<sup>31</sup> could originate from Cilicia. Furthermore, besides a few Neo-Assyrian cuneiform tablets,<sup>32</sup> the excavations of Tarsus have produced what are apparently two small Aramaic graffiti<sup>33</sup> to be dated about 700 B.C., the first one with the inscription *šlbnt*, “to Šilbanit”, Šilbanit being an Akkadian name meaning “under the protection of Banit.”<sup>34</sup>

The use of Aramaic probably continued during the Neo-Babylonian period. Cilicia (Ḥume and Pirindu) seems to have been maintained under the political control of Babylon by means of military campaigns.

<sup>21</sup> Niehr 1994b; Lipiński 2000a: 636–640; Niehr 2001; id. 2004a; id. 2004b; id. 2006; id. 2010a: 279–284.

<sup>22</sup> KAI 23.

<sup>23</sup> KAI 26; Röllig 1999a; Schmitz 2009; Amadasi Guzzo 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Tekoğlu – Lemaire 2000; Lanfranchi 2005; id. 2009; Lemaire 2006c; Singer 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Provisorily, Dinçol 1994 and Hawkins 2000: 526.

<sup>26</sup> Mosca – Russell 1987; KAI 287; Puech 2009; Younger 2009b; Bordreuil 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Kaufman 2007.

<sup>28</sup> See especially the Aramaic tablets found in northern Mesopotamia: Fales 1986; Lemaire 2001b; Fales – Radner – Pappi – Attardo 2005; Lipiński 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Lemaire 1987.

<sup>30</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1951a and Lemaire 2001a: 189.

<sup>31</sup> Lemaire 2001c: 17f.

<sup>32</sup> Goetze 1939.

<sup>33</sup> Gordon 1940; Garbini 1978: 900; id. 1981: 158.

<sup>34</sup> I thank Dr. Asli Özyar for sending me a good picture of this inscription, which he was able to find again although it was not published in Goldman 1963 and Lemaire 2005. It is not mentioned either in Fitzmyer – Kaufman 1992.



In 557/6 B.C. King Neriglissar<sup>35</sup> went as far as Kirshu (Meydancikkale in Cilicia Tracheia)<sup>36</sup> and the Lydian border but there was apparently a previous Neo-Babylonian campaign under Nebuchadnezzar II, probably in his second year (603/2 B.C.), as hinted in a Sabaean inscription.<sup>37</sup> However, thus far, for the Neo-Babylonian period, we do not know of contemporary Aramaic inscriptions in Anatolia itself.

## 2. Achaemenid Period<sup>38</sup>

The political situation of Anatolia during the Achaemenid period is mainly known through Greek sources as shown by the synthesis of P. Briant on the Achaemenid Empire.<sup>39</sup> Aramaic, however, played an important role in imperial administration. Although Aramaic was not the official script or language of the Achaemenid Empire,<sup>40</sup> it functioned as a kind of lingua franca and was used in the administration to communicate between all the various parts of this huge empire: we find Aramaic documents from Elephantine in southern Egypt up to Persepolis and Afghanistan.

As expected, the influence of Aramaean culture was especially important in Cilicia. Besides many monetary legends in Aramaic (*trkmw, trbzw, prnbzw, mzdy, mzdy zy 'l 'brnhr' whlk, klk/hlk, trz, b'l trz, b'l dgn*,<sup>41</sup> *nrgl trz, lnrql, 'n', mrlw, 'z, 'rh, 'grh*),<sup>42</sup> Cilicia produced several monumental Aramaic inscriptions.<sup>43</sup> The earliest one (end of 6th–beginning of 5th century B.C.) is probably the Saraydin inscription (KAI 261),<sup>44</sup> which indicates the hunting place of “Washuwanish son of Appuashi/u, grandson of Washuwanish,” who could be related to Appuashu, king of Pirindu, who is mentioned in the Neo-Babylonian campaign of King Neriglissar (see above). Syennesis and Princess Epyaxa, who met Cyrus the Younger

<sup>35</sup> Wiseman 1956: 37–42, 74–77, 86–88; Grayson 1975 = 2000: 103f; Glassner 1993: 201.

<sup>36</sup> Davesne – Lemaire – Lozachmeur 1987.

<sup>37</sup> Bron – Lemaire 2009: 25–29.

<sup>38</sup> See Lemaire – Lozachmeur 1996.

<sup>39</sup> Briant 1996.

<sup>40</sup> Greenfield 1998: 206.

<sup>41</sup> Lemaire 1991d: 47–51.

<sup>42</sup> Lemaire 1989; id. 2000a; Casabonne et al. 2001; Casabonne 2004: 67–68, 101–136, 174–196, 207–220.

<sup>43</sup> Lemaire 2000b; Casabonne 2004: 241–249; Schwiderski 2004: 17 (Abydos), 34 (Agaca Kale), 40–41 (Arebsun), 191 (Daskyleion 1–2), 195 (Gözne), 202 (Hemite), 291 (Kesecek Köyü), 293 (Limyra), 294 (Sardis), 295 (Meydancikkale 1–2), 364 (Saraydin), 408 (Sultaniye Köy), 421 (Xanthos 1–3).

<sup>44</sup> KAI 261; Gibson 1975: 155: no. 35; Casabonne 1996: 111–114; id. 2000: 93–96.

in 401 B.C.,<sup>45</sup> could also belong to the same family of dynasts.<sup>46</sup> Two inscriptions were found in Kirshu (Meydancikkale),<sup>47</sup> the ancient capital of Appuashu, king of Pirindu. They are unfortunately only partly legible: the biggest one is probably an official inscription (perhaps of a cultic law: *dth?*), which begins with a date, perhaps “year seventeen [of Artaxerxes the kin]g”; the other is probably related to the family tomb of “Belshunu,” who may have been a local officer with a Neo-Babylonian name. Another officer, “Sarmapiya the satrap,” is apparently mentioned in the Hemite inscription.<sup>48</sup> Two inscriptions, Gözne<sup>49</sup> and Bahadirlı I,<sup>50</sup> indicate the frontier of territories (*thwm*); the first one mentions the Aramaean gods Ba‘alšamayin, Šahr, and Šamaš,<sup>51</sup> and the second the local goddess Kubaba. A few inscriptions are too fragmentary to specify their genre (Bahadirlı II,<sup>52</sup> Hediören<sup>53</sup>). Most of the inscriptions are apparently funerary inscriptions: Kesecek Köyü,<sup>54</sup> Bozkuyu Höyük/Yukarı Bozkuyu,<sup>55</sup> Göller (Bostanlar),<sup>56</sup> Kumkulluk,<sup>57</sup> Meydancikkale II, Aigeai,<sup>58</sup> Menekse.<sup>59</sup> In four of them the funerary stele is called *šmh*, lit. “his name”, which seems specific to Cilicia.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, although, from the monetary legend, it is clear that Greek was also used during this period, especially on the coast, these various Aramaic inscriptions, as well as the mentioned deities, reveal the importance of the written Aramaean culture among the people of Cilicia during the Achaemenid period. This influence was also felt in the other lands of Anatolia.

In Lycia, besides Lycian and Greek inscriptions, we know of a few Aramaic ones. A few bronze coins with the monetary legend *lryyn* may

<sup>45</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis* I, 2, 12–27.

<sup>46</sup> Casabonne 2005: 71.

<sup>47</sup> Davesne – Lemaire – Lozachmeur 1987: 366–382; Lemaire – Lozachmeur 1998; Lemaire 2003a.

<sup>48</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1950; Lemaire 1991c: 205.

<sup>49</sup> KAI 259; Gibson 1975: 154.

<sup>50</sup> KAI 278; Gibson 1975: 156f.

<sup>51</sup> Šahr and Šamaš are also mentioned in the Kesecek Köyü inscription.

<sup>52</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1951b.

<sup>53</sup> Lemaire 1993.

<sup>54</sup> KAI 258; Gibson 1975: 153–154; Lipiński 1975a: 146f; Teixidor 1986: 131, 452–453.

<sup>55</sup> Lemaire 1993.

<sup>56</sup> Lemaire 1994: 91–96.

<sup>57</sup> Lemaire 1994: 96–98.

<sup>58</sup> Lemaire 2004a.

<sup>59</sup> Lemaire 2013b.

<sup>60</sup> Lemaire 2004b.

come from this country<sup>61</sup> and monumental Aramaic inscriptions were discovered in Xanthos and Limyra. In Xanthos, the main Aramaic inscription is the famous trilingual inscription of “Pixodaros, son of Katamnos, the satrap in Caria and Lycia,”<sup>62</sup> who promulgated a cultic law (*dātāh*) probably “engraved by order of the property-holder, the priest Simias.”<sup>63</sup> This inscription commemorates the institution of a “cult/chapel (?) to the god Kandawats Caunina and his colleagues,” which was placed under the protection of “the god(s) Leto, Artemis, Hshatrapati, and others.” Three other fragments of Aramaic inscriptions were bi- or possibly trilingual.<sup>64</sup> Other than Xanthos, one can only mention the Aramaean Greek funerary inscription of Limyra.<sup>65</sup>

While Ch. Le Roy emphasizes that in Lycia, “. . . moins de 5% des textes inscrits d'époque archaïque et classique sont en araméen. Cette langue apparaît essentiellement comme l'instrument de l'empire,”<sup>66</sup> one may also note that Aramaic was apparently never used alone but always with another language: Lycian or Greek.

Sardis, the capital of Lydia, was situated at the end of the great imperial road from Susa and she was the “centre de la partie occidentale de l'Empire achéménide.”<sup>67</sup> It produced a few monumental Aramaic inscriptions. The first one, found in 1912, is the famous bilingual, Lydian and Aramaic,<sup>68</sup> related to a funerary monument. The Aramaic part contains a few orthographic mistakes and several loan words.<sup>69</sup>

Another Lydian-Aramaic bilingual was found in Falaka, in the Kastros Valley, and dates to “the sixteenth year of King Artaxerxes” (probably 343/2 B.C.). Unfortunately, its Aramaic part is badly damaged. Three other fragmentary Aramaic inscriptions, apparently also dated to the 4th century B.C., were discovered recently: in Kenger (north of Maionia),<sup>70</sup> Kemaliye (Lydian Philadelphieia),<sup>71</sup> and Çivril (Uşak museum). This last

<sup>61</sup> Lipiński 1975a: 166f and Lemaire – Lozachmeur 1996: 100.

<sup>62</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1979a; Lemaire 1995a; Briant 1998a; id. 2001: 179–182; Kottsieper 2002.

<sup>63</sup> Lemaire 1995a: 431.

<sup>64</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1979a: 170–175; id. 1979b; Lemaire 1992; Lemaire – Lozachmeur 1996: 101.

<sup>65</sup> KAI 262; Lipiński 1975a: 162–171.

<sup>66</sup> Le Roy 1987: 264.

<sup>67</sup> Chaumont 1990: 586.

<sup>68</sup> KAI 260; Lipiński 1975a: 153–161.

<sup>69</sup> Lemaire 1990–1992: 26.

<sup>70</sup> Lemaire 2002b.

<sup>71</sup> Kwasman – Lemaire 2002.

inscription, probably dated “in year 2 of king Darius” (III), apparently commemorates the setting up of a pillar (*mwd*) “for Arte[mi]s of the Ephesian(s),” a goddess also mentioned in the bilingual Sardis inscription (above). The fragmentary Kenger inscription appears to commemorate the setting up of a *stwn* (“stele”), a word also already mentioned in the funerary Sardis bilingual inscription. The literary genre of the fragmentary Kemaliye inscription is difficult to specify. Most of these inscriptions contain maledictions as well as words or personal names that do not appear to be Semitic. The apparently official character of the Sardis bilingual and of the Çivril stele is indicated by their dating according to the year of the Great King at the beginning of the inscription, a phenomenon also known in the Xanthos trilingual (above). This dating of Aramaic inscriptions can be compared to the dating at the beginning of a Greek copy of an Achaemenid inscription from the Roman period, as is the case with the Droaphernes inscription, the debated original of which could well have been Aramaic<sup>72</sup> or, better, bi- or trilingual. The problem of an Aramaic original is still more debated for the Gadatas inscription presented as a letter from Darius.<sup>73</sup>

One could perhaps add to these Aramaic inscriptions from Lydia, a Persian province since 547 B.C., an unprovenanced cylinder-seal with the personal name “Artim(as),”<sup>74</sup> which can be compared to Artimas “satrap” of Lydia in Xenophon.<sup>75</sup>

North of Lydia, Daskyleion (Hisartepi near Ergili) was the capital of Hellespont. The ancient site has been partly excavated under the direction of Tomris Bakir<sup>76</sup> and has produced, besides several Phrygian inscriptions, twelve Aramaic bullae and three monumental funerary Aramaic inscriptions.<sup>77</sup> The names of the deceased (*'lnp br 'šy, 'd/rh, pdy*) seem to be West Semitic as is the formula *šlm yhw y lkm* (“Peace be upon you!”) in Daskyleion II: 5–6. The names of the twelve Aramaic inscriptions on bullae are mostly Iranian, but a few could be Semitic.<sup>78</sup> To these Daskyleion inscriptions, one may add the bronze lion weight from Abydos. It was

<sup>72</sup> Robert 1975; Chaumont 1990; Briant 1996: 696f, 1025–1027; id. 1998b; id. 2001: 177–179; id. 2006: 329; Debord 1999: 367–374.

<sup>73</sup> Briant 1996: 507–509; id. 2001: 182; id. 2003; Metzler 1997.

<sup>74</sup> CIS II, 99; Bivar 1961; Lipiński 1975a: 164–166; Bordreuil 1996: III, 152, 174.

<sup>75</sup> *Anabasis* VII, 8, 25.

<sup>76</sup> See, e.g., Bakir 2001.

<sup>77</sup> Gibson 1975: 157f, 166; Lipiński 1975a: 150–153; Altheim-Stiehl – Metzler – Schwertheim 1983; Altheim – Cremer 1985; Lemaire 2001d.

<sup>78</sup> Röllig 2002c.

found in 1861, weighs 31,808 kg and is now in the British Museum (E 32625).<sup>79</sup> Its Aramaic inscription reads: *'sprn' lqbl stry' zy ksp'* ("Exact according to the treasurers of silver"). It is obviously connected with the High Achaemenid administration and probably with Xerxes' expedition against Greece in 480 B.C.<sup>80</sup>

Further to the east, Paphlagonia and Pontus did not produce monumental Aramaic inscriptions, but 4th century B.C. coins from Sinop (Paphlagonia) show legends in Aramaic: *'rywrt*,<sup>81</sup> *'bdssn, mtrwpst, [']rwn-tpt, wdrn, tyryn*. Except for probable *'bdssn*, these are apparently Iranian names of Achaemenid officials.<sup>82</sup> In the same period, coins of Gaziura (Pontus) could read *'rywrt* and *b'l gzw* in Aramaic.<sup>83</sup>

The center of Anatolia (Phrygia and Cappadocia) did not produce Aramaic inscriptions, but at Gordion a cylinder-seal reads *h̄tm bny br ztwhyšn* ("Seal of Banaya, son of Zatuvaḥyashna").<sup>84</sup> The name of its owner appears to be Semitic with a Persian patronym.

Except perhaps in Cilicia, these Aramaic inscriptions in the various parts of Achaemenid Anatolia suggest that, during that period, Aramaic influence was essentially felt through the direct influence of the high Achaemenid administration. It does not imply that the local population spoke Aramaic.

### 3. Hellenistic Period

With Alexander's campaign and the change to Hellenistic domination, Aramaic seems to disappear. Instead, we see the quick development of the use of Greek. However, the use of Aramaic went on for a while in eastern Anatolia in Cappadocia, where we know of three inscriptions or groups of inscriptions found in Arebsun, Ağcakale/Akçakale, and Farasha.

The inscriptions of Arebsun were discovered in 1895 in a village located near the river Kizilirmak/Halys and called Jarabusun/Jarepsun/Arebsun/Jarapisson (Greek: *Arabissos*) and are now in the Istanbul Oriental Archaeology Museum. The Aramaic inscriptions are engraved on two

<sup>79</sup> CIS II, 108; KAI 263; Mitchell 1973.

<sup>80</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* VII, 44–45.

<sup>81</sup> According to Diodorus of Sicily XXXI, 19, 3, "Ariarates" was a Persian dynast in northern Cappadocia at the time of Artaxerxes III.

<sup>82</sup> Harrison 1982.

<sup>83</sup> Naster 1988: 9.

<sup>84</sup> Young 1953: 14f and Lemaire – Lozachmeur 1996: 107.

black stones and, after various preliminary presentations,<sup>85</sup> were only recently published in detail with good photographs:<sup>86</sup> the inscriptions of both blocks seem to date paleographically to the first half of the 3rd century B.C. Their content is very original. Ahuramazda is clearly mentioned in stele A, line 2, and perhaps in stele B, text 1.1. Both stelae were set up to celebrate the marriage of “Bêl”, perhaps on the 26th of Tammuz. However, this does not seem to be an ordinary marriage: the husband is “Bel” and his wife “Dayanamazdayasnish” is called “queen (?)”, “sister”, and wife of “Bel”. Bel is not only “great” and “king” but also apparently “god”, and “he gets out of the skies.” These inscriptions are probably to be interpreted in the context of the Mazdaean religion.

The bilingual Greek-Aramaic inscription of Ağcakale/Akçakale, 41 km south of Divriği, was discovered in 1900 and has been variously interpreted.<sup>87</sup> It apparently commemorates the foundation of a fortified city (Greek *teichè* / Aramaic *byrt*), called Andômon, by the “satraps” Oromanes and Arioukes, his son. Oromanes and Arioukes are probably to be identified with Ariaramnes and his son Ariarathe (III) of Cappadocia<sup>88</sup> and Andômon with Anda(è)môn/Andoumôn, mentioned in Letter 249 (§ 7) of Gregory of Nazianzus.<sup>89</sup> Actually, “the Ariarathids of Cappadocia...traced their lineage back to the Achaemenids through the marriage between Pharnaces and Atossa, sister of Cambyze II.”<sup>90</sup> The Aramaic inscription is to be paleographically dated about the middle of the 3rd century B.C.<sup>91</sup>

E. Lipiński notes that, “the bilingual Greek-Aramaic inscription from Faraşa was found ca. 1900 by A. Levidis in the savage gorge of Zamanti-Su, the ancient River Karmalas.”<sup>92</sup> It is engraved in the rock of the cliff. The two-line Aramaic inscription reads *sgr br mhyprn rb hy[1]’ mgyš [lm]trh*<sup>93</sup> (“Sagari, son of Mahifarna, chief of the ar[m]y, became magus [of Mi]thra”). The Greek version specifies that Sagari/Sagarios was *stratèg[o]s* of Ariaramneia, apparently a city founded or rather [re]founded<sup>94</sup> by Ariaramnos, the founder of the ruling dynasty in

<sup>85</sup> See Clermont-Ganneau 1900; Lidzbarski 1902; RES III, 1785; KAI 264.

<sup>86</sup> Lemaire 2003b.

<sup>87</sup> RES II, 954; Lipiński 1975a: 197–208; Lozachmeur 1975.

<sup>88</sup> Diodorus of Sicily XXXI, 19, 6.

<sup>89</sup> See Gallay 1967: 141.

<sup>90</sup> Facella 2009: 383.

<sup>91</sup> Lemaire 1995b: 9.

<sup>92</sup> Lipiński 1975a: 173.

<sup>93</sup> KAI 265.

<sup>94</sup> The original name of the city was probably *Rhodandos*.

Cappadocia in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., and probably located in Farasha. Thus, this inscription apparently commemorates the initiation of Sagari(os) into the sacred function of mithraic Magus, associating a military with a religious function as often was the case during the Hellenistic period. An approximate date in the second half of the 2nd century B.C. seems likely.

Thus, the Aramaic script and language were clearly still in use in eastern Anatolia during the Hellenistic period for official inscriptions of religious or civic content. This use may be compared to the contemporary use of Aramaic in Armenia.<sup>95</sup>

#### 4. *Conclusion*

Originally attested in southeastern Anatolia, in the kingdom of Sam'al, the Aramaean culture expanded first in Cilicia under the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian administrations. The use of Aramaic in imperial administrations later expanded to the whole of Anatolia during the Achaemenid period, but nearly fell into disuse finally because of the expansion of Greek. However, the written Aramaean culture was still alive in Cappadocia during the Hellenistic period, apparently in connection with dynasts connected with the Achaemenids and with the Zoroastrian religion.

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<sup>95</sup> KAI 274–275; Perikhanian 1971; Naveh 1971; id. 1982: 128.

## 4. PHOENICIA

Herbert Niehr

1. *Political Contact between Phoenicians and Aramaeans*<sup>1</sup>

Even though the core region of the Phoenician city-states—reaching from Arwad in the north to Tyre in the south, including their hinterland—was never a coherent kingdom, it did form an interconnected cultural unit. The coastal region and the Lebanon Mountains were predominantly influenced by the Phoenicians, while the Beqa' and the Anti-Lebanon were within the influence sphere of different Aramaean kingdoms, Šobah, Geshur, and especially Damascus. The Phoenicians expanded into the Beqa' and the Anti-Lebanon only during Achaemenid and Hellenistic-Roman times.<sup>2</sup>

The large Phoenician royal cities were located in the Lebanese homeland between Tyre in the south and Byblos in the north, as well as in the Syrian coastal region from Tripolis to Arwad. Nevertheless, Phoenician traces can be found as far as Gabala<sup>3</sup> and Ras Shamra, ancient Ugarit,<sup>4</sup> to the north; however, they must be distinguished from the Phoenicians, Aramaeans, and Greeks in al-Mina<sup>5</sup> north of Ugarit. The Phoenicians in Anatolia<sup>6</sup> are beyond this article's scope.

First, a few remarks on Phoenician-Aramaean relations in the region north of Lebanon. The coastal cities, as well as the island of Arwad and its hinterland in the territory of Amrit, bordered directly on the kingdom of Hamath in the mid-8th century B.C.; this led to a temporary domination by the Aramaean kings of Hamath over the Phoenicians of this northern coastal region.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Grainger 1991: 5–20, 106–128.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Rey-Coquais 1970: 95–99, 117–121; Elayi 2000; Elayi-Sapin 2000: 43–56; Lipiński 2000b: 127–129; id. 2004: 264–283; Peckham 2001: 26–31; Jigoulov 2010: 179–183.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Segert 2001 and Tropper 2012: 78f and also Bordreuil 2007: 76–78 for a Phoenician inscription in alphabetic cuneiform script from Sarepta.

<sup>5</sup> For al-Mina cf. Bonatz 1993; Luke 2003; Wittke 2004: 48–50; Jigoulov 2010: 179f; inscriptions in Bron – Lemaire 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Röllig 1992; id. 1995; Peckham 2001: 31–33; Lipiński 2004: 109–143.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Lipiński 1992b: 36 and the article by H. Sader in this volume.



A glance at a map<sup>8</sup> of the Phoenician core region shows that Lebanon was bordered in the east and southeast by the kingdoms of Šobah, Geshur, and Damascus. King Hazael (ca. 843–803 B.C.) of Damascus was temporarily able to extend his realm into the territory of Israel and even into the region of the Philistine royal cities, and gain access to the Mediterranean coast. Only during this period did Damascus have access to a Mediterranean harbor. This expansion of King Hazael meant that even Tyre was temporarily confined in the south by the Aramaean sphere of influence.<sup>9</sup>

It should be noted that there were no political or military confrontations between Phoenicians and Aramaeans. Both cultures profited from their mutual cultural and mercantile contacts. One also gains the impression that, with the continuing consolidation of the Aramaean kingdoms in Syria, the Phoenicians kept out of the inner-Syrian region and concentrated their interests on the coastal region and the bordering mountains. Later, they also concentrated on their growing number of trading posts in the Mediterranean, such as those on Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete, Sicily, and Sardinia, as well as in Spain and North Africa, to name but a few.<sup>10</sup> With this went a continuous balance of interest between the Phoenicians in Lebanon and the Aramaeans in Syria.<sup>11</sup>

In the Mediterranean, trading contacts of Syrian Aramaeans are unverifiable and the presence of Aramaeans cannot be proven on the basis of what few Aramaic inscriptions there are.<sup>12</sup> This is especially true of the Aramaic inscriptions on the votive offerings on Samos and in Eretria. These objects were probably the loot of Greek mercenaries in the service of Tiglath-Pileser III (756–727 B.C.), who acquired them during the sack of Damascus in 732 B.C. They must have reached Samos and then Eretria by way of these mercenaries, perhaps even over several intermediate stops.<sup>13</sup> Based on the inscriptions of Pithecusae we are dealing here with Phoenicians, not Aramaeans.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, the presence of Aramaeans cannot be substantiated by a few toponyms in Tripolitania alone.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the maps in Wittke – Olshausen – Szydlak 2010: 47, 49.

<sup>9</sup> Regarding the expansion politics of Hazael, cf. Niehr 2011.

<sup>10</sup> See the maps in Wittke – Olshausen – Szydlak 2010: 69, 71.

<sup>11</sup> Also Peckham 2001: 20–22, 37.

<sup>12</sup> Contra Garbini 1993: 87–99, 181–192.

<sup>13</sup> See in detail Niehr 2010b: 287f.

<sup>14</sup> Regarding the inscriptions of Pithecusae, see the discussion in Amadasi Guzzo 1987: 37–39, 46f and Krebernik 2007: 119f.

<sup>15</sup> So Manfredi 1993, but cf. Lipiński 2004: 347–349.

Well attested are the joint actions of Phoenicians and Aramaeans against the Assyrian expansionist politics to the west, for example, their joint efforts against the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) in the battle at Qarqar in 853 B.C., in which the allied troops of Damascus, Hamath, Israel, Egypt, Byblos, Irqata, Usnu, Siyannu, and Arwad fought against the Assyrians.<sup>16</sup> A similar coalition also existed with the coastal kings during the 10th, 11th, and 14th regnal year of Shalmaneser III.<sup>17</sup>

Phoenicians and Aramaeans probably also fought together against the Assyrians during the reign of Assyrian king Adad-nirari III (810–783 B.C.).<sup>18</sup> The same holds true for the time of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.), when a conspiracy of King Hiram of Tyre with King Rezin of Damascus is documented.<sup>19</sup>

It is uncertain, due to gaps in textual transmission, whether Phoenicians involved themselves in the last insurgency mounted against the Assyrians from Hamath<sup>20</sup> at the battle at Qarqar in 720 B.C.

Even so, these military actions against the Assyrians cannot disguise the fact that the kings of Arwad, Byblos, and Sidon had been paying tribute to the Assyrians since the time of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.).<sup>21</sup> Further tributes by Arwad, Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre are attested for the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.).<sup>22</sup> Sources also speak of tributes by Tyre and Sidon to the Assyrians on the occasion of various military campaigns against Damascus by Shalmaneser III.<sup>23</sup> Finally, a relief on the Balawat Gates shows Tyrians presenting their tribute to Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.).<sup>24</sup>

## 2. *Phoenician Cultural Influence on the Aramaeans in Syria*

Historically, a cultural influence of Lebanese Phoenicians on some of the Aramaean kingdoms in Syria is initially ascertainable. Aramaeans adopted the Phoenician script with its 22 consonant alphabet at the beginning of

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Yamada 2000: 143–163.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Yamada 2000: 166–177, 180–183.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Weippert 2010: 274–276.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Borger 1982–1985: 376–378.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Weippert 2010: 303f.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Wäfler 1975: 87f.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Katzenstein 1973: 139–142 and Grayson 1991: 226.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Katzenstein 1973: 166 and Weippert 2010: 263–265.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Wäfler 1975: 77–83; Schachner 2007: 225–227; and the inscriptions in Grayson 1996: 27–32 no. 5 and 140–149 nos. 63–88.

the 9th century B.C.<sup>25</sup> The transition from Phoenician to Aramaic is visible in early inscriptions of the Aramaean kingdoms, especially in Sam'al, where the oldest inscription was written during the time of King Kulamuwa (ca. 840–810 B.C.). This inscription was composed using the Phoenician language and script (KAI 24); a somewhat more recent inscription, however, was in Aramaic and used Phoenician script (KAI 25).<sup>26</sup>

The Phoenician inscription at Sam'al (KAI 24) definitively proves the existence of Phoenician scribes<sup>27</sup> in Aramaean lands. The existence of a Phoenician scribe by the name of Abdilim is documented for the time of King Kapara of Guzana (Tell Halaf).<sup>28</sup> A definite Phoenician cultural influence on Aramaean literacy in Syria is clearly revealed by their adoption of the Phoenician alphabet and by the work of Phoenician scribes.<sup>29</sup> The related religious Phoenician influence on the Syrian Aramaeans will be discussed later.

Furthermore, the amulet tablets from Hadattu (Arslan Tash) should also be mentioned in this context. These amulets are written in a mixed Phoenician-Aramaic dialect and in Aramaic script and they attest a reception of Phoenician magical practices by the Aramaeans of Syria.<sup>30</sup>

### 3. *Aramaic in Lebanon*

There have been different approaches to prove the Aramaization of Lebanon based on linguistic criteria; however, the results have been sketchy. For instance, only a limited influence of Aramaic on Phoenician can be traced. Secondly, there are very few inscriptions in Aramaic from Lebanon. This includes northern Phoenician city-states as far as Arwad.

Regarding the influence of Aramaic on Phoenician inscriptions in Lebanon, there is little use of Aramaic words or constructions.<sup>31</sup> For

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. for example Naveh 1970; Peckham 2001: 33–37; Sass 2005: 13–74; and above, section 2, of H. Gzella's contribution to this volume.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Tropper 1993: 50–53.

<sup>27</sup> Regarding Phoenician scribes, cf., in general, Bonnet 1991 and ead. 2003.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Lipiński 1994: 25.

<sup>29</sup> It was also primarily the Phoenicians who passed their alphabet on to the Phrygians and to the Greeks and thus to the west; cf. Röllig 1998: 367–372; Brixhe 2004; Krebernik 2007; and Lemaire 2008b: 51f. Though one should not underestimate the role of the Aramaeans, cf. especially Knauf 1987; Bordreuil 2007: 81; Sass 2005: 133–146.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. section 2.5 in H. Niehr's chapter on religion in this volume.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. the overview and discussion in Healey 1983: 664–666; Lipiński 1990: 105 n. 78; id. 1992b: 36. Nevertheless, the strong influence of Aramaic on the elder inscriptions from Byblos postulated by Healey 1983: 664f is no longer consistent with the current state of research in Phoenician philology.

example: *bgw* (“among”, KAI 17: 1) and *ʕ ly* (“hers”, KAI 17: 2),<sup>32</sup> respectively, *ʕ ly* (“his”),<sup>33</sup> in inscriptions from the 2nd century B.C. Add to these *ʕ ly* (“my”, KAI 43: 9) as well as two Aramaic loan words, *šgyt* (“very”, KAI 43: 9)<sup>34</sup> and *rʕt* (“decision”, KAI 60: 4),<sup>35</sup> from Phoenician inscriptions outside Lebanon. Further influences can be found through Greek transcriptions of Phoenician lexemes in Plutarch and Porphyrio.<sup>36</sup> An Aramaic orthographic influence on Phoenician orthography is revealed through plene writing.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, there are a few Aramaic personal names, such as Hadad and Gusi, found on the stelae in the necropolis of Tyre (7th century B.C.),<sup>38</sup> and the royal names Baʿanaʿ of Sidon (last decade of the 5th century B.C.)<sup>39</sup> and Ainʿel of Byblos (4th century B.C.),<sup>40</sup> the latter written in Aramaic orthography. A definite increase in Aramaic personal names is identified only in the onomastica of Arwad and Tyre dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D.<sup>41</sup> Here, one should be extremely aware of issues involved in drawing conclusions about the spoken language from personal names. Some cases of Aramaization of divine names during the Roman period<sup>42</sup> do not change this impression, so that no general linguistic Aramaization of Lebanon can be concluded from this.

The observation that Phoenician inscriptions such as KAI 12 were still composed during the 2nd century B.C. originates from these findings. Further inscriptions from this time are Greek-Phoenician bilinguals from Arwad<sup>43</sup> and other places.<sup>44</sup> Phoenician inscriptions minted on coins dating as far back as the 3rd century A.D. cannot be adduced as a proof for Phoenician as a spoken language at that time.<sup>45</sup> From Hellenistic-Roman

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Donner – Röllig <sup>3</sup>1973: 25f.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Dunand – Duru 1962: 194 no. 16.

<sup>34</sup> KAI 43 dates to the 2nd century B.C.; cf. Donner – Röllig <sup>3</sup>1973: 60.

<sup>35</sup> KAI 60 is from the 3rd century B.C.; cf. Teixidor 1980: 457–460.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Briquel-Chatonnet 1991: 14.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Friedrich – Röllig <sup>3</sup>1999: 25 § 67; 40f § 100–103.

<sup>38</sup> Regarding the stelae 15 and 19 cf. Sader 2005: 40–42, 45, 99.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Dunand 1965: 106f; Lipiński 1992b: 36.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Lipiński 1992a: 11 and id. 1992b: 36.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Briquel-Chatonnet 1991: 16–18.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Aliquot 2009: 139–142.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Rey-Coquais 1970: 201–205; Briquel-Chatonnet 1991: 6–10; Jigoulov 2010: 61.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Bordreuil – Gubel 1995: 182f.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Briquel-Chatonnet 1991: 10.

times onward the inscriptions show the distribution of Greek and Latin<sup>46</sup> in Lebanon more than anything else.

Phoenician as a spoken language went out of use at the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>47</sup>

The number of Aramaic inscriptions found at or originating in Lebanon is very small, further emphasizing that an Aramaization of Lebanon cannot be substantiated. The inscriptions of the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. mentioned here support this conclusion. Geographically, they do originate from Lebanon but their makers were not Phoenicians.

A letter (ND 2686), found at Nimrud, reports on a sealed document written in Aramaic and sent to Nimrud from Tyre between 738 and 734 B.C.<sup>48</sup> However, the letter is a communiqué from the Assyrian administration and is therefore no proof of the use of Aramaic by Phoenicians, but rather evidence of the Aramaization of Assyria,<sup>49</sup> or rather its administration.<sup>50</sup>

One further Aramaic inscription, possibly from northern Lebanon and dating from the 6th century B.C., must be mentioned. It concerns an edict from the Neo-Babylonian authority requiring that Aramaean (?) fugitives from Babylon be returned to Mesopotamia.<sup>51</sup> Like the Nimrud letter, this is no indigenous text but rather a command from Babylonian officials written in Official Aramaic.

An Aramaic inscription from Lebanon must be distinguished from the previous two cases. It was found at Yanuh located to the north of Byblos in the upper part of the valley of Ibrahim and was built into a 'Basilica' as spolia. The inscription consists of two lines in Aramaic reporting on the building of a temple; its writing is similar to Nabataean script and can be dated to 110 or 109 B.C. It was written not by Phoenicians but by Ituraeans,<sup>52</sup> who had by then already expanded into the hinterland of Byblos.

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Rey-Coquais 1970; Breton 1980; Briquel-Chatonnet 1991: 11–13; Grainger 1991: 108f; Aliquot 2008; id. 2009 and the references in Aliquot 2009: 6 n. 13.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Briquel-Chatonnet 1991: 8, 11.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Saggs 1952 = 2001: 154f; id. 1955: 130f, 149–152; Tadmor 1982: 452.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. the contribution by M. Nissinen in this volume.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Garelli 1982 and Tadmor 1982.

<sup>51</sup> Regarding the inscription, cf. especially Caquot 1971; Lipiński 1975a: 77–82; id. 2000a: 560; Kottsieper 2000; Sass – Marzahn 2010: 151f with fig. 1009.

<sup>52</sup> Regarding the inscription and its interpretation, cf. Briquel-Chatonnet – Bordreuil 2001; Aliquot 2009: 34; Myers 2010: 130f.

Recent research on the Ituraeans has not been able to establish beyond a doubt their long-suspected Arabian origin; modern Ituraean research emphasizes an Aramaean origin.<sup>53</sup>

The Ituraeans are possibly the descendants of the Aramaeans in the Beqa', perhaps of the kingdom of Šobah. In the mid 2nd century B.C., they entered the stage of history when the Seleucid power structures that had ruled the Beqa' and Lebanon dissolved and the Hasmonaeans entered the Beqa' from the south. The Ituraeans managed to gain control over not only the Beqa' but also some regions of central Lebanon.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, an Aramaean cultural influence on Lebanon proceeded from the Beqa' westward into the Phoenician heartland. Further confirmation of this occurrence (next to the already mentioned inscription of Yanuh) could be the worship of the god Ba'alšamem in Qadeš in the hinterland of Tyre and in Raḥle, which extended as far as Palmyra.<sup>55</sup> It is within this context and perhaps also during the following period that Aramaic toponyms in Lebanon<sup>56</sup> should be placed. Aramaic was found in Lebanon up until the 17th century A.D. and was gradually replaced by Arabic.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4. Religion

An adoption of Phoenician deities into the Aramaean pantheon and vice versa, can be determined. In the case of the adoption of Phoenician deities into the Aramaean pantheon, the goddess Pahalatis is mentioned in Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions from Hamath in the 9th century B.C. The theophoric element *b'lt*<sup>58</sup> can be found in Aramaic graffiti from Hamath dating to the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. This goddess had been worshipped since the 2nd millennium B.C. and was the principal deity of the city of Byblos, the "Lady of Byblos," who appears in the 1st millennium B.C. under her Phoenician name, *b'lt gbl*.

The Phoenician god Adon, who appears in a personal name in Hamath,<sup>59</sup> also originates from Byblos.

<sup>53</sup> On this discussion, cf. especially Retsö 2003: 407f; Aliquot 1999–2003: 166–191; id. 2009: 28–37; Myers 2010: 133–168.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. the maps in Grainger 1991: 130 map 4 and in Aliquot 2009: 29 fig. 7 as well as the figures in Aliquot 1999–2003: 191–212 and Myers 2010: 42–101.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Niehr 2003: 219–228 and Aliquot 2009: 277f, 349–352.

<sup>56</sup> In general, see Wild 1973: 33–41; cf. the catalogues of semantics and etymology of toponyms in Wild 1973: 69–322 and in Wardini 2002: 131–277, 281–508.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Briquel-Chatonnet 1991: 19.

<sup>58</sup> For instances, see Niehr 2003: 92 nn. 15 and 16.

<sup>59</sup> For instances, see Otzen 1990: 275–277.

From Hamath comes confirmation of the adoption of the Phoenician god Ba'alšamem as Ba'alšamayin in the inscription of King Zakkur of Hamath (KAI 202), shortly after 800 B.C. According to the inscription, Ba'alšamayin called on the Aramaean Zakkur, a foreigner from 'Anah on the Euphrates to be king in Hamath. He supported Zakkur and in addition made him king over Hazrak. King Zakkur raised his hands in supplication and the god answered through seers and prophets, and ensured his release from his rivals.<sup>60</sup>

The stele from Breğ near Aleppo, with an inscription by King Bar-Hadad (KAI 201) from the second half of the 9th century B.C., is a votive offering to the god Melqart. Melqart was the principal deity of the city of Tyre but his cult was also practiced in northern Syria. Apart from this inscription, the contract between kings Ashur-nirari V (754–745 B.C.) of Assyria and Mati'el of Bit Agusi (SAA II no. 2) mentions him. Perhaps he had a prominent sanctuary near Aleppo, where King Bar-Hadad erected the stela in gratitude for a rescue from an unspecified threat.<sup>61</sup>

Several Aramaean deities were adopted into the Phoenician pantheon, for example, Atargatis, Ba'al Hammon, Belos, Demarus, and Jupiter of Yabrud.<sup>62</sup> With the exception of Ba'al Hammon in Carthage and its surroundings,<sup>63</sup> none of them ever attained any primary position. The divine name Belsamen in Philo Byblios shows that the Phoenician god Ba'alšamem had undergone an Aramaean influence.<sup>64</sup>

Two small amulet tablets present an interesting instance of Phoenician religious influence on the Aramaeans. They date to the 7th century B.C. and were found at Arslan Tash. Their inscriptions were originally Phoenician incantations, which were copied and modified by an Aramaean scribe. The latter is evident in the fact that the god Ashur is mentioned; he appears in Aramaic inscriptions from northern Syria but not in Phoenician inscriptions. They were found in a city settled by Aramaeans, which also points to an adoption of Phoenician incantations practices in Aramaean religion.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> An exhaustive analysis of the Zakkur inscription can be found in Niehr 2003: 89–96.

<sup>61</sup> Regarding the stele, its inscription, the depiction of the god Melqart, and the stele's localization near Aleppo, cf. especially Pitard 1987: 138–144; id. 1988; Puech 1992; Niehr 2010a: 247f.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Lipiński 1995: 123f, 227f, 251–264, 280–283, 307f.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Xella 1991: 46–83 and Bonnet 2010: 57–60, 66f.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Niehr 2003: 310–313 and Aliquot 2009: 141f.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. in further detail Niehr 2010a: 241f.

### 5. *Conclusion*

As has become apparent in the previous sections there were Phoenician-Aramaean cultural contacts that had a limited influence on the Phoenicians in Lebanon.<sup>66</sup> This is based on the following conclusions:

1. Generally, one must emphasize, from a Syrian perspective, the ‘peripheral position’ of the Phoenician royal cities beyond the Lebanon Mountains. This situation allowed for the development of independent politics and economics by the Phoenicians in Lebanon and made the continuation of Phoenician traditions—linguistic, cultural, and religious—possible. Added to this was the growing Phoenician interest in their trading posts within the Mediterranean region. Therefore, an interchange of cultures between Aramaeans in Syria and Phoenicians in Lebanon existed, which laid the basis for a lasting peaceful coexistence.
2. The time of the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests and deportations (9th–6th centuries B.C.) was less devastating for the coastal cities of Lebanon than for the Aramaean cities and kingdoms of Syria. While the deportation of Phoenicians and inhabitants of Tyre as laborers to Nineveh during the reign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) is well-documented, as is the forced relocation of people from Sidon to Kār Asarhaddon during Esarhaddon’s reign (681–669 B.C.), and other similar situations,<sup>67</sup> there were no resettlements of Aramaeans from Syria to Lebanon due to their close proximity.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, the important phase of Aramaization by relocation of Aramaean deportees is not applicable here, unlike in other regions of the Near East such as Assyria or northern Palestine.<sup>69</sup> However, the flight of Aramaeans from Syria to the Phoenician regions in the face of Assyrian invasions must be taken into consideration.
3. During Achaemenid times<sup>70</sup> the Phoenician royal cities in the satrapy of Transeuphratene enjoyed greater independence than, for example,

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. also Peckham 2001: 37: “The relations between Phoenicians and Aramaeans were rare and mostly ephemeral.”

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Oded 1979: 25, 31, 55, 57, 61, 93 and Klengel 1992: 227f.

<sup>68</sup> I owe this important piece of information to my colleague Andreas Fuchs (Tübingen).

<sup>69</sup> For Lebanon in Assyrian and Babylonian times, cf. Klengel 1992: 222–234; Bunnens 1995b: 227–234; Sommer 2005: 144–190, 261f.

<sup>70</sup> On Lebanon during Achaemenid times, cf. especially Elayi 1980; ead. 1987; ead. 2000; Grainger 1991: 5–33; Nunn 2000a; Jigoulov 2010.



the provinces of Yehud and Samaria. The sweeping triumph of Official Aramaic passed by Lebanon, and a displacement of Aramaic by Official Aramaic, as was the case for Hebrew, cannot be established for Lebanon. Instead, Phoenician remained the written and spoken language until the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>71</sup>

4. In Hellenistic-Roman times,<sup>72</sup> imposed by education and trade, the language used by the upper class in the Phoenician cities of Lebanon shifted to Greek, with Latin being adopted later.<sup>73</sup> However, most of the population wrote and spoke Phoenician until early Christian times.<sup>74</sup> Only in the 2nd century B.C., with the advent of the Ituraeans, did Aramaic slowly begin to displace Phoenician.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, it is clear that there was coexistence and cooperation between Phoenicians and Aramaeans, rather than domination of Phoenicia by the culture of the Aramaeans of Syria.

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<sup>71</sup> For the sources, cf. the overviews in Elayi – Sapin 2000: 113–123; Lemaire 2006b: 186–191; Yigoulov 2010: 39–63.

<sup>72</sup> On Lebanon in Hellenistic-Roman time, cf. Millar 1983; id. <sup>2</sup>1994: 264–295; Grainger 1991: 52–186; Aliquot 2009; Bonnet 2010: 178–185.

<sup>73</sup> See above, footnote 46.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Briquel-Chatonnet 1991.

<sup>75</sup> For Aramaic in Lebanon, cf. Briquel-Chatonnet 1991: 14–18.

## 5. PALESTINE

Angelika Berlejung

1. *The Rise of the Aramaeans and Their Arrival in North Palestine in the 10th and 9th Centuries B.C.*

The inhabitants of the territories called “Aram” (“Aram” being originally a toponym without ethnic connotations) have been called “Aramaeans” in the Assyrian texts and in the Old Testament, but the term “Aramaean” was never a self-designation.<sup>1</sup> The term “Aramaean” enters history with its first attestation in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.). He fought against the “Aḥlamu of the land of the Aramaeans” (*aḥ-la-mi-i KUR ar-ma-ia.MEŠ*) or the “Aḥlam-Aramaeans,” in the Euphrates Valley from Suḥu to Carchemish, pursuing them near Mount Bishri (west of Der ez-Zor) and conquering six of their cities.<sup>2</sup> Tukulti-Ninurta I (1240–1205 B.C.) regarded Mount Bishri as “the mountains of the Aḥlamu” (*ša-da-an aḥ-la-mi-i*),<sup>3</sup> who can partly be identified with the group later called the “Aramaeans.” According to E. Lipiński<sup>4</sup> the Aramaeans who settled in the early 12th century B.C. in the Mount Bishri area are meant when texts from Emar refer to “the armies of the mountain” (*ERIN.MEŠ<sup>KUR</sup> Har-ri* or *ERIN.MEŠ Ṭár-wi*).<sup>5</sup> Aramaeans would then have been a population living in the mountains and entering the plains mainly for martial purposes. This hypothesis is based mainly on the theory that the Aramaeans entered Syria as outsiders and nomadic invaders, a theory which seems to be outdated. Today, scholars prefer to consider the Aramaeans as an indigenous local group within Syria, which participated actively (and, seen in retrospect, successfully) in the change of the social conditions that characterize the transition of the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age. The Aramaeans were no invaders but the direct descendants of the Bronze Age Syrian population groups and the heirs of their culture. That the Aramaeans were not newcomers in Syria but were part of the local population (which perhaps integrated Aḥlamu and other groups) is indicated by the continuity in

<sup>1</sup> Sader 2010: 277. For the discussion on “all Aram” on the Sefire stele IA (as self-designation or/and ethnic or territorial term) see Grosby 2002: 150–165.

<sup>2</sup> RIMA 2, A.0.87.1 vv. 44–63 par., for the following, see Lipiński 2000a: 35–40; id. 2006: 203–224; Sader 2010: 275–283.

<sup>3</sup> RIMA 1, A.0.78.23: 70.

<sup>4</sup> Lipiński 2006: 206.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Arnaud 1986: no. 42: 9 and id. 1991: no. 25: 2–3; 44: 2–3.

the use of the Semitic language, in the archaeological records and material culture between the 2nd and 1st millennia B.C.<sup>6</sup> In the Iron Age I the (“Aramaean”) rural-pastoral mode of life (with a limited mobility not necessarily implying nomadic life) replaced the Late Bronze Age urban lifestyle, and the tribes replaced the former states as the basic unit of collective organization.

Even if the name “Aramaean” is only attested since the 12th century B.C., the names of some “Aramaean” tribes are already known from cuneiform sources of the 13th century (e.g., the tribe Bit Zamanni in the area north of Tur ‘Abdin in texts from Tell Billa of the 13th century B.C.).<sup>7</sup> Therefore different (“Aramaean”) tribes with different names seem to be the starting point of the later tribal confederations that gradually developed into a (complex of) sheik-/chief- and kingdom(s). Each tribe was organized along tribal lines whose units were segmented in social patrilineages with elders, sheikhs, and/or chiefs; after the rise of statehood the new tribal confederations were ruled by chiefs or kings with their dynasties. This tribal structure based on kinship is typical not only for the Aramaeans, but also for the tribes, tribal confederations, and later (mini-)sheikh-/chief-/kingdoms of Iron Age Palestine; these parallels in the social structure may have facilitated the integration of the Aramaeans into the biblical worldview.

In the 12th and 11th centuries B.C. the rural-pastoral Aramaean tribes had settled Syria peacefully, and even founded some urban centers (as e.g., ‘Ain Dara), therefore initiating the re-urbanization process and long-distance trade in their areas. In the east their expansion had been stopped by the Assyrians and in central Syria by the Luwian kingdom of Hamath, which only later came under Aramaean rule (see the Zakkur-inscription; KAI 202). In the inscriptions of Aššur-bēl-kala (1073–1056 B.C.) the area of the Upper Khabur and Tur ‘Abdin is called *KUR.A-ri-me* (= “Land of the Aramaeans”).<sup>8</sup> This indicates that some territories west and northwest of Assyria were now considered Aramaean habitats. In the 1st millennium B.C. the Aramaeans were the dominant population group in Syria; their rise to political power had been made possible by the collapse of the Late

<sup>6</sup> Akkermans – Schwartz 2006: 361 and Sader 2010: 277–280.

<sup>7</sup> Finkelstein 1953: nos. 6 and 17; Lipiński 2000a: 45–50. For Bet Zamanni, see Dion 1997: 34f, 352–355 and Lipiński 2000a: 135–161.

<sup>8</sup> RIMA 2, A.0.89.2. iii 27’–28’; A.0.89.3: 6’; A.0.89.6: 7’; A.0.89.9:4’; very important: A.0.89.7 iii 1–32. See further Adad-nirari II (909–889 B.C.) A.0.99.2: 33 (KUR *aḫ-la-me-e* KUR *ar-ma-a-ia*.MEŠ).

Bronze Age urban cultures and the larger empires. At the beginning of the 1st millennium B.C. the Aramaean tribes founded tribal sheik-/chief-/kingdoms as territorial mini-states centered around “royal cities” (capitals), and promoting rapid urbanization, with fortified cities. In the 10th and 9th centuries B.C. the earliest Aramaean tribal sheikh-/chief-/kingdoms of this type can be located in the north, Bit Agusi often named after its later capital Arpad (9th century B.C.),<sup>9</sup> and Sam'al/Zincirli being the capital of Bit Gabbari (10th/9th centuries B.C.);<sup>10</sup> in the east, Bit Adini in the Middle Euphrates<sup>11</sup> (10th/9th centuries B.C.) or Bit Baḥiani at Guzana/Tell Halaf<sup>12</sup> (10th century B.C.) can be mentioned. As already pointed out, central Syria was dominated by the kingdom of Hamath. Early Aramaean tribal chief-/kingdoms are founded only around it. In the South Aram-Damascus, is well-known, although its early Aramaean history is (contra 1 Kgs 11: 23–25) still in the dark.<sup>13</sup> Old Testament (hi-)storiography does not preserve any historically valuable information about the beginnings of this Aramaean kingdom around its urban center Damascus, since the biblical narratives are written retrospectively. Additionally, one encounters the problem that the Old Testament sometimes confuses (perhaps purposely, as C. Levin pointed out)<sup>14</sup> Aram and Edom (thus the letters “r” and “d”), see e.g., 2 Sam 10: 15–19 or 2 Sam 8: 3–8. The Aramaean kingdom of Damascus is first mentioned in Assyrian cuneiform sources from the mid-9th century B.C. (see below, section 3.), but its beginnings were surely earlier.

Due to the lack of valuable and contemporary sources, the situation of south and southwest Syria/north Palestine (Cis- and Transjordan) is far from clear. The following (re-)construction is based mainly on the Old Testament, which is at least a reliable source for the preservation of the names of some Aramaean tribes and political entities in the area. Without this biblical attestation the existence of these short-lived Aramaean entities would have remained in the dark forever.

<sup>9</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 195–220 and Dion 1997: 113–136. For a new construction of the history of Arpad, see Kahn 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 233–248 and Dion 1997: 99–112.

<sup>11</sup> RIMA 2, A.0.99.2:48 (Adad-nirari II). See Lipiński 2000a: 163–194 and Dion 1997: 86–98.

<sup>12</sup> The earliest attestation is RIMA 2, A.0.99.2:100f (Adad-nirari II). See Lipiński 2000a: 119–133; Dion 1997: 38–44; recently Orthmann 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 347–407 and id. 2006: 209f.

<sup>14</sup> Levin 2009.

Aramaeans apparently settled in south(west) Syria/north Palestine in the 10th and 9th centuries B.C. Şobah and Bit Rehov in the Beqa' Valley<sup>15</sup> (mid-9th century B.C.) and Geshur and Bit Maacah on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee in the Bashan or Golan area (10th and 9th centuries B.C.) mirror an Aramaean presence in the area even if their precise localization is still in doubt.<sup>16</sup> It is also not known if these Aramaean entities entered the region from outside or (parallel to the developments in Syria sketched above) if they were indigenous rural-pastoral population groups (or a combination of both), which used kinship as the pattern for their collective organization and renewed urbanization. The names of Şobah, (Bit) Rehov, Maacah, and Tob are attested in 2 Sam 10: 6.8, displaying different entities, implying that four different allies of the Ammonites are mentioned. But according to 2 Sam 8: 3.12, the king of Şobah (here introduced as Hadad-Ezer)<sup>17</sup> was the son of a certain Rehov. Furthermore, Geshur and (Bit) Maacah are often related or even paralleled in the Old Testament (Dtn 3: 14; Josh 12: 5; 13: 11.13; 1 Chr 3: 2; but paralleled with Aram Naharayim and Şobah in 1 Chr 19: 6), while Maacah is also mentioned as the name of a Geshurite princess in 2 Sam 3: 3. The precise mutual relationship of all these names is debated. It is possible that two different biblical names do not refer to two different tribal and political entities, but to the same chief-/kingdom; in this case one term would refer to the tribal or dynastic name, the other to a toponym. This idea is supported by the attestations of the names of Aramaean political entities in other parts of Syria. In general, the names of the new Aramaean chief-/kingdoms of the 1st millennium B.C. derive, especially in the cases when the name contains the element "bit", from an eponymous founder (thus, a certain Adinu has to be expected as the founder of Bit Adini, Baḫian of Bit Baḫiani, Gush of Bit Agusi, Rehov/Ruhub of Bit Rehov, and Maacah of Bit Maacah) or from a geographical name (e.g., Aram, Arpad). Some scholars therefore argue that Geshur and Bit Maacah<sup>18</sup> as well as Şobah

<sup>15</sup> Ba'asa, son of Ruhub/Rehov of the mountain Amana (in the Anti-Lebanon)/the Ammonite (1. *Ba'-a-sa* DUMU *ru-hu-bi* KUR.*a-ma-na-a-a*), is attested as the enemy of Shalmaneser III in the battle at Qarqar in the year 853 B.C. (RIMA 3, A.O.102.2 ii 95). The patronymic shows that the founder of the kingdom was living in the early 9th century B.C. The dynasty of Ruhub/Rehov was consequently called Beth-Ruhub//Rehov, see also notes 29 and 57–58.

<sup>16</sup> See the discussion in Lipiński 2000a: 319–345.

<sup>17</sup> The doubts referring to the historicity of a king Hadad-Ezer of Şobah are briefly presented in Lipiński 2000a: 340–342.

<sup>18</sup> According to Lipiński 2000a: 336 Geshur is the name of the capital, while Bit Maacah is the name of the dynasty. Similarly, Lipiński 2006: 208 refers to Geshur/Bit Maacah as a Syro-Hurrian kingdom. See also Lipiński 2006: 238–243.

and Bit Rehov are one and the same,<sup>19</sup> while others claim that Şobah is not identical with Bit Rehov and has to be located to the north of Bit Rehov.<sup>20</sup> According to the problematic Judg 18: 28, Layish (identified with Dan; Tell el-Qadi<sup>21</sup>) is said to have been located in a valley of Bit Rehov. This would imply that the area of Bit Rehov included (parts of) the Beqa' to the Hermon. But the sources do not justify any far-reaching hypothesis. Bit Maacah and Tob are today only attested in the Bible.<sup>22</sup> Şobah<sup>23</sup> and Bit Rehov<sup>24</sup> are only known from later sources, while the extra-biblical evidence for Geshur in Tell el-Amarna is dependent on an emendation (see below, section 2.).

In sum, the first traces of the Aramaean tribal and tribal confederation political entities in south and southwest Syria lead into the 10th and 9th centuries B.C., and this parallels the developments in Palestine itself. The beginnings of the northern tribal-confederation chief-/kingdom of "Israel" can be traced to the first half of the 9th century B.C. It was followed, not long after, by the rise of the southern tribal chief-/kingdom Judah, and its Transjordanian counterparts Ammon, Moab, and Edom (a century later). In fact all these tribal chief-/kingdoms appear on the historical stage in the 10th and 9th centuries B.C.; they share the same tribal structure, they are from their origins local, non-urban, rural-pastoral population groups, and they regulate their social relations by kinship structures (patrilineages; family-clan-tribe). The names of the growing collective organizations refer to their dynastic founder (Bit Ḥumri = Israel in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions; Bit David = Judah in the Tel Dan stele<sup>25</sup>) or on toponyms (e.g., Moab).

<sup>19</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 332f; id. 2006: 208; Bagg 2007: 53; Halpern 2004: 183f; Weippert 2010: 258 n. 52.

<sup>20</sup> According to Na'aman 1995a: 384–386 Şobah and Bit Rehov are two distinct regions: Şobah was located to the north or northwest of Mount Anti-Lebanon, while the area of Bit Rehov was north of Dan; Bit Rehov was, according to Na'aman, the kingdom's historical name (and Şobah one if its regions), see further Na'aman 2002. Dion 1997: 174–176 and Sader 2010: 276 also refer to two entities in the Biqa': Şobah in the north, and Bit Rehov in the south. Şobah and Rehov are discussed in Na'aman 2002 and Halpern 2004: 167–189.

<sup>21</sup> Referring to Layish, Dan and the archaeological record, see Gass 2005: 389–397.

<sup>22</sup> For the discussion, see Lipiński 2000a: 334–345; id. 2006: 238f, 298f; Lemaire 2001e. Tob may be mentioned in EA 205 and on a list of Thutmose III, see Lipiński 2000a: 336f; Lemaire 2001e: 125, Na'aman 2002, and Gass 2005: 494–496 proposing a possible localization in southwestern Hauran.

<sup>23</sup> Tiglath-Pileser III mentions the province of Şubat in the northern Beqa', identified with Şobah; see Weippert 2010: 258 n. 52 and Bagg 2007: 233f. Şobah could be written on Aramaic graffiti (8th century B.C.) found at Hamath; see Lipiński 2000a: 298, 311–313; esp. 270 graffiti 12.

<sup>24</sup> The "son [DUMU] of Ruhub/Rehov" is attested in inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (853); see notes 15 and 57–58. Consider the discussion in Bagg 2007: 53.

<sup>25</sup> KAI 310; Ahituv 2008: 467–473; Weippert 2010: C.3.116.

The focus on the name of the dynastic founder indicates that genealogies played a major role, though they may not always represent real (i.e., biological) lineage, but instead may refer to the hierarchy of the clans or the tribes with respect to each other. This way to organize and hierarchize the social and ethnic context remains quite stable even after the early non-urban tribes transformed into urban societies and territorial kingdoms (with urban capitals). This is clearly visible in the genealogies of the Old Testament, which—even if they are constructions of the exilic and post-exilic periods only and are therefore written down considerably later than the narrated time—express the close kinship between the sons/tribes deriving from Sem (herein also Aram; Gen 10: 22–23) and the arch-fathers Abra(ha)m (with his father Terach, and his brothers Nahor and Harran), Isaac, and Jacob (via their wives) to Aramaean and Transjordanian relatives (Gen 11: 27–29; Gen 22: 20–24).<sup>26</sup> The book of Genesis presents the origins, earlier developments, kin- and relationships between Syrian, i.e., Aramaean, Trans- and Cisjordanian tribes and kingdoms in the shape of a family history. Scholarly (re)construction of the rise and development of the Syrian and Trans- and Cisjordanian non-urban tribes to territorial mini-states with urban residences and fortified cities is quite different. It is widely accepted that these developments in Syria and Palestine (areas without clear borders between each other) have to be linked with the phenomenon of de-urbanization in the transition from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age I and re-urbanization in the Iron Age IIA, opening a window of opportunity to the different tribes to settle or re-settle an area and to found their early chiefdoms. In the beginning of the 1st millennium B.C. these early south Syrian, i.e., Aramaean, Cis-, and Transjordanian tribal (and tribal confederation) chief-/kingdoms of the 10th and 9th centuries were involved in mutual and local conflicts. In south(west) Syria/Palestine the rising local sheikh-/chief-/kingdoms concurred with each other. Our knowledge about their relationships in the 10th and 9th centuries is minimal. It is probable that in addition to their local struggles, with the rise and expansion of Aram-Damascus they all had to face the same enemy, who surely threatened their independence or even existence. It is unknown how long the early Aramaean political entities of south Syria and north Palestine remained independent or continued to exist under these new circumstances. If “Ba’asa, son of Ruhub/Rehov of the mountain Amana” indeed refers to a king of the dynasty of Bit Rehov in the Beqa’ Valley, then

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<sup>26</sup> See Hieke 2003: 42, 124–143.

this Aramaean dynasty would have survived at least until 853 B.C., maybe as a vassal of Hamath<sup>27</sup> or Aram-Damascus<sup>28</sup>—but the interpretation of this passage is controversial.<sup>29</sup>

The earliest primary literary<sup>30</sup> source about the situation in south(west) Syria and north Palestine is the Aramaic inscription from Tell el-Qadi (Tel Dan, second half of the 9th century B.C.).<sup>31</sup> Its fragmentary first lines could refer to Hadad-Ezer/Hadad-Idri, king of Aram-Damascus, and to Omri or Ahab, king of Israel, while the rest of the text (lines 5–13) mentions the battles of Hazael of Aram-Damascus and his confrontations with Joram of Israel and Ahazya of Judah, resulting in the killing of both.

The local conflicts between the Syro-Palestinian tribal (and tribal confederation) mini-states, and even the controversies between Israel and Aram-Damascus, only led to limited successes and losses for their protagonists (see below). But with the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, starting with the campaigns of Adad-nirari II (912–891 B.C.) and more systematically of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), the Aramaean tribal chief-/kingdoms came (from east to west and north to south) successively and with growing intensity into the focus of the Assyrian western expansion. The final result was an Aramaean disaster. During the Neo-Assyrian period the majority of the Aramaean states lost their political independence, and with the fall of Damascus in 732 B.C. Israel lost one of its former major enemies, but also one of its strongest allies.

## *2. A Closer Look at the Aramaean Tribal Chief/Kingdoms in North Palestine: Geshur and Bit Maacah*

It is generally recognized that the 12th century B.C. (Iron Age IA) was a time of Egyptian retreat in Palestine, generally marked—with local variations—by progressive de-urbanization, recession, and impoverishment.

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<sup>27</sup> According to Lipiński 2000a: 298, 313, 343f Šobah (= Bit Rehov) had been a vassal state of Hamath since the mid- or late 9th century B.C., being absorbed by Hamath in the first half of the 8th century B.C.

<sup>28</sup> Dion 1997: 176.

<sup>29</sup> RIMA 3, A.0.102.2 ii 95 (translates “the Ammonite”). See the discussion in Dion 1997: 176 and Bagg 2007: 53 and n. 15.

<sup>30</sup> The dating of 1 Kgs 20 is debated. The actual text 1 Kgs 20: 34 refers to a treaty between Ahab and Bar-Hadad I (supposed to be the predecessor of Hadad-Ezer) after some previous military clashes. But scholars assume that the text originally referred to Joash and was only secondarily connected with Ahab. For the arguments, see Kottsieper 2007a: 121–124.

<sup>31</sup> KAI 310; Ahituv 2008: 467–473; Weippert 2010: C.3.116. The literature (until 2003) is collected and summarized in Gass 2005: 395 n. 2837.



In this transition period, people shifted increasingly into a half- or non-sedentary way of life, indicated archaeologically by the evident reduction of the number of cities and settlements in the lowlands and the village character of the settlements that replaced the destroyed cities. During this period of decline, indigenous population groups of Palestine sought new modes of life. At the same time they had to welcome some new populations: the Philistines in the south and some south Syrian, i.e., Aramaean, tribes in the north. Because the new foundation of fortified cities in the Iron Age I period in Palestine is a rare phenomenon, it is usually attributed to the arrival of new population groups and settlers. Kinneret at the Sea of Galilee is one of these exceptional sites that can be linked with new settlers. Since the cultural influence from Syria is evident,<sup>32</sup> the excavators consider the city in the Iron Age I as the settlement of the Aramaean tribe of Geshur,<sup>33</sup> which established its local tribal chief-/kingdom at the Sea of Galilee ca. the 12th century B.C. (founding phase Stratum VI). Even if an Aramaean entity named Geshur and Geshurite (Dtn 3: 14; Josh 12: 5; 13: 2, 11, 13; 1 Sam 27: 8; 2 Sam 3: 3; 13: 37f; 14: 23, 32; 15: 8; 1 Chr 2: 23; 3: 2 and maybe in Gen 10: 23 meant with “Geter”) is mainly/only known from the Old Testament (whether EA 256: 21–28 refers<sup>34</sup> to Geshur is still doubtful), some archaeological sites confirm the existence of a chief-/kingdom around the Sea of Galilee in the 12th to 9th centuries B.C. with clear connections with Syria. Since Syria was in this period dominated by the Aramaeans (see above, section 1.), it seems plausible to refer here to Aramaean tribes settling or re-settling the area<sup>35</sup>—keeping in mind that the label “Aramaean chiefdom” always includes the general multi-ethnic character of Syria and Palestine. In addition to Kinneret, Tell Hadar, et-Tell, and Ein Gev

<sup>32</sup> For Kinneret of the Iron Age I Münger 2012: 232–235 mentions 8 affinities (e.g., glyptics, pottery types, architecture, burial *intra muros*) with the north Syrian culture.

<sup>33</sup> Dietrich – Münger 2003; Fritz 1993; id. 2008; Hafþórsson 2006: 218–222.

<sup>34</sup> See Lipiński 2000a: 336 n. 85; id. 2006: 238, who rejects the widely accepted emendation of *Ga-ri* to *Ga-šu-ri*. Hess 2004: 49f argues in favor of this emendation, even including EA 364.

<sup>35</sup> According to Lipiński 2000a: 336, the name of the Geshurite king Talmay (given only in the Old Testament 2 Sam 3: 3; 13: 37; and 1 Chr 3: 2) is Hurrian, indicating that Geshur was not an Aramaean but a Hurrian kingdom during the 10th century B.C. In any case it is highly problematic to define the ethnicity of an area/chief-/kingdom by the name of a ruler whose name is only given in the Old Testament. Hess 2004: 57 also supports the Hurrian origin of the king’s name, but convincingly points to the fact that the onomastic profile of Geshur is multi-ethnic. For the multi-ethnic character of Syria and Palestine, see below, section 4.

have to be mentioned<sup>36</sup> and deserve a closer look. Clear borders of the Aramaean chief-/kingdom of Geshur are difficult to establish; natural lines can be drawn with the Yarmuk River to the south and the Hermon range to the north, while the connection of Kinneret and Tel Hadar shows that the Jordan River was not a real frontier to the west.

The Geshurite city of Kinneret (VI and V [= Iron Age I] with a later and only scattered settlement IV) was founded ca. in the 12th century B.C. as the residence of an Aramaean tribal chief-/kingdom.<sup>37</sup> The fortified and well-planned city extended over nine hectares and had ca. 2,200 inhabitants. Storage facilities, an industrial zone for oil production, and architecture point to a highly differentiated social structure. The city was a center of long-distance trade with Phoenicia, Egypt, north Syria, Greece (Euböa), and Philistia. It was also a center for metal casting (deposit), which indicates contacts with Cyprus (copper import).

On the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee was at the same time Tel Hadar IV (late 11th century B.C.), where the Late Bronze Age city wall was re-used as an outer wall. Public buildings (two warehouses, two tripartite pillared buildings, a grain silo) and imported luxury items indicate that the site was a commercial center. Pottery points to the fact that Tel Hadar was in the Iron Age I closely linked to Kinneret. Both sites have a similar city wall and share the same regional south Syrian/Aramaean form of storage jars and the “snake-house” or fenestrated vessels of the Jordan Rift and Hule valleys.<sup>38</sup> It therefore appears that Tel Hadar was, in (the Late Bronze Age I and) in Iron Age I the secondary harbor of Kinneret. Tel Hadar I of the 8th century B.C. revealed a town with a public building at the highest point of the mount, one Aramaic inscription engraved on the shoulder of a jar, and a female tambourine-holder.<sup>39</sup> At this time Aramaean economic interests had apparently already shifted to Ein Gev, to the south and right of the shore.

In Ein Gev (Stratum V–IV), a large fortified town with storage facilities (tripartite pillared buildings), existed from the 10th or 9th to the 8th

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<sup>36</sup> Hafþórsson 2006: 218, 222, 229, and 235f doubts Aramaean rule in et-Tell, Kinneret, Dan, and the Golan, and more or less even the existence of a political entity Geshur in this period. His de-constructions sometimes include some useful observations but do not offer any useful re-constructions.

<sup>37</sup> See note 32.

<sup>38</sup> For the interpretation as shrine models, see Ilan 1999: 95f; Nissinen – Münger 2009: 134–137. For a “snake-house” in Dan, see Biran 1994: 152f (room 7082) and Ilan 1999: 95f with pl. 36.11.

<sup>39</sup> Kochavi 1993. See further Kochavi – Yadin 2008.

century B.C. A storage jar with an incised Aramaic inscription belonged “to the cupbearer,” indicating the existence of this high official, who was surely active in the royal court (probably in et-Tell or already Damascus). In the Iron Age II Ein Gev replaced Tel Hadar as the commercial port until Tiglath-Pileser III conquered the area (733/2 B.C.).<sup>40</sup>

Et-Tell<sup>41</sup> was founded in the middle of the 10th century B.C. It is considered by its excavators as the capital of the kingdom Geshur and is identified with Betsaida.<sup>42</sup> Since Kinneret IV had been abandoned in the first half of the 10th century B.C., it appears that the population left Kinneret and shifted to et-Tell at the northeastern end of the Sea of Galilee, where they founded their new city. Et-Tell’s palace structures (area B stratum VI, Iron Age IIA, *bit-hilani* type north of the city gate), cultic installations, and city fortifications with two parallel walls show the influence of Syrian, i.e., Aramaean culture. The palace indicates that this was the residence of an Aramaean chief/king of Syrian background whose tribal state fell victim to the expansion of Aram-Damascus into the lake district from the 9th century B.C. on. Stratum VI was destroyed during the 9th century B.C. by a major conflagration. According to E. Lipiński<sup>43</sup> and S. Hafþórsson, who take 1 Kgs 15: 16–22 as a reliable historical source, Bar/Ben-Hadad I (900–880 B.C.) had already conquered Dan to Kinneret in order to reach Galilee, the Jezreel Valley, and finally the coast. Et-Tell could have been another victim of these wars. Others (Arie, see below) believe that it was only Hazael (the successor of Hadad-Ezer, and “son of a nobody”)<sup>44</sup> who expanded into this territory and annexed it.<sup>45</sup> Et-Tell appears to have lost its political independence during these events in the 9th century B.C. (see the changes of the *bit-hilani* in Stratum V). In any case they did not put

<sup>40</sup> Bar-Yosef – Mazar – Kochavi 1993; Kochavi – Tsukimoto 2008. They propose the biblical identification with Aphek. Summarizing the older excavations in Ein Gev: Hafþórsson 2006: 207–211.

<sup>41</sup> For the following, see Arav 2004: 1–48 and id. 2008.

<sup>42</sup> Arav 1999: 107; id. 2004: 1. For some doubts, see Lipiński 2006: 241, with reservations Hafþórsson 2006: 211–218.

<sup>43</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 372 and Hafþórsson 2006: 141–144, 181. Consider further Niehr 2011: 345.

<sup>44</sup> RIMA 3, A.0.102.40 i 25–27. For a longer discussion of the “father” of Hazael resp. his predecessor, see Kottsieper 2007a: 119–121 (Hadad-Ezer instead of Bar-Hadad I); Niehr 2011: 340–342. For a survey of the Bar/Ben-Hadads of the Old Testament, see Hafþórsson 2006: 178–181.

<sup>45</sup> Na’aman 2002: 205/44 resp. 53 also argues in favor of the annexation of Geshur (and Šobah, being the two kingdoms of Bit Rehov) by Hazael only.

an end to et-Tell as an Aramaean city, which continued to flourish (now as Aram-Damascus' city) in the following period.

During Stratum V the palace was divided by a wall into two elongated halls. Pottery and loom weights indicate weaving activity in the building, which was perhaps no longer a palace. Stratum Vb–a (Iron Age IIB) revealed a massive four-entry gate as inner city gate of the 8th century B.C. The gate complex housed five high places and eight stelae. A decorated stele was found on the stepped high place at the niche in the northern tower. The iconography of this stele points to parallels with other Aramaean kingdoms of the north in the 9th and 8th centuries (eṭ-Ṭurra,<sup>46</sup> Tell el-Ash'ari; 'Awas, Gaziantep in southeastern Turkey) and to the armed storm-god with lunar features (fig. XLIII): Bull iconography is combined with the crescent moon, which forms the bull's horns. A circle, divided into four units, at the bull's side seems to indicate the four phases of the moon.<sup>47</sup> The stele of et-Tell is the only one of this type that has been found in situ as part of an ensemble consisting of a podium and a rectangular basalt basin with two perforated ritual cups for libations. The installation of the several high places at the gate points to cultic rituals at this important place marking the borderline between the city and the periphery. The gate and parts of the city were finally destroyed (Stratum Va) by Tiglath-Pileser III (733/2 B.C.), even if the settlement was not completely abandoned (Stratum IV).<sup>48</sup>

As already mentioned Bit Maacah is often paralleled with Geshur in the Old Testament. The present writer does not consider Bit Maacah and Geshur to be identical. Bit Maacah seems to settle a different area than Geshur. The place-name of Abel Bit Maacah<sup>49</sup> leaves no doubt about its affiliation with the Aramaean chief-/kingdom Bit Maacah,<sup>50</sup> maybe even indicating that this was the place of the chief's/king's residence.

<sup>46</sup> Wimmer – Janaydeh 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Arav 2004: 20 and Bernett – Keel 1998: 31f.

<sup>48</sup> See Greene 2004: 77f.

<sup>49</sup> The Chronicles identify Abel Bit Maacah with Abel-mayyim (1 Kgs 15: 20 with the parallel 2 Chr 16: 4). Abel Bit Maacah is surely not identical with Tel Qadi/Dan, against Lipiński 2000a: 372f, with Arie 2008: 35. A better candidate seems to be Tell Abil el-Qamḥ, 18 km north of Lake Hule, a large fortified city with an upper and lower city (unexcavated). It has been proposed that Abel is already mentioned in Egyptian texts of the 2nd millennium B.C. (e.g., EA 256, but the reading Jabilima is not without doubts). It is also not beyond doubt, whether Tiglath-Pileser III refers to this site in his annals as "URU. *Abil-x1+x2*, which is the border of the Land Bit Ḥumri" (Tadmor 1994: 138f: 6'). All of this is rejected by Bagg 2007: 1.

<sup>50</sup> Na'aman 2000: 98/178 and Lemaire 2001e: 122f.

The settlements of Bit Maacah apparently crossed the Jordan River: Bit Maacah is localized to the north of Geshur, in the northern Golan and, if the identification of Abel Bit Maacah with Tell Abil el-Qamh is correct, even west of Dan (Tell el-Qadi), raising the question of whether (and how long) Dan was also a settlement of Bit Maacah.

Contrary to the biblical account, which attributes the area around the Sea of Galilee to the tribe of Naphtali in the course of the “conquest” (Josh 19: 35) or as part of the empire of David (2 Sam 20: 14–22), this area was under Aramaean (Geshurite in Transjordan, Bit Maacahite in Cis- and Transjordan, later Aram-Damascus) control in the 12th, 11th, 10th and 9th centuries B.C., a situation which changed for only a brief interim in the course of the 8th century B.C., during the reigns of Joash (800–785 B.C.) and Jeroboam II (785–745 B.C.) of Israel.<sup>51</sup> 2 Kgs 13: 25; 14: 25; Am 6: 13f refer to military successes against Aram-Damascus by both kings, who were able to gain the southern and western shore of the Sea of Galilee, with an unknown expansion to the north (Kinneret or Dan). Recently it has been proposed, that it was Hazael (after 842 B.C.) who united the previous Aramaean kingdoms of Geshur and Bit Maacah, annexed them into his kingdom of Aram-Damascus, and constructed (or even founded, see the occupational gap or poor settlement in the Iron Age IIA) Dan (Tel Qadi, Stratum IVA = Iron IIB = 830–800 [foundation of the cultic area])<sup>52</sup> as an Aramaean city (erecting the Tel Dan stele in celebration of this construction) and as the new center for his southern border. Dan would have been his stronghold and base camp for further expansions to the south. Be that as it may, the northern part of Palestine was for several centuries in Aramaean hands (Geshur, Bit Maacah, and later Aram-Damascus) until the first Israelite king arrived and occupied (not re-occupied, as is often claimed) this area for a first and brief “Israelite intermezzo.” It was perhaps King Joash who destroyed “Aramaean” Dan (Stratum IVA), erected the “Israelite” Stratum III (Iron Age IIB; 800–?; cultic area continues), followed by Jeroboam II, who built Dan Stratum II (insufficient data to separate Str. III and II; note: the cultic area continues). This short-lived “Israelite” city, Dan III/II, was destroyed by Tiglath-Pileser III (734/3/2) and the whole area<sup>53</sup> was lost for Israel as well as for Aram-Damascus.

<sup>51</sup> For a recent historical (re-)construction, see Berlejung <sup>3</sup>2008: 105–III. Consider now Finkelstein 2011: 240–242.

<sup>52</sup> Arie 2008: 36–38.

<sup>53</sup> Destruction layers attributed to Tiglath-Pileser III during his campaign of 733/2 are: Rehov III, Beth-Shean P7, Megiddo IVA, Hazor V, Kinneret II, Yokneam XII and et-Tell Va.

In view of the long Aramaean pre-history of north Palestine and the area around the Sea of Galilee, the short “Israelite” presence should not be overestimated. The population groups surely remained the same during the “Israelite intermezzo,” and only the Assyrians, with their deportation policy, caused any major changes. Finally, it has to be mentioned that even if Geshur, Bit Maacah, and Aram-Damascus were different Aramaean tribes, it is difficult to grasp the major differences in their “Aramaean” culture and symbolic systems. The problem is the lack of primary sources. In the following case of Aram-Damascus the availability of sources is slightly better than for Geshur and Bit Maacah.

### 3. *Aram-Damascus in Palestine in Its 9th–8th Century Political Interactions with Israel*

The founding of the northern tribal-confederation chief-/kingdom of Israel in the first half of the 9th century B.C., followed, not long after, by the rise of the tribal chief-/kingdoms Ammon and Moab (Edom a century later) in Transjordan, created a concurring situation in north Palestine between the new chief-/kingdoms and the neighboring Aramaean tribal chief-/kingdoms. Although the historicity of Jeroboam I as chief/king of the northern tribes is not questioned, there is much controversy about what the northern kingdom of Israel actually looked like and what it included. On the basis of more recent archaeological research, it can be argued that Megiddo, the Jezreel Valley, the Beth-Shean Plains, and Galilee (Kinneret, Hazor, Dan) were regions subjected to a very checkered political history, in which the local élites and tribes (see above, section 2, on Geshur and Bit Maacah) at times pursued their own interests and often proved quite flexible in their outward loyalties (Aram-Damascus or Israel).<sup>54</sup> The Jezreel Valley and Galilee constituted an intermediate area between the “Aramaean” and the “Israelite” tribal groups, so that these areas could or would not, without further ado, be integrated into the social, political, and cultural structure of a tribal-confederation kingdom ruled from Samaria or Damascus, both being far away. From the 9th century B.C. on,

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<sup>54</sup> North Palestine of Trans- and Cisjordan was a segmented ethno-linguistic landscape and a borderland where the influences of Israel, Phoenicia, and Aramaean tribes (at first Geshur and Bit Maacah, later Aram-Damascus) crossed over. And it can be observed that the mingling of Syrian/Aramaic and Palestinian elements could create something new, i.e., a new regional and local style. The material remains of north Palestine support this: Syrian and central Palestinian pottery styles could be mixed with each other and generate a new, typical regional pottery style (e.g., Kinneret).

Aram-Damascus was a permanent opponent of “Israelite” claims, with both sides alternatively claiming or actually holding Galilee and the Jezreel Valley.<sup>55</sup> Omri (882/878–871/870 B.C.), the founder of the first dynasty of the northern kingdom and the real “father” of that political entity, and his son Ahab (871/0–852/1 B.C.) managed to include the Jezreel Valley and the southern parts of Galilee into their political entity, but the northern parts were and remained Aramaean. The Assyrian western expansion forged the western political entities into some solidarity. In 853 B.C., Shalmaneser III marched against the towns of Giammu in the land of the Balih River and then turned south via Aleppo (Halman) in order to attack the kingdom of Hamath.<sup>56</sup> However, he was stopped at Qarqar on the Orontes by an alliance led by the symbolic number of twelve kings (i.e.; Hadad-Idri/Hadad-Ezer I, king of Damascus; Irhuleni, king of Hamath; Ahab, king of Israel; contingents of Byblos, Egypt, Irqanat, and Usanat; Mattin-Ba’al of Arwad; Adon-Ba’al of Shianu; Ba’asa, son of Ruhub/Rehov<sup>57</sup> of the mountain Amana;<sup>58</sup> and camels of the Arab Gindibu). This anti-Assyrian alliance appears to have broken up around 843/2 B.C. because of the death of Hadad-Idri/Ezer I, its main protagonist; the usurpation of the throne of Aram-Damascus by Hazael (842 B.C.); and the end of the peaceful relationships between Aram-Damascus and Israel.<sup>59</sup> Hazael appears to have waged a war against the chief-/kingdom of Israel in 842/1 B.C., which was assisted by Judah. According to the readable part of the Tel Dan stele<sup>60</sup> Hazael won a battle killing the Omride Joram, and Ahaziah, kings of Israel and Judah. As a consequence of these events, the Omride dynasty in Israel was eliminated and Jehu, son of Nimsi, seized (841 B.C.) the throne of Israel. Hazael had to face Shalmaneser III alone when he marched against Damascus, the Hauran, as far as the mountain cape Ba’alira’asi (841 B.C.),

<sup>55</sup> Concerning the history of Aram-Damascus, see Lipiński 2000a: 347–407 and Dion 1997: 177–221. Referring to the 9th century, see Hafþórsson 2006: 181f, 247–251. For the Assyrian attestation of Aram-Damascus = *ša imerišu* = Bit Hazael, see Bagg 2007: 49, 60–62, 238f.

<sup>56</sup> RIMA 3, A.0.102.2 ii 78–ii 102 par. for a summary, see Hafþórsson 2006: 82–90. For the history of Hamath, see Dion 1997: 137–170 and Lipiński 2000a: 249–318.

<sup>57</sup> This could refer to Bit Rehov; see the discussion in Weippert 2010: 258 n. 52. Consider also notes 15 and 29.

<sup>58</sup> See notes 15 and 29. For the discussion about the identification of KUR *a-ma-na-a-a*, see Na’aman 1995: 385–387 and Hafþórsson 2006: 87–89.

<sup>59</sup> See Lipiński 2000a: 373–391; id. 2006: 216f (dated 843); Dion 1997: 191–197.

<sup>60</sup> See n. 25. Summarizing the main topics and problems of the stele: Hafþórsson 2006: 49–65. See further and clarifying Na’aman 2006.

receiving the tribute of Tyre, Sidon, and Jehu of “Bit Ḥumri.”<sup>61</sup> Because the Assyrian pressure on Aram-Damascus notably relaxed after 838/7 B.C., Hazael himself moved into northern Palestine around 837 (?) B.C. and destroyed Megiddo (Stratum VA–IVB), among other places in the north.<sup>62</sup> The Jezreel Valley, the Beth-Shean Plains, and Galilee were now part of Aram-Damascus, whoever had settled there before (Geshur, Bit Maacah, Israelite tribes). After Hazael’s conquest, Dan, Hazor (Stratum VIII; Phoenician or Aramaic ostraca), and et-Tell (Stratum V, see above) were (re-)built as centers of Aram-Damascus. How far to the south Hazael’s conquests went is unclear. According to 2 Kgs 10: 32–33; 12: 18–19; Am 1: 3–4, he took Gilead and went as far as Gath,<sup>63</sup> imposing tribute on Joash of Judah (840–801 B.C.). Recent excavations at Gath (identified with Tell es-Safi) seem to support the existence of Aramaeans in front of Gath: The rampart and fossa, siege constructions (Stratum A3), and the burnt layer in Gath, which are dated to the end of the 9th century B.C., could correspond to this conquest, which put an end to a large, wealthy city. It is unknown if Hazael wanted to establish a formal vassalship on Judah and Israel, or some kind of direct or indirect rule. The remains of a model for a victory stele (?) have been found in Gath (fig. XLIV), indicating that Aramaean iconography sought to commemorate the supremacy over Gath.<sup>64</sup> In any case Hazael could not establish his Aramaean domination in Palestine, because Damascus had to face more Assyrian invasions. Damascus could again withstand the attacks of Shalmaneser, who in 841 B.C. ravaged the country, received the tribute of Jehu, king of Israel (black obelisk), and reached the Mediterranean coast, where Phoenician kings also paid him tribute. In 838 and 837 B.C., two more Assyrian invasions followed, which Aram-Damascus was able to resist.<sup>65</sup> The future fate of the Aramaean states in Syria (i.e., Aram-Damascus), of the Trans- and Cisjordanian states, and of Israel depended in the following decades

<sup>61</sup> RIMA 3, A.O.102.8:1”–27” par. Perhaps the Carmel Cape or Rash en-Naqla. Jehu’s tribute is also mentioned in RIMA 3, A.O.102.88.

<sup>62</sup> The destruction of some important sites in the north is usually attributed to Hazael (not to Jehu, since it was his own territory): Rehov IV, Beth-Shean SI, Jezreel, Taanach IIB, Hazor IXA, Yokneam XIV, Tell Bet Mirsim B, Gath A3, Beth Shemesh IIB.

<sup>63</sup> See Ehrlich 2002: 62–66 and recently Maier – Gur-Arieh 2011.

<sup>64</sup> Stern 1993: fig. on page 1523. According to him, five fragments were found in the rubbish dump in the middle of area C. Stern refers to the Assyrian style of the stele, which seems better described as Aramaean style (compare e.g., Tell Tayinat), see also Maier 2009. I want to express my thanks to Benjamin Sass for his photograph and the permit to print it here as fig. XLIV.

<sup>65</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 350f, 384f and Dion 1997: 196–199 refer to Shalmaneser’s III attacks against Aram-Damascus.



on the power or weakness of the actual Neo-Assyrian king. Only when Aram-Damascus itself came under increasing pressure from Assyria did it become possible for the Samarian kingdom to move out from its heartland in the mountains and to expand once again. This was the case during Adad-nirari III's (809–781 B.C.) western campaigns in the years 805–802<sup>66</sup> (mainly against Arpad) and 796 (against Manṣuate).<sup>67</sup> Adad-nirari III received tribute in Damascus from “the Lord” (*ma-ri-i'*), king of Aram, (803<sup>68</sup> or 796<sup>69</sup> B.C., maybe already Bar/Ben-Hadad II, son of Hazael), and from Joash from Israel, Edom, Philistia, and further from the city-states of Tyre and Sidon.<sup>70</sup> According to E. Lipiński, Adad-nirari III received tribute from Joash after having rescued Samaria (803 B.C.), which was besieged by the Aramaeans (Bar/Ben-Hadad II).<sup>71</sup> According to D. Kahn, Tyre, Sidon, Samaria, Edom, and Philistia had to pay tribute to Assyria, although they were not conquered, because they had been under the rule of Aram-Damascus before; after the defeat of “the Lord” of Aram, they had to follow their overlord and submit to Assyria.<sup>72</sup> All this is far from being proved. The sources only attest the fact of the tribute payment, but—apart from the Assyrian supremacy—not its specific reasons. After these years Assyria had to focus its energy against other areas, which brought a short respite to Syria. This was apparently used by Bar/Ben-Hadad II of Aram-Damascus to attack Israel again (perhaps already 802 B.C. [2 Kgs 13: 3.7.25; 2 Kgs 14: 25f; perhaps anachronistic: 1 Kgs 20: 26]). However, the Aramaeans were pushed back by Joash (800–785 B.C.) and his son Jeroboam II (785–745 B.C.), who were able to recover portions of the northern territories<sup>73</sup> that had been lost to the Aramaeans. The boundary between “Israel” and Aram-Damascus may have lain for a time near Kinneret, for there, with Kinneret III around 800 B.C., a fortress was built on the northern hill, though a new city, Kinneret II was founded only in the course of the 8th century B.C. Perhaps the Israelite king Joash (2 Kgs 13: 25) or his son founded a border fortress town there. Joash or Jeroboam II are also the Israelite kings who could have built Dan III/II (see above; see

<sup>66</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 214f and id. 2006: 219f.

<sup>67</sup> The location is under discussion, as to whether it is southern Syria or southern Beqa'; it is, in any case, a part of Aram-Damascus, see Weippert 2010: 273 n. 15.

<sup>68</sup> According to Lipiński 2000a: 393 and id. 2006: 219.

<sup>69</sup> According to Weippert 2010: 273–275.

<sup>70</sup> RIMA 3, A.0.104.8:15–21; RIMA 3, A.0.104.7:4–12; RIMA 3, A.0.104.6:11–20.

<sup>71</sup> Lipiński 2000a: 395 and id. 2006: 219.

<sup>72</sup> Kahn 2007: 82.

<sup>73</sup> Dion 1997: 207–214; Lipiński 2000a: 401, 403f; id. 2006: 220.

the anachronistic 1 Kgs 12 confusing Jeroboam I and II).<sup>74</sup> The period of relative rest for Syria (though Shalmaneser IV went to the Lebanon Mountains in 775 B.C.; he and his *turtānu* Šamši-ilu brought a considerable tribute from Hadyanu from Damascus<sup>75</sup> in 773 B.C.; and in 772, 765, and 755 B.C. the Assyrians led campaigns to Hatarikka) and the Palestinian mini-states ended with the arrival of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.): in 740 B.C., Bit Agusi/Arpad was annexed. In 738 B.C., an alliance led by Azriyau, king of Hamath, was defeated. The reduced Aramaean state of Hamath was entrusted to Eni-ilu. In 738 B.C., Tiglath-Pileser III received tribute from Menahem of Israel (2 Kgs 15: 18–20), from the Phoenician city-state kings, and from Razyan/Rezin of Damascus, among others.<sup>76</sup> But after Tiglath-Pileser's III return to his battlefields in the north and east of the empire, the western rulers used the following years to organize an anti-Assyrian alliance. The sequence of the events is not exactly clear and does not harmonize with the Old Testament: 2 Kgs 16; Isa 7: 1; Hos 5 refer to an anti-Assyrian coalition (led by Razyan/Rezin of Damascus, Hiram II of Tyre, and Pekah of Israel) that was not supported by Judah. This provoked Israel and Aram-Damascus to force the king in Jerusalem to join them against Tiglath-Pileser III, while Judah asked Assyria for military help.<sup>77</sup> This is described as the basic conflict of the so-called Syro-Ephraimite War, whose historicity and extent is debated. In any case, from Assyrian sources it is clear that in 734 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III at first moved against the Philistines (!) as far as Gaza (on the Egyptian border) and took tribute from Ahas of Judah and from the kings of Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Arabs. Any reference to military assistance for Judah is lacking. The omission of the kings of Damascus and Samaria<sup>78</sup> in the later list of tribute-bearers could point to their refusal to pay, thus rebellion. During Tiglath-Pileser III's campaign of 734 B.C., neither Razyan/Rezin of Aram-Damascus nor Pekah was a target of the Assyrian activities. But the events of 734 B.C. caused Tiglath-Pileser III to attack Aram-Damascus in 733–732 B.C., assisted by some of his loyal vassals, like Panamuwa II of Sam'al,<sup>79</sup> and probably by Shalman of Moab.<sup>80</sup> Damascus fell in 732 B.C. and its territories were annexed to Assyria. In the same year, Galilee, the

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<sup>74</sup> Berlejung 2009.

<sup>75</sup> RIM A 3, A.0.105.1:1–10.

<sup>76</sup> Tadmor 1994: 68f: 10–12 (Ann. 13), 89 (Ann. 27), 106–109 (Stele IIIA), 233.

<sup>77</sup> Based on the biblical accounts, Dion 1997: 211f sketches the traditional picture.

<sup>78</sup> For the variants in the lists of the tribute-bearers, see Tadmor 1994: 268.

<sup>79</sup> KAI 215.

<sup>80</sup> According to Lipiński 2000a: 406f and id. 2006: 221, 357.

Jezreel Valley, Megiddo, Dor, and Transjordan were lost to the Assyrians, who transformed much of this territory into Assyrian provinces. Roughly one decade later (722/20 B.C.) Samaria shared the same fate. The cross-over deportations of the Assyrians in the former Aramaean and Israelite areas in north Palestine of both sides of the river Jordan certainly de-constructed Aramaean tribal structures and identity. But Aramaic<sup>81</sup> had become the second language of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the Neo-Assyrian period<sup>82</sup> and was in Palestine successively influencing<sup>83</sup> and replacing the native Hebrew, Moabite, Ammonite, and other local languages. In the Persian period the documents and even short notes of everyday life in the province of Yehud are all written in Aramaic.<sup>84</sup> More than one thousand Aramaic ostraca datable between 363/2 and 313/2 B.C. from Idumaea/Edom attest the importance and continuity of Aramaic as the administrative language at the end of the Persian and beginning of the Hellenistic periods.<sup>85</sup>

#### 4. *In Search of Aramaeans in Palestine*

The ability to identify ethnicity or ethnic identity on the basis of material culture is an issue of debate. In case of the labels “Aramaean” and “Israelite” as ethnic categories, it is very difficult or even futile to try to identify a site in Cis- or Transjordan as Aramaean or Israelite based on the material culture only. Scholars today continue to search for ethnic markers in the material culture that would indicate Aramaean presence or absence in south Syria/Palestine beyond any doubt. The problem is that a typical “Aramaean” everyday material culture is difficult to grasp.<sup>86</sup> Material culture is always determined by political, social, and economic factors—and also somehow by ethnic identity. But it is very difficult to draw sharp lines, since ethnic identity usually only becomes visible in

<sup>81</sup> For Aramaic within the North-West Semitic languages, see Gianto 2008.

<sup>82</sup> Consider Lemaire 2001b: 8–12 and the catalogue (texts mainly from the 7th century B.C. from various places and collections). Only no. 24 is from the Persian period.

<sup>83</sup> For the interaction between Hebrew and Aramaic during the first millennium B.C., see Lemaire 2006a.

<sup>84</sup> For the linguistic situation in the Persian-period province of Yehud, compare Kottsieper 2007b. For a survey of the few epigraphical sources from Yehud, see Kottsieper 2007b: 104–109. Hebrew was only used in the cult and within the nearer context of the temple. Since the Jerusalem temple played a key role in issuing coins, Hebrew language and script survived on coins. Coins that were minted by a priest or former priest used Hebrew.

<sup>85</sup> Lemaire 2001a: 8 n. 6 (literature); Lemaire 1996; id. 2002a.

<sup>86</sup> See also the reservations of Sader 2010: 288f.

political, social, and economic structures. Therefore it is crucial to decide where economic (and ecological) factors end and ethnic ones begin (e.g., in debates concerning pork consumption). In the search for typical Aramaean remains in the Iron Ages, the usual procedure is to parallel pottery types,<sup>87</sup> architecture, city-planning,<sup>88</sup> funerary customs,<sup>89</sup> and iconographical motifs<sup>90</sup> of south Syria/Palestine with others in middle or north Syria where Aramaeans are doubtlessly attested (e.g., close to Damascus).<sup>91</sup> With regard to architecture, a widely accepted proposal is to consider *bit-hilani* buildings as typically Aramaean.<sup>92</sup> Indeed the *bit-hilani* seems to be a Syrian regional architectural structure, which developed its special characteristics mainly from the late 10th century B.C. on—even if there are possible earlier roots up to the Hittites, thus being part of the Hittite legacy in north Syria. But in the Iron Age the inherited Late Bronze Age traditions have been reshaped in a north Syrian style in order to fit into the Syrian political system, which was mainly dominated by the Aramaeans. If it remains true that no *bit-hilani* buildings can be identified in Luwian sites,<sup>93</sup> the *bit-hilani* could indeed be an indication of a typical Aramaean settlement (in Transjordan, in et-Tell).<sup>94</sup> Aramaean temple architecture (*in antis* and with a tripartite division) appears to be a local Syrian development absent from Luwian cities in Syria and (except for the sculpture decoration) without any Hittite characteristics.<sup>95</sup> The temples in Aleppo, Tell Tayinat, 'Ain Dara, and Jerusalem share here some common characteristics, even if it seems implausible to claim for the latter an Aramaean origin.

Moreover, the find of Aramaic inscriptions is usually considered a clear indication of Aramaean presence. In the first centuries of the 1st millennium B.C. (as e.g., the Tel Dan stele, inscription of Ein Gev, and

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<sup>87</sup> Referring to pottery, see Akkermans – Schwartz 42006: 363–366 and Hafþórsson 2006: 190f.

<sup>88</sup> For the characteristics of Aramaean cities, see Sader 2010: 290f.

<sup>89</sup> For the funerary stelae, see Bonatz 2000a. The stelae have their roots in 2nd-millennium Syrian funerary traditions. For the funerary cult, compare Niehr 2006.

<sup>90</sup> Referring to Aramaean iconography (and the Hittite influences), see Sader 2010: 291–293. For massive reservations against ethnic labeling in Syria, see Gilibert 2011: 9f.

<sup>91</sup> This is also the method of Ilan 1999: 207f; Akkermans – Schwartz 42006: 366–377; Hafþórsson 2006: 185–246, esp. 189; Münger 2012.

<sup>92</sup> Akkermans – Schwartz 42006: 368–374; Hafþórsson 2006: 188f; Sader 2010: 293–295.

<sup>93</sup> So Sader 2010: 294.

<sup>94</sup> But see now Lehmann – Killebrew 2010: 24–27.

<sup>95</sup> Akkermans – Schwartz 42006: 370–372; Sader 2010: 295f. They refer to Aleppo (Hadad), Tell Tayinat, and 'Ain Dara.

other Aramaic inscriptions<sup>96</sup>) this is surely true. But during the subsequent centuries Aramaic became the diplomatic language and then very quickly also the lingua franca of the Neo-Assyrian and later of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian empires. Therefore, the presence of Aramaic script or texts is not necessarily a marker for the physical presence of an Aramaean individual.

Recently, it has been proposed that the Syrian way of mingling the (“Aramaean,” “Luwian,” “Hittite,” etc.) styles was a conscious attempt to shape an innovative political discourse and belongs to the political process of self-definition.<sup>97</sup> The use (or avoidance) of a style or iconography associated with certain group identities would then be the result of a cultural choice involving a conscious acceptance or rejection. According to this proposal the mixed cultures, architectures, iconographies, and styles of Syria and Palestine are the result of mediating social conflicts and serving local and/or international politics. Even if this suggestion has some attraction it has to be handled with care: the objective evaluation of different styles, the option of *conscious* cultural choices or combinations, and the high estimation of innovation (over tradition) seems to be an anachronistic perspective.

In general, it can be observed that the Aramaean political entities were basically multiethnic as well as multilingual, and that the intense and peaceful acculturation of the settlers from Syria/Aramaean in Palestine proceeded quickly. Therefore, present archaeology tries to avoid ethnic models and categories in favor of socioeconomic interpretations to explain the changes in the material culture as the result of social, economic, and ecological factors. In the case of Aramaeans and Israelites it appears clear that their social and economic structure and cultures (basically those of tribal societies) were closely related from the beginning, mingling with each other from the Iron Age I on, with the result that their culturally specific differentiation within Palestine is hardly possible. Maybe indeed the early Aramaean presence in the north of Palestine is one of the reasons why there are obvious differences in the material culture between north and south Palestine, but surely the north-south differences in rainfall, climate,

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<sup>96</sup> For early Aramaic inscriptions, see Sass 2005: 83–88; Avigad 1997: 280–319 registers 107 stamp seals and impressions with Aramaic legends; unfortunately, the provenance of the majority is unknown. For the Aramaic ostraca of pre-Persian times, consider Fitzmyer – Kaufman 1992: B.1.

<sup>97</sup> Brown 2008: 235–259 (with reference to Kulamuwa and his mingling of Luwian, Aramaean, Assyrian, and Phoenician elements), and discussed in Gilibert 2011: 79–83.

resources, and infrastructure also played a major role. In north Palestine during the Iron Ages a strong orientation to the Aramaean “Syrian” states can be observed, when architecture, pottery, ivories, iconography, religion, funerary customs, marriage policy, economy and trade, and political alliances of the north Palestinian political entities in Cis- and Transjordan are oriented more toward Syria and Phoenicia than to Judah and Philistia. Clear borders cannot be drawn without doubt, especially in the area of the Sea of Galilee and to the north.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, the interpretation and ethnic labeling of northern sites are controversial: according to E. Arie,<sup>99</sup> in Dan (Tell el-Qadi) the architectural elements, the scepter head,<sup>100</sup> the two bronze plaques,<sup>101</sup> and the fragments of anthropomorphic faces<sup>102</sup> represent the period of the rule of Aram-Damascus over the inhabitants of Dan (who are from another Aramaean tribe), while A. Biran,<sup>103</sup> or C. Uehlinger<sup>104</sup> use the same material remains and claim their Israelite provenance—and an “Israelite” Dan.

The character of north Palestine and south Syria as an open frontier, which enabled the coexistence and/or amalgamation of different ethnic groups in the area, creating a new regionally fragmented typical culture and gradually merging (after the end of the Late Bronze Age) into a larger corporate entity and identity, leads to the conclusion that the area and its population were more linked to the Aramaeans (and other population groups) than we will ever be able to learn. Referring to the Iron Age I, D. Ilan<sup>105</sup> has pointed out that, “in a region such as the north-eastern Galilee, the variety of possible reactions to environmental constraints, social fragmentation and political configuration is so great and so temporally dynamic that it is hard to arrive at a convincing reconstruction of the political system. . . .” This is surely true for the area not only during the Iron Age I but also later. Even if it is not to be doubted that Palestine was confronted in the 9th century B.C. by Aram-Damascus, an invader from outside, other than the layers of destruction there is little evidence of the newcomers. Of course it has to be taken into account

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<sup>98</sup> This is also the final result of Ilan 1999: 205–208, who points to the coexistence of different ethnic groups in the areas of Galilee, the Golan, and the Hule Valley (esp. Dan).

<sup>99</sup> Arie 2008: 37.

<sup>100</sup> Biran 1994: 198.

<sup>101</sup> Biran 1999.

<sup>102</sup> Biran 1994: fig. 133 and Pakman 2003 (arguing for Phoenician influence).

<sup>103</sup> Biran 1994: 165–209.

<sup>104</sup> Uehlinger 1997: 116f, 139.

<sup>105</sup> Ilan 1999: 209.

that, especially in north Palestine during the fights between the kingdoms of Aram-Damascus and Israel, the gain and loss of territory happened in very short intervals (see above). For the population of the conquered areas the items of daily life remained the same, as did the cultic installations, the gods, and other things that were not destroyed. The primary effect of the change in political supremacy was in taxation and jurisdiction, since it had to be clear who should get the bribes. But we have no records of these practical aspects of political changes in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. Parallel to their political fate, Cis- and Transjordan were subjected to various cultic-religious influences, whereby one must reckon with the existence of a local cult that survived all the transformations or managed to integrate the successive influx of new religious notions into its own local traditions (see, for example, the amalgamation of the local weather-god Hadad/Ba'al and the Aramaean moon-god at et-Tell). While the weather-god of the Hadad/Ba'al type is well-known and widespread in Syria and Palestine even before the Iron Age, the moon-god of Harran seems to be an Aramaean deity.<sup>106</sup> His symbolism (crescent moon on a pole with bells, bull iconography) and the lunar elements associated with him<sup>107</sup> found entrance into Palestine and in subsequent times continued to assert themselves. Aramaean, respectively Aramaic influence can be detected in the Gileadite inscription of Tell Deir 'Alla (end of the 9th, beginning of the 8th century B.C.), which provides evidence of the autochthonous tradition of a vision of the seer Bala'am, son of Beor (Num 22–24), in which various deities played a major role. They belonged to the local pantheon of the place in Transjordan: Šagar, Aštar, deities ('*lhn*), šadday-deities, and (according to the (re-)construction of the text), perhaps also El.<sup>108</sup>

How far the influence of the Aramaean religious symbol system extended into the Israelite heartland and to the south, is also difficult to say. In 2 Kgs 23: 8 and Ezek 8: 3–5, a “cult at the gates,” as archaeologically

<sup>106</sup> The religious center of the Aramaeans was Harran in northwestern Mesopotamia from ca. 1050 B.C. on. At least since the 18th century B.C. a place of worship for the moon-god was located in Harran. For the early history of Harran and its god, see Green 1992: 19–47 and Keel 1994.

<sup>107</sup> According to RIMA 3, A.0.102.92 there was a temple of the god Sheru (Aram. šhr) in the city of Malaḥa, which was a royal city of Hazael of Damascus (plundered by Shalmaneser III). The location of Malaḥa remains uncertain. For a summary of possible locations, see Younger 2005: 263 and Hafþórsson 2006: 132–134. Lipiński 2000a: 350f, 384f proposed the identification with the city of Hazor, which is highly improbable.

<sup>108</sup> Weippert 1991. For the classification of the Bala'am Inscription from Tell Deir 'Alla as Aramaic, see Lipiński 2006: 290–292 and Lemaire 2006a: 181 nn. 14 and 15.

documented in Dan and et-Tell, is mentioned at Jerusalem. It is branded as an illegitimate worship of false gods, and within the polemical biblical discourse it is not possible to determine to what deity it might have been addressed in the Judean capital. It is also impossible to determine whether it was an earlier native local cult or the result of an Aramaean influence and prototype (as e.g., 2 Kgs 16: 10).

In Iron Age II the Aramaean Ba'al/Hadad, the northern Israelite YHWH of the Omrides,<sup>109</sup> and the state gods of the Transjordanian states, Milkom and Kemosh, were conceived with solar and celestial connotations. The iconographically documented symbolism of the sun and the heavens, which had come from Egypt through Phoenician mediation, became native in Israel and Syria. But the progressing symbolism of the moon-god and Venus, leading to a lunarization and astralization of the religious symbol system (also of the local gods) in Palestine is attributed to the Aramaean (crescent moon) and later Assyrian influences. The diverse religious symbol systems could be combined with each other (Egyptian ankh-symbols with the Aramaean crescent moon). In Palestinian glyptic, the moon-god appears in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. in the form of the cult standard of the moon-god from Harran, who ranked for the Assyrians as the highest god of the west; they integrated him into their religious system and also venerated him (see the top of a standard that was found in the Assyrian fortress in Tell eš-Šerī'a). Crescents on poles are likewise documented on seals, scarabs, and other image-bearing objects. Especially in the specifically inner-Palestinian local traditions around Jerusalem (though also in the former northern kingdom and in northern Transjordan), one finds representations of the moon-god in anthropomorphic form as a bearded, enthroned figure sitting in a boat and conferring blessings (sometimes with the name of the Judean owner of the seal). This find has been interpreted<sup>110</sup> as an indication that the local supreme gods in Palestine had assumed lunar characteristics, i.e., that in Judah of the 7th century B.C. YHWH of Jerusalem was worshipped as a moon-god (according to O. Keel – C. Uehlinger as the uranic-lunar El)<sup>111</sup> or that the characteristics of a local Palestinian god (in Judah therefore of YHWH) were transferred to the Aramaean(-Assyrian) moon-god of Harran. In the Neo-Babylonian period lunar symbolism still persisted in Syria and

<sup>109</sup> Keel – Uehlinger <sup>5</sup>2001: § 164 and Niehr 1994a.

<sup>110</sup> Dalman 1906: 49.

<sup>111</sup> Keel – Uehlinger <sup>5</sup>2001: § 180.



Palestine<sup>112</sup> (note, e.g., Nabonidus, who patronized the moon-god Sin of Harran), while in the Persian period the Aramaean moon-god had lost parts of his former attraction.<sup>113</sup> But it should be noted that the names of three governors of the Persian province of Samaria, “Sin-uballit I–III” (= “Sin brought to life”; members of a family living during the 5th until the end of the 4th century B.C.) still contained the name of the Mesopotamian moon-god. Perhaps this name indicates that the very first Sin-uballit I (or his parents) was a returnee from the Israelite exilic elite in the Harran region, who had some sympathy for Nabonidus’ religious policy.

In the Persian period it becomes evident that Aramaic had meanwhile established itself as the lingua franca of the Ancient Near East. Not only the Aramaic script and language were shaping the Ancient Near East.<sup>114</sup> The collection of literary works in the Jewish colony on the island of Elephantine in Egypt contained the Aramaic story and sayings of Aḥiqar,<sup>115</sup> one of the masterpieces of Aramaic literature and wisdom, which influenced deeply the biblical book of Job. At least in the post-exilic period everybody in Palestine spoke Aramaic and Judaeo-Hebrew/Yehudit ceased to be the commonly spoken language, a development which could not be stopped by the author of Neh 13: 24 and his call for Judeo-Hebrew/Yehudit.<sup>116</sup>

### 5. *The Image of the Aramaeans in the Old Testament*

The attestations of the Aramaeans are concentrated in two major text complexes:

1. It has already been mentioned that the book of Genesis includes the Aramaeans in its genealogies. The social and political relationships between “Israelites” and “Aramaeans” are described in the form of family stories and lineages. The stress of these texts is on the *kinship* between “Israelites” and “Aramaeans.”

<sup>112</sup> Note the cult place for the moon-god in En Ḥaṣeva (7th and 6th centuries B.C.), Bennett – Keel 1998: 70f. Arabian influence at this site cannot be ruled out.

<sup>113</sup> Note e.g., the small presence of the crescent moon in the seal iconography of the Persian period, see Uehlinger 1999: 154 no. 9 and 168f nos. 28 and 28a; Keel – Uehlinger 2001: § 217.

<sup>114</sup> See the Aramaic translation of the Bisitun inscription of Darius I, in TAD E C 2.1.

<sup>115</sup> TAD E C 1.1; cf. Contini – Grottanelli 2005; Niehr 2007; Weigl 2010.

<sup>116</sup> See Kottsieper 2007b: 95–102.

2. In the books of the Former Prophets Aramaean tribes, places (e.g., the city of Damascus), rivers (Abana and Parpar [2 Kgs 5: 12]), individuals (King David's scribe Shay-Si, with the name "gift of the Moongod" [2 Sam 20: 25; 1 Kgs 4: 3]; Na'aman [2 Kgs 5: 1ff]; David's wife Maacah, mother of Absalom and daughter of King Talmay of Geshur [2 Sam 3: 3]) and kings (Ben-hadad, son of Tab-Rimmon, son of Hezyon [1 Kgs 15: 18]; Ben-Hadad, son of Hazael [2 Kgs 13: 24]; Hazael [1 Kgs 19: 15; 2 Kgs 8–13]; and Rezin/Razyan [2 Kgs 15: 37; 16: 5–9]) are mentioned. In the Books of the Kings the main focus is on Aram-Damascus.<sup>117</sup> This Aramaean kingdom is often referred to as an ally or enemy of the Israelite kingdom. In the Latter Prophets Aram-Damascus is mentioned as a political partner and/or adversary in much the same way (see Is 7: 1). In propheticies Aram-Damascus can also be depicted as a tool in the hands of YHWH (e.g., Is 9: 11f), who wants to punish his people Israel. But on the other hand Is 7: 8f; 8: 4; 10: 9 and 17: 3 draw clear parallels between Aram-Damascus and Israel. Both states are treated by YHWH in analogy and have to face deportation and defeat: YHWH is the god who punishes Aram-Damascus by himself and orders its deportation to Qir (Am 1: 5). YHWH is also the one who leads Aram out of Qir (Am 9: 7). According to Is 17: 3 there was a "rest of Aram" as well as a "rest of Israel." The prophetic perspective stresses that YHWH did with Aram-Damascus what he did with Israel and later with Judah. This perspective does not argue with kinship relationships, but Israel and Aram-Damascus share the same fate.

The construct of the Aramaean descent lines is also mentioned in its shortest form in Dtn 26: 5. This text combines the genealogy of the patriarchs with the Exodus tradition and (from v. 9f on) with the gift of the land. This young text<sup>118</sup> therefore presupposes and summarizes the narrative line from Gen 10/11 to the book of Joshua. Within the book of Deuteronomy this is the only attestation of an Aramaean—Aram or Damascus are not mentioned at all. From the historical perspective Dtn 26: 5 is wrong, since the tribes of Palestine emerged from earlier local Palestinian population groups and not from outside. Only in north Palestine (Cis- and Transjordan

<sup>117</sup> The relevant texts are collected and very briefly discussed in Hafþórsson 2006: 137–184.

<sup>118</sup> See e.g., Gertz 2000: 285. Compare the summary of the German debate of the text's history in Otto 1999: 321 n. 507.

with open frontiers) did Aramaeans arrive from northern parts of Syria, acculturate, and become part of the regional population (see above). But Dtn 26: 5 is very interesting from a constructivistic point of view. The verse refers not to a historical “ethnic,” “genetic,” or “biological” kinship between Israelites and Aramaeans, but to a purposely established kinship (*Wahlverwandtschaft; syngeneia*) that is purely fictional. In contrast to real kinships, which cannot be chosen, fictional kinships are self-determined. Dtn 26: 5 gives therefore a clear impression, which relatives of the writers of this verse (and of the Old Testament genealogies mentioned above) *wanted* to have and which they *wanted* to deny.

It has to be kept in mind that the biblical genealogies with Aramaeans are in the earliest exilic, but mostly post-exilic texts. This is also exactly the time when Judean deportees had been settled by the Babylonians in the Aramaean heartland or in “Chaldea,” where they had to interact with the native or previous Aramaean settlers. In the logic of the given genealogical construct of the Old Testament, the Judeans who had been deported into the Aramaean heartland were no strangers, but had there their familial roots and networks. On the other side, the exiled denied their roots in Canaan: as descendants of Abra(ha)m and of Jacob/Israel and their wives they claimed to be more closely related to the Aramaeans than to the Canaanites, which made them newcomers when they entered Palestine from the outside in the “conquest.” The genealogies of Gen and Dtn 26: 5 support the self-made construct that nothing would connect Israel/Judah, respectively Yehud, with the native Canaanites. This real kinship was eliminated in favor of the chosen and constructed one (with the Aramaeans).<sup>119</sup>

Considering the massive Aramaean presence in the Old Testament the final question is what stood behind the strong interest in the Aramaeans. Three possibilities are conceivable:

1. Aramaeans from Syria settled in Palestine and participated in shaping its culture (attested from the Iron Age I on during each following period).
2. Inhabitants of Israel/Judah were in Aramaean settled areas for a visit and were so deeply impressed by the Aramaean culture that Aramaean traditions and elements were purposely included in the Old Testament and imported into the local material culture. This option is explicitly

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<sup>119</sup> For the functions of genealogies, see Hieke 2003: 301f, 345–352.

mentioned once in 2 Kgs 16: 10: King Ahas of Judah went to Damascus and brought back “Aramaean-inspired” new ideas for the altar in Jerusalem.

3. During the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations inhabitants of Palestine were exiled into Aramaean settled areas in Syria and in Babylonia. In these exiles the acculturation of the Israelites/Judeans with the Aramaeans went forth and when Israelites/Judeans came back to Palestine, these returnees imported to Palestine the culture, traditions (and family members) that had resulted from the Aramaean-Israelite/Judaean interaction, acculturation, inter-marriage, and integration. Evidence of the coexistence and interaction between Israelite deportees and Aramaeans in Syria and Assyria, and Judaean deportees and Aramaeans in Babylonia is available. Cuneiform texts from Ma'allanate (7th century B.C.) testify a vital convergence of Hebrew, Akkadian, and Aramaic speaking and writing population groups at a place in close proximity to Tell Halaf/Guzana/Gosen.<sup>120</sup> Cuneiform archives from Al-Yahudu in Babylonia draw a similar picture of the interaction, inter-marriage, and coexistence of Aramaeans, Judeans, and Babylonians.<sup>121</sup>

In sum, all three possibilities are well attested and can be combined. A diachronal line may even be plausible with the growing intensity of the Aramaean presence in Palestine and from the Iron Age I on. Josh 13: 13 may not be that far off (whatever “today” may be<sup>122</sup>): “But the Israelites expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maacathites: And Geshur and Maacah dwelled among Israel until today.”

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<sup>120</sup> See Lipiński 2010: indexes 1–3. The texts are also included in the *PNA* volumes. See e.g., the names of “Hanāna” (West Semitic nos. 8 and 9), “Handî” (Aramaic no. 2), “Iatyahû” (Hebrew), “Idrî-Anu” (Aramaic no. 4), “Ikkāru” (Akkadian no. 6), “Il-dalâ” (West Semitic nos. 6 and 10), “Azrî-Iāu” (Hebrew no. 3), “Ašîrâ, son of Same'-Iāu” (Aramaic no. 5), “Mašî” (Semitic?), “Buššî” (Arabic? no. 2), “Bêl-taklāk” (Akkadian no. 5), “Bêl-bāni” (Akkadian nos. 3 and 4).

<sup>121</sup> Wunsch – Magdalene 2011: 113–134 and Wunsch (forthcoming).

<sup>122</sup> See e.g., Knauf 2008: 131 referring to the 5th century B.C. as the beginning of Jewish settlements in Galilee and a mixed population in the 2nd century B.C.

## 6. EGYPT

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The West Asiatic presence in Egypt is well documented by epigraphic and archaeological material as well as by the presence of West Semitic loan words.<sup>1</sup> By the time of the New Kingdom (1539–1292 B.C.), foreigners and foreign communities were a prominent characteristic of Egyptian society.<sup>2</sup> The first possible mention of Aramaeans in Egyptian local sources,<sup>3</sup> however, dates to much later, to the reign of Apries (Ἀπρίης), fifth king of the 26th Egyptian (Saite) dynasty during the Late Period.<sup>4</sup> The inscription of Nesuhor, chief of the Elephantine's garrison, dated to the first quarter of the 6th century B.C., mentions *3mw*-Asiatics and *sttyw*-Asiatics, and it was interpreted by B. Porten as referring to Jews and Aramaeans.<sup>5</sup> From the reign of Amasis, the P. Berlin 13615 (530 B.C.) found in Elephantine mentions *rmt* *Ḥ3rw* "man of Khor/Syria" and *rmt* *'lšwr*.<sup>6</sup> The Aramaic script is referred to in Demotic as *šh* *'lšwr*,<sup>7</sup> which suggests that *rmt* *'lšwr* might be referring to Aramaeans.<sup>8</sup>

## 1. Sources

The Aramaic corpus from Egypt has been collected and re-edited by B. Porten and A. Yardeni.<sup>9</sup> The texts written in papyrus comprise fifty letters, plus thirty-four fragments of letters and reports; fifty-eight legal documents, plus thirty-five fragments of contracts; two literary texts, plus two fragments; one copy of the Bisitun inscription; twenty-nine accounts;

<sup>1</sup> Helck 1971: 515–576; Hoch 1994; Saretta 1997; for the Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period, see the summary in Schneider 1998: 1–30.

<sup>2</sup> In his study of foreign names during the New Kingdom, Thomas Schneider lists 680 foreign names, 430 of them of Semitic origin; cf. Schneider 1992.

<sup>3</sup> P. Bibliothèque Nationale 215 verso, c/14; cf. Spiegelberg 1914. Previous attempts to understand the Egyptian toponym *P-irm(w)* in Amenhotep III's topographic list (ca. 1386–1349 B.C.) and in P. Anastasi III (ca. 1210 B.C.) as referring to Aramaeans are not currently accepted; cf. Lipiński 2000a: 32–34.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus (II 161); Diodorus (I 68).

<sup>5</sup> Porten 1968: 15. However, see also Johnson 1999: 214, who prefers to categorize them as two different Asiatic groups without further specification.

<sup>6</sup> P. Berlin 13615 + P. Berlin 13606 a–b + P. Berlin 15824 a–b; see Zauzich 1971 and id. 1992: 361–364.

<sup>7</sup> Erichsen 1941: 57; Zauzich 1992: 364; Steiner 1993: 80–82.

<sup>8</sup> Johnson 1999: 214.

<sup>9</sup> Porten – Yardeni 1986; iid. 1989; iid. 1993; iid. 1999.

nine lists, plus forty-seven fragments of accounts, lists, and opistographs (TAD D 3.1–47); and one hundred unidentified fragments (TAD D 4.1–34; D 5.1–66). There are fourteen leather fragments (TAD D 6.1–14) and one hundred and eleven ceramic inscriptions, fifty-seven of which are letters (TAD D 7.1–57), thirteen are accounts (TAD D 8.1–13), and fifteen are lists (TAD D 9.1–15). Twenty-six inscriptions were found on whole jars (TAD D 11.1–26), two on stone plaques (TAD D 12.1–2), and five on wooden plaques (TAD D 13.1–5). There are eight seals, bullae, and stamps (TAD D 14.1–8); five libation bowls (TAD D 15.1–5); two statuettes (TAD D 16.1–2); one dedication stone (TAD D 17.1); forty-eight funerary inscriptions (TAD D 18.1–8; D 19.1–7; D 20.1–6; D 21.1–17); and fifty-four graffiti (TAD D 22.1–54).<sup>10</sup> Three hundred and sixteen additional ostraca from Elephantine have recently been published by H. Lozachmeur.<sup>11</sup>

The oldest documents written in Aramaic and found in Egypt are a letter addressed to the “lord of Kings Pharaoh” from “Adon, king of E[kron]” (TAD A 1.1; Saqqara, end of the 7th century B.C.) and a land lease between Padi (a Philistine name?), and Aḥa, an Egyptian name (TAD B 1.1; Korobis, 515 B.C.);<sup>12</sup> the most recent Aramaic texts come from the Hellenistic period (ca. 2nd century B.C.), when Greek replaced Aramaic as the official language.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. *Language*

The various samples of Aramaic in Egypt show that there were linguistic variations, perhaps due to the widespread use of Aramaic by several ethnic groups. Studies in Aramaic dialectology have shown evidence of morphological and syntactical variations within the Aramaic corpus from Egypt itself. The dialect of the proverbs of Aḥiqar has been described as an independent dialect, different from the Imperial Aramaic and dated

<sup>10</sup> For a chronological list of the discovery of papyri, parchments, ostraca, and jar inscriptions, and an alphabetic museum list of inscriptions on pottery, wood, and stone, see Porten 1997: 393–410.

<sup>11</sup> For the complete Clermont-Ganneau collection (288 ostraca), plus thirty-three of unknown provenance (XI–33), cf. Lozachmeur 2006. Nine of the Clermont-Ganneau ostraca had been published by Porten – Yardeni (TAD D 7.2, 5, 7, 10, 16, 21, 30, 35, and 44).

<sup>12</sup> The oldest Aramaic inscription, if one was to accept Edward Lipiński’s epigraphic dating (Lipiński 1975b), would be TAD D 20.2 dated by him to the end of the 6th century B.C. (cf. Vittmann 2003: 106). Porten – Yardeni, on the other hand, suggest “Early 5th century BCE” (TAD D 20.2, p. 252). See also Porten 2000: 187.

<sup>13</sup> Naveh 1970: 45.

ca. 750–650 B.C.,<sup>14</sup> the narrative story and the proverbs are written in different dialects.<sup>15</sup> The Hermopolis Letters also show peculiarities in syntax and morphology compared with the Elephantine material.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. *Identification*

Despite the numerous sources written in Aramaic, documenting the presence of Aramaeans in Egypt and describing their origins, distribution, and activities is not an easy task.<sup>17</sup> The fact that Aramaic became the lingua franca of the Ancient Near East under the Persian Empire and was widely used by other groups presents difficult obstacles and makes it necessary to find additional criteria for ethnic identification in addition to language and script.<sup>18</sup>

The sources, however, do not make such identification easy. For example, in the Elephantine corpus we have several cases of the same person sometimes being described as “Aramaean” and other times as “Jewish.” J. Johnson has suggested that these ethnic terms served the administrative function of identifying one’s position in the Elephantine bureaucracy, and that these terms seem to reflect an organizational schema imposed with the purpose of providing an administrative structure.<sup>19</sup> This proposal opens a new direction for understanding the Jew-Aramaean “ethnic” problem in Elephantine–Syene. We would expect that in documents not related to any administrative matter the Jews would refer to themselves as Jews. That is the case in the private letters among Jews, as mentioned above. The letter in which they refer to themselves as “Syenians who are hereditary property holders in Elephantine the Fortress”<sup>20</sup> is an offer of payment for the reconstruction of the temple, i.e., it has some administrative aspect to it. Following this reasoning, “Aramaean” would be an ethnic-administrative term used by the Persian administration, while “Jew” would be an ethnic-communitarian term. Administratively speaking, all Jews were Aramaeans. The administrative character of this identification is apparent

<sup>14</sup> Kottsieper 1990: 181.

<sup>15</sup> As noted in Kutscher 1970: 347–412.

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the phonological, morphological, and morphosyntactic variations of Imperial Aramaic, see Folmer 1995: 705–712. For the standard grammar of Egyptian Aramaic, see Muraoka – Porten 1998.

<sup>17</sup> None of the previous studies on the Aramaeans includes a dedicated chapter to their presence in Egypt.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Folmer 1995: 5f; Vittmann 2003: 84f; Winnicki 2009: 260.

<sup>19</sup> Johnson 1999: 218.

<sup>20</sup> TAD A 4.10.

when we relate the ethnic administrative qualification of Aramaeans to their membership in a certain detachment (*degel*, lit. “standard”). None of the people described by their occupation is additionally described as a member of any of the detachments. The case of Miptaḥiah as a Jewess of Elephantine and an Aramaean according to her detachment<sup>21</sup> can be better explained by considering “Aramaean” as an ethnic-administrative designation and “Jew” as an ethnic-communal designation.<sup>22</sup> As R. Yaron observed, “every Jew can be described as Aramaean, but not every Aramaean is in turn a Jew.”<sup>23</sup>

For our study of the Aramaeans in Egypt, therefore, we should exclude the material that can be identified as Jewish or “Judean.”

#### 4. *Distribution and Cosmopolitanism*

Aramaic texts were found in several Egyptian locations (cf. map 2), Saqqara–Memphis, Luxor, Hermopolis, Korobis, Abydos, Thebes, Wadi el-Hudi, and Edfu (Ptolemaic period), but the richest Egyptian documentation written in Aramaic comes from Elephantine–Syene, at the southern border of Egypt, where Babylonians,<sup>24</sup> Caspians,<sup>25</sup> Khwarezmians,<sup>26</sup> Bactrians,<sup>27</sup> Medes,<sup>28</sup> Magians,<sup>29</sup> Persians, Jews, and Aramaeans, alongside the Egyptian population, used Aramaic for their business transactions.<sup>30</sup>

The Elephantine corpus points to the existence of a Jewish settlement in Elephantine, where the temple of YHWH was located,<sup>31</sup> and an Aramaean settlement in Syene, where the temples of Banit,<sup>32</sup> Nabu,<sup>33</sup> Bethel,<sup>34</sup> and Malkat-Shemayin<sup>35</sup> were found. Both communities interacted freely with other ethnic groups.

<sup>21</sup> TAD B 5.5: 1–2.

<sup>22</sup> The same explanation can be applied to the use of the term “Jew” in TAD A 3.8.

<sup>23</sup> Yaron 1964: 172.

<sup>24</sup> TAD B 2.2: 19, witness.

<sup>25</sup> TAD B 2.7: 18, 19; B 3.4: 23, 24, witnesses; B 3.4: 2, parties of the document; B 3.5: 11; B 3.12: 4, 12; B 3.12: 4–5, owners of the property.

<sup>26</sup> TAD B 2.2: 2 and B 2.3: 23, parties of documents.

<sup>27</sup> Party in TAD D 2.12: 2.

<sup>28</sup> TAD B 3.6: 17, witness.

<sup>29</sup> TAD B 3.5: 24, witnesses.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Briant 2002: 507–510.

<sup>31</sup> TAD A 3.3: 1; A 4.7: 6 *passim*.

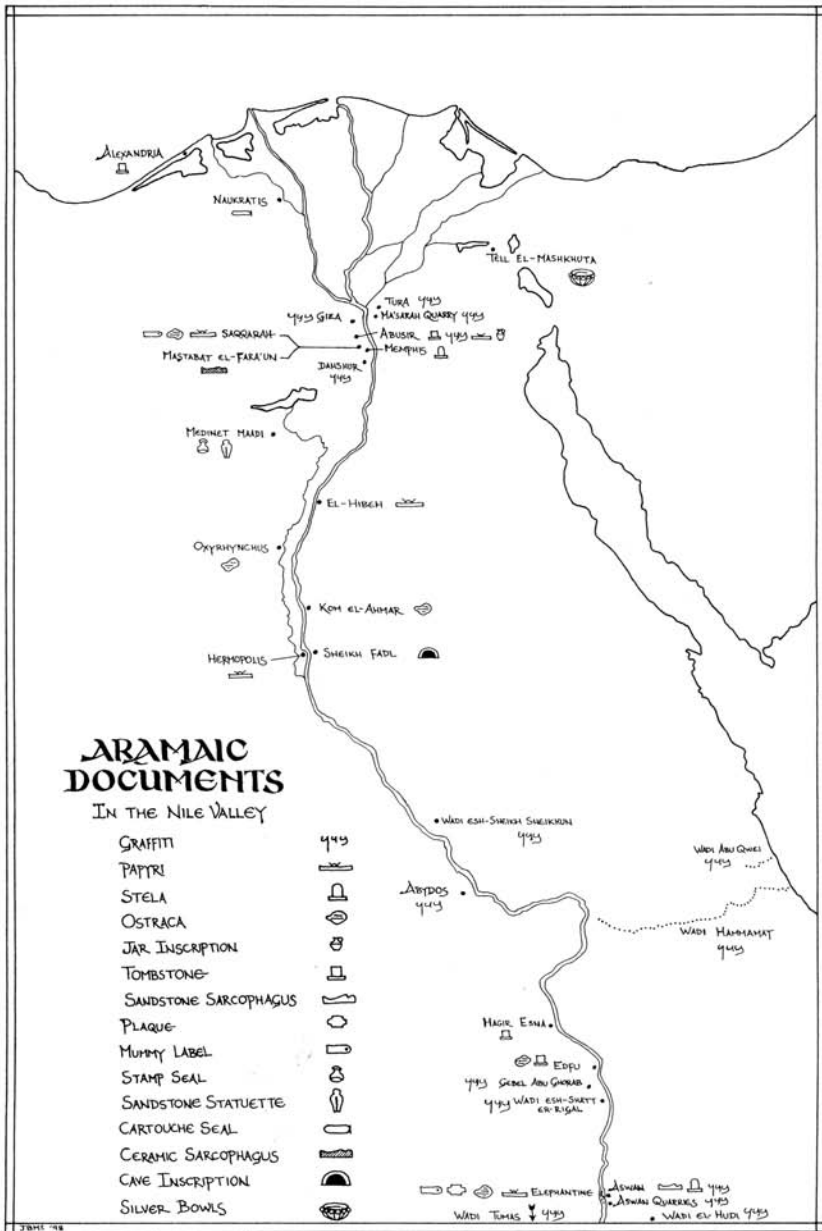
<sup>32</sup> TAD A 2.2: 1; 12; A 2.4: 1.

<sup>33</sup> TAD A 2.3: 1.

<sup>34</sup> TAD A 2.1: 1.

<sup>35</sup> TAD A 2.2: 1.





Map 2. Distribution of Aramaic Documents, after Porten – Yardeni 1999: 304.

In Saqqara, another rich source of Aramaic documents, we find a case similar to that of Elephantine. The Saqqara papyri bear witness to the life of a multi-ethnic community, which included Babylonians, Aramaeans, Sidonians, Jews, Moabites, Ionians, Carians, and Hyrcanians.<sup>36</sup>

The progressive assimilation that we find in the onomasticon in both Elephantine–Syene and in Saqqara points to the cultural exchanges among the various groups attested in both places that adopted aspects of the local Egyptian culture to various degrees.<sup>37</sup> There are examples from Memphis–Saqqara where a father bears a Semitic name while his son bears an Egyptian name,<sup>38</sup> and vice versa, fathers with Egyptian names and sons with Semitic names.<sup>39</sup> There is also one example of a brother with a Semitic and a sister with an Egyptian name (TAD B 8.4: 15). A similar situation is found in Elephantine–Syene.<sup>40</sup> The onomastic assimilation of the Aramaeans (cf. the Hermopolis letters), however, contrasts with the almost exclusive use of Hebrew names by the Jews.

The organization of the Aramaean communities in both Syene and Memphis was based on the *ḥaylā'* (“garrison”, “troop”),<sup>41</sup> a term encompassing not only soldiers but also their families, to whom letters were addressed,<sup>42</sup> who paid tribute,<sup>43</sup> and who received payments<sup>44</sup> and rations.<sup>45</sup> The establishment of these garrisons seems to have been modeled after the Babylonian *ḥaṭru*-system.<sup>46</sup>

The *ḥaylā'* (“garrison”), was under the command of a *rab ḥaylā'* (“troop commander”).<sup>47</sup> The garrison was divided into detachments (*degel*), which are attested in both Memphis and Elephantine–Syene,<sup>48</sup> under

<sup>36</sup> Aimé-Giron 1931: 58 and Segal 1983: 8f.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Porten et al. 2011: 85–89.

<sup>38</sup> TAD C 3.6: 10; cf. Porten 2002.

<sup>39</sup> TAD C 3.611; C 4.3: 18.

<sup>40</sup> See Porten et al. 2011: 85–89. This situation was also attested in Babylon, where we find Egyptians bearing Babylonian names but still being listed as Egyptians; see Unger 1931: 81f and Wasmuth 2009.

<sup>41</sup> See Segal 1983: 7f; Porten 1968: 28–35; id. et al. 2011: 83–85.

<sup>42</sup> TAD A 4 I: 1; 2: 1 *passim*.

<sup>43</sup> TAD C 3.5: 7 *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> TAD C 3.14–32.

<sup>45</sup> TAD C 3.14: 38, 41. See Briant 2002: 448f.

<sup>46</sup> See Briant 1975: 177 n. 51; id. 2002: 506f. See also Wright 2011: 509, who suggests that the Babylonian *ḥaṭru*-system “resembles more the cleruchies in which Jews served during the Hellenistic period than garrisons such as Elephantine.”

<sup>47</sup> TAD D 17.1. All of them with Babylonian names; cf. Porten 2000: 163 with bibliography.

<sup>48</sup> TAD A 4.5: 1; A 5.2: 2; 5: 7; B 2.1: 2–3.9; 2: 3–4.9–10; 3: 2; 4: 2; 6: 2; 7: 2.10; 8: 3; 9: 2; 4: 11: 2; B 3.3: 3; 4: 2; 6: 2; 8: 2; 12: 3; 13: 2; B 4.5: 2; 6: 2; B 5.2: 2–3; 5: 2; B 6.1: 2; 3: 7; B 7.1:

the supervision of a *rab degel* (“detachment commander”).<sup>49</sup> These garrisons were clearly perceived by the Egyptian local population as a foreign, “Asiatic” presence.<sup>50</sup>

### 5. *Migration*

The advance of Assyrian forces and the fall of Damascus to the Assyrians in 732 B.C. could have triggered a massive displacement of the Aramaean population, and in that case Egypt would have been an attractive destination.<sup>51</sup> Their widespread presence during the Persian period from the very north to the southern border of Egypt, however, suggests that there was not just one event that triggered their displacement into Egypt but most likely that a multiplicity of push-pull forces were at play.

E. Kraeling, after discussing previous theories about the origins of the Jewish colony in Elephantine, proposed that the Aramaean community was established as a replacement of the previous garrison, which had defected to the Nubians, and that Jewish elements settled in Elephantine into an already existing Aramaean community, perhaps under Amasis (570–526 B.C.).<sup>52</sup> R. C. Steiner has suggested that the origins of the Aramaeans from Syene should be looked for in Bethel, where they settled after being deported from RASHU.<sup>53</sup> Based on the attestation of the Aramaean deities Anat-Bethel and Anat, assimilated in Elephantine to YHWH, K. van der Toorn has suggested that the Aramaeans of Syene came from Israel but originated ultimately in north Syria.<sup>54</sup> J. K. Winnicki concludes that “these Aramaeans may have been the descendants of refugees who had fled from Arpad, Hamath and other Syrian cities during the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions (...).” They also may have come

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2; 2: 3; B 8.6: 8–9; 10: 6; C 38.3: 7–9; 4: 35–36; C 3.19: 4; D 2.1: 2; 3: 3; 5: 3; 11: 2; 12: 3–4; D 3.39: 7; D 4.12: 2; D 22.7: 1; D 23.16: 5.

<sup>49</sup> TAD B 8.5: 11.

<sup>50</sup> See Briant 1998c: 144–151.

<sup>51</sup> 1 Kgs 11: 14–22 narrates how after David had conquered Edom, Hadad, a member of the royal house, then a young boy, fled to Egypt, taking with him subsequently people from Midian and from Paran. Although the Bible describes him as an Edomite (*'dm*), it has been suggested, based on the frequent confusion of *d/r* in the Bible, that he could have been an Aramaean; cf. Lipiński 2000a: 368a.

<sup>52</sup> Kraeling 1953: 41–48, esp. 48.

<sup>53</sup> Steiner 1995: 204.

<sup>54</sup> Van der Toorn 1992; see also Fales 1995b: 123f, who locates them near Arpad.

as merchants.<sup>55</sup> The Persepolis Tablets illustrate how during the Persian period various classes of workers were moved around the empire.<sup>56</sup>

### 6. Popular Religion

Letters are one of the few sources for the study of the religion of the Aramaeans in Egypt. The salutation of the Aramaic letters from Egypt is typically a blessing, a prayer, or a greeting mentioning the names of one or more Aramaean and Egyptian deities<sup>57</sup> or their temples: *brktky lPth zy yhzny 'pyk bšlm*, “I blessed you by/to Ptaḥ that he may let me see your face in peace.”<sup>58</sup> The blessing follows immediately the address and its object is the addressee. Such a blessing might be considered an intercessory prayer,<sup>59</sup> perhaps uttered in the temple itself.

Four letters sent to Syene from Memphis open with greetings to a temple (*šlm byt DN*)<sup>60</sup> of Bethel<sup>61</sup> and the Queen of Heaven (*malkat sheṣmayin*),<sup>62</sup> Banit,<sup>63</sup> and Nabu,<sup>64</sup> as one sent to Elephantine greets the Temple of YHWH there.<sup>65</sup> In 1974, J. A. Fitzmyer wrote what today remains true: “The greeting is peculiar, and its full implications have not yet been fully explored.”<sup>66</sup> Is it a salutation (“Greetings, Temple of Nabu”), as J. A. Fitzmyer assumed, or an elliptical prayer for the well-being of the temple,

<sup>55</sup> Winnicki 2009: 261.

<sup>56</sup> Mathieson – Bettles – Davies – Smith 1995: 39; Briant 2002: 429–435; Wasmuth 2009: 134.

<sup>57</sup> Ptaḥ in TAD A 2.1: 2; 2.2: 2; 2.3: 2; 2.4: 2; 2.5: 2; 2.6: 1 coming from Memphis and addressed to Luxor and Syene.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Couroyer 1978: 578–581; Dion 1981: 63; Schwiderski 2000: 126–128. Muraoka – Porten 1998: 198f translated the formula, “I said to Ptaḥ a blessing for you: ‘May he show me your face in peace!’”

<sup>59</sup> Like those discussed by Sweeney 1985: 213–230.

<sup>60</sup> TAD A 2.1–4.

<sup>61</sup> TAD A 2.6: 1–2. Bethel is also attested in several names: Bethelnathan (TAD A 2.1: 3.7); Bethelshezib (TAD A 2.5: 6), etc.; cf. Vincent 1937: 562–592 and Porten 1969: 118f.

<sup>62</sup> The Queen of Heaven (*nbt pt* in Egyptian) was an epithet applied to the goddess Anat; cf. Porten 1968: 164f and van der Toorn 1992: 96.

<sup>63</sup> TAD A 2.2: 4. Banit is one of the names of Ishtar and appears in several Aramaean names, Banitsar, Banitsarel, Makkibanit, etc.

<sup>64</sup> TAD A 2.3. A Babylonian deity. The inscription on a ceramic sarcophagus (TAD D 18: 1) mentions a priest of Nabu, Sheil, residing in Syene. Nabu is also attested in the Sheikh Fadl Cave Inscription (TAD D 23.1.6: 7; 16a: 2) and in names from Memphis and Syene: Nabunathan, Nabuša (TAD A 2.1: 2.13; A 2.2: 2.6; A 2.5: 1.10), Nabušežib, Nabubarach (TAD D 11.9: 2), Nabudalah, etc.; cf. Porten 1968: 119f.

<sup>65</sup> TAD A 3.3: 1; cf. Vincent 1937: 25–60, 312–391.

<sup>66</sup> It has no known epistolary parallels; cf. Fitzmyer 1974: 212. The attempt of Fales 1987: 455f to attach it to the following address appears forced.

“Peace be with the Temple of Nabu,” as we had previously suggested?<sup>67</sup> A letter inscribed on an ostrakon from Yarḥu to Haggai<sup>68</sup> also mentions the gods Bel, Nabu, Šamaš,<sup>69</sup> and Nergal, showing some degree of continuity between the gods worshipped by the Aramaeans in Egypt and those worshipped in Syria.<sup>70</sup> Gods worshipped or revered by Aramaeans in Egypt include Addu (Adad), Anat (the Queen of Heaven), Atta, Attar, Ba‘al, Banit, Bel, Bethel, El, Eshem, Hadad, Horus, Ḥerem, Mar and Marah, Marduk, Nabu, Nanai, Nergal, Nusku, Osiris, Ptaḥ, Šahr (moon-god), Šamaš, and Yahu. H. Niehr has suggested the following religious hierarchy among the gods mentioned in Aḥiqar: Hadad, Divine Council, El, Šamaš, and the rest of the gods.<sup>71</sup>

The Aramaean onomasticon shows a high percentage of theophoric names, (Nabu and Bethel-names are the most popular) expressing aspects of their personal piety, for example,<sup>72</sup> NBWŠZB (Nabušežib)<sup>73</sup> and its short form NBWŠH (Nabuša), “Nabu Rescued,”<sup>74</sup> NBWNTN (Nabunathan), “Nabu Gave,”<sup>75</sup> NBWŠRH (Nabušarah), “Nabu Released,”<sup>76</sup> ŠZBNBW (Šezibnabu), “Nabu Saved,”<sup>77</sup> NBW<sup>c</sup>QB (Nabuaqab), “Nabu Protected,”<sup>78</sup> NBWŠDQ (Nabušadaq), “Nabu Is Just,”<sup>79</sup> NBWBRK (Nabubarach), “Nabu Blessed,”<sup>80</sup> NBWNRY (Nabunuri), and “Nabu Is My Light.”<sup>81</sup>

Funerary inscriptions attest to the high level of acculturation of Aramaeans in Egypt.<sup>82</sup> A famous example is the stele TAD D 20.30 (cf. fig. XLV),<sup>83</sup> which displays an inscription in Hieroglyph and another in Aramaic.<sup>84</sup> The Hieroglyph reads:

<sup>67</sup> Botta 1996–1999: 7; see also Botta – Porten forthcoming.

<sup>68</sup> TAD D 7.30: 2.

<sup>69</sup> Attested also in the proper name Šamašnuri (TAD B 4.2: 12; D 18.16: 1).

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Niehr 2003: 185–195.

<sup>71</sup> Niehr 2007: 20.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Kornfeld 1978.

<sup>73</sup> TAD A 2.1: 15; B 8.4: 1,13; CG X2 cv 8, L, 1, IIIa; cf. Lozachmeur 2006: 481.

<sup>74</sup> TAD A 2.1: 2.13; A 2.2: 2.6; A 2.5: 1.10.

<sup>75</sup> TAD A 2.3: 14; A 3.1R: 3; A 3.1V: 4, 6; B 2.8: 11.12; D 9.9: 4; D 22.30: 1.

<sup>76</sup> TAD B 8.4: 1.

<sup>77</sup> TAD A 3.1v: 1.

<sup>78</sup> TAD A 6.2: 23; 28; C 3.13: 54; C 3.15: 20, [31].

<sup>79</sup> TAD C 3.8 III B: 28.

<sup>80</sup> TAD D 11.9: 2.

<sup>81</sup> TAD C 4.8: 8.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Wasmuth 2010.

<sup>83</sup> Formerly ÄM 7707; cf. Porten 2000: 188; Vittmann 2003: 106, 110; TM 91158.

<sup>84</sup> Translation by Porten and Gee; see Porten – Gee 2001: 289–295 and Vittmann 2003: 106, 110.

An offering which the king gives (to) Osiris, foremost of the westerners, great god, lord of Abydos, so that they may give a good burial in the necropolis and a good reputation upon earth to the one revered before the great god, lord of heaven, Akhatabu.

The Aramaic inscription reads:

Blessed be Aba, son of Ḥor, and Aḥatbu, daughter of Adiya, both of Khasstemehi, before Osiris, the god. Absali, son of Abah, (whose) mother is Aḥatabu so said in the year 4 month of Meḥir (of) the king of kings, Xerxes.

### 7. *Legal Traditions*

The study of the patronymics of the Elephantine–Syene scribes shows that the majority of scribes with Hebrew-Aramaic patronymics were active in Elephantine and that the majority of scribes with Aramaic or Akkadian patronymics were active in Syene. The consequences of the various origins of the scribes' patronymics for the legal formulary were noticed early by R. Yaron, who stated that: "The nationality of the scribes is of obvious importance, since it was their task to supply the proper formulas for the documents, to find the proper legal expression for the wishes of the parties. In doing so, a scribe would naturally draw on his own legal system, with which he was familiar."<sup>85</sup>

R. Yaron's statement supports the assumption that the Aramaic documents written in Egypt did not belong to one and only one legal and/or scribal tradition.<sup>86</sup> We postulate the existence of six scribal traditions attested by the Syenian scribes: the Abah tradition, represented by the document drawn up by his son Itu (TAD B 2.2); the Nabuzeribni tradition, represented by the documents drawn up in Syene by his son Attarshuri (TAD B 2.3 and B 2.4) and his great-grandson Nabutukulti in Elephantine (TAD B 2.11); the Nabunathan tradition, represented by the document drawn up by his son Peṭeese (TAD B 2.8); the Nergal(u)šezib tradition, represented by the document drawn up by his son Raukhšana (TAD B 3.9); the Ešemšezib tradition, represented by the document drawn up by his grandson Šaweram (TAD B 3.13); and the Mannuki tradition, whose

<sup>85</sup> Yaron 1961: 12f.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Botta 2006. A scribal tradition is defined by the transmission of the skills to produce a legal instrument from father or teacher to son or student. Variations in the formulary could be attributed to different scribal schools. A legal tradition is the sum of individual laws and the types of institutions created to enforce them. Nuzi is one of the best-documented cases of several scribal traditions within a city, see Friedman: 1982: 199–211; for Emar, see Faist 2008.

only attestation is the document drawn up by his son Bunni (TAD B 3.2).<sup>87</sup> In addition, we consider the papyri from Saqqara (TAD B 8.1–4; B 8.6–12, and B 5.6) and TAD B 1.1 as belonging to separate scribal traditions from the documents of Elephantine–Syene.<sup>88</sup>

Within this variety of scribal traditions, however, certain common features can be ascertained within the Aramaic corpus. The legal documents are regularly composed according to a general objective framework (date, parties, scribe, witnesses, endorsement) into which the operative section is inserted.<sup>89</sup> They are drawn up in the first person by the party undertaking obligations without any dialogue reflecting the offer and acceptance of the terms described in the contract. Instead, there is usually a certificate of performance and a declaration of satisfaction with the quality of the performance. The operative section is characterized by its subjective and personal quality; it constitutes the core of the document's legal function, describing the legal changes that have taken place. For every type of transaction, there is a corresponding set of legal formulae constituting the operative section.<sup>90</sup>

## 8. Literature

The two major Aramaic literary works coming from Egypt are the Proverbs of Aḥiqar and P. Amherst 63.<sup>91</sup> The story of the Aramaean sage Aḥiqar<sup>92</sup> (dated to the late 5th century B.C.), “a wise and skillful scribe” (*spr ḥkym wmkhyr*) and “[be]arer of the seal of Sennacherib, King of Assy[ria]” (*[šb]yt*

<sup>87</sup> The place of production of the document is not mentioned in the text. Porten et al. 2011: 206 consider it as coming from Elephantine. We consider Bunni to be from Syene because of his patronymic, but TAD B 3.2 was possibly drawn up in Elephantine according to his “place of execution” formula.

<sup>88</sup> Bunni, son of Mannuki, bearer of an Akkadian patronymic, and whose only attested document does not mention the place of productions is considered here to belong to the Syenian scribes.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Yaron: 1957 and Porten et al. 2011: 82f. For detailed studies on the Aramaic legal sources, see Yaron 1961; Verger 1965; Muffs 1969; Cussini 1992; Lipiński 2000a: 557–597; Porten 2003; Gross 2008; Botta 2009.

<sup>90</sup> For a discussion of the component of the document's formulary, see Botta 2009: 44–56. For a detailed study of the structure of the Aramaic deeds of conveyance, see Gross 2008: 20–26.

<sup>91</sup> Only a few lines remain from the tale of Ḥor bar Punesh (TAD C 1.2); see Porten 2004.

<sup>92</sup> See TAD C 1.1 for the 1993 critical edition by B. Porten and A. Yardeni; followed by Grelot 2001; Schwiderski 2004: 83–104; Contini 2005: 113–139; Niehr 2007; Weigl 2010. For criticism of the rearrangement of sheets by Porten – Yardeni (cf. Yardeni 1994: 77 n. 9), see Kottsieper 2008: 110f; id. 2009: 412–414. For connections with Egyptian wisdom, see Quack 2011.

ʿzqth zyśnh ʿryb),<sup>93</sup> who served as counselor to Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, is without doubt the best-known and most influential Aramaic text found in Egypt.<sup>94</sup> The text includes a biographical section telling the story of the wise counselor; the betrayal by his nephew and protégée, Nadin; and a collection of sayings, written in a different dialect than the biographical narrative and whose origin should be looked for in 8th-century southern Syria.<sup>95</sup>

P. Amherst 63 (dated to the 4th century B.C.) is a liturgical Aramaic composition, written in Demotic script, for use in the New Year's festival. It has been suggested that it could have been used by the Aramaeans of Syene. The text mentions the gods: Nanai from Ayakku, Nebo from Borsippa, Bethel, Mar from Rash, Marah from Shur, Ba'al from Zephon, Bel from Babylon, Belit from Esangila, Pidra[i] from Raphia, the throne of Horus and Osiris from the Negeb, Anat, and Mami. The text also includes a psalm that closely resembles Psalm 20 and that properly serves as a conclusion for this chapter:

May Horus answer us in our straits.  
 May the Lord answer us in our straits.  
 O Bow(man)-in-the-Heavens, shine forth.  
 Send your messenger from the temple of Arash.  
 And from Zephon may Horus sustain us.  
 May Horus grant to us what is in our heart  
 May Mar grant to us as is in our heart.  
 All counsels may Horus fulfill.  
 May the Lord (*'dny*) not diminish any request of our heart.  
 Some by the bow, some by the spear.  
 (But) behold (as for) us, the lord Mar our god (*'lhn*) (is) Hor.  
 May our numen (*'ln*) be with us.  
 May the numen (*'l*) of Bethel answer us on the morrow.  
 May Ba'al of Heavens (*b'l šmyn*), the Lord (*mr*) bless.  
 For your pious ones (are) your blessings.<sup>96</sup> (P. Amherst 63 XI 11–19)

<sup>93</sup> TAD C 1.1: 1–3.

<sup>94</sup> For the development of the Aḥiqar tradition, see Contini – Grottanelli 2005: 40f and Niehr 2007: 23–31.

<sup>95</sup> Kottsieper 2008: 111; but see also Niehr 2007: 22f.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Vleeming – Wesselius 1982; Nims – Steiner 1983; Zevit 1990.



## 7. NORTHERN ARABIA

Herbert Niehr

1. *The Cultural Influence of Aramaeans in Northern Arabia*<sup>1</sup>

At various sites in northern Arabia, there are clear signs of the cultural influence the Aramaeans exerted on the language and religion of that region.

Fundamental to these cultural contacts were trade connections that existed between northern Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia. Cuneiform inscriptions from the 9th century B.C. onward document these trade relations especially well.<sup>2</sup> There were also continued attempts by Mesopotamian rulers to gain military dominance over northern Arabia. Sources tell of the capture of Duma (modern al-Ğawf), an oasis town in northern Arabia, by King Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) in 691 B.C.<sup>3</sup> After his victory, Sennacherib not only had the royal family deported to Ashur but the city's gods as well. His successor, Esarhaddon (681–669 B.C.), had the divine statues returned to Duma.<sup>4</sup> King Ashurbanipal (669–627 B.C.), who succeeded his father Esarhaddon, also led campaigns against the Arab tribes as his grandfather had done before.<sup>5</sup>

The Old Eastern Aramaic language must have arrived in northern Arabia, at the latest, with the Babylonian ruler Nabonidus (555–539 B.C.), who went on to spend ten years in Tayma. Mention must also be made of the use of Aramaic by the north Arabian rulers of Qedar during the 5th century B.C.<sup>6</sup> Even more recent are Aramaic attestations in the Gulf region in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>7</sup>

As far as religion is concerned, there is a definite Aramaean inheritance visible in the gods Attaršamayin<sup>8</sup> and Ba'alšamayin.<sup>9</sup> The royal name Haza'il also stems from Aramaic.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the personal name

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank my colleague Wolfgang Röllig (Tübingen) for reviewing and discussing this article, and Jessica Baldwin (Tübingen) for the English translation.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview, see Eph'al 1982: 21–59 and Retsö 2003: 119–211.

<sup>3</sup> See Eph'al 1982: 41; Retsö 2003: 154f, 158; Potts 2010: 75.

<sup>4</sup> See Knauf <sup>2</sup>1989: 81–88; Retsö 2003: 158f; Potts 2010: 75.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gerardi 1992 and Retsö 2003: 161–171.

<sup>6</sup> Lemaire 1995c: 70f; on the dating, cf. *ibid.*: 68–70.

<sup>7</sup> See Potts 1983; Puech 1998; Healey – Bin Seray 1999–2000; Healey 2000.

<sup>8</sup> See Knauf <sup>2</sup>1989: 81–84.

<sup>9</sup> See Niehr 2003: 281–302.

<sup>10</sup> See Retsö 2003: 154f, 158–161.

*rmnntn* (“Ramman has given”) is found in inscriptions (CIS II 117) from the region of Tayma. The theophoric element “Ramman” is an epithet of the god Hadad of Damascus.<sup>11</sup>

The most prolific sources of Aramaean cultural influence in northern Arabia originate from the oasis town of Tayma. This town shall be described in detail below.

## 2. *Tayma and the Aramaeans*

Geography, nature, history, trade, and politics integrated the north Arabian oasis town of Tayma and its hinterland<sup>12</sup> into a web of international relations.

It was connected to Syria in the northeast via Duma and Wadi Sirhan. Contact to southern Mesopotamia was established via Thaj on the Persian Gulf. The Incense Route passing by Tayma to the west near Heġra provided contact with the north. It led via Petra to Gaza, joining in Petra with the King’s Highway, which continued on to Damascus.

The western route to Egypt was also important. One was able to reach the seaport of Leuke Kome by way of Heġra, from which it was possible to cross the Red Sea and thus enter Egypt. The Nile River then provided the main route to Upper and Lower Egypt.<sup>13</sup> The importance of Tayma lay in its function as oasis town and trading post along this very important route from west to east.<sup>14</sup>

Despite numerous claims, cultural contact between Tayma and Anatolia has not been proven.<sup>15</sup>

Especially important, though, are the contacts between Tayma and Mesopotamia.<sup>16</sup> The earliest mentions of Tayma in Mesopotamian sources date to the beginning of the 8th century B.C. Several members of a caravan

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Greenfield 1976 and Schwemer 2001: 623–625.

<sup>12</sup> Regarding the topography and history of this oasis town, cf. Bawden – Edens – Miller 1980: 69–81; Edens – Bawden 1989: 52–76; MacDonald 1995: 1361, 1362–1368; Hausleiter 2010: 223–239.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the map in Grohmann 1963: fig. 1 and the illustration of northern Arabia in Wenning 1987: 112–125; Edens – Bawden 1989: 84–93; MacDonald 1995.

<sup>14</sup> See Edens – Bawden 1989.

<sup>15</sup> The mention of Tayma script in the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription of Prince Regent Yariri from Carchemish, dating to 800 B.C., refers to an Aramaean tribe and thus to Aramaean script in northern Mesopotamia and not to Tayma in northern Arabia. The inscription KARKAMIŠ A15b in Hawkins 2000: 130–133; regarding its interpretation, cf. Starke 1997a: 389–392; Hawkins 2000: 133; Rollinger 2006: 77f.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. especially Potts 1991; Beaulieu 1989: 178–180; Hausleiter 2010: 220f.

from Tayma to Saba were arrested somewhere in the Middle Euphrates region when they refused to pay tribute.<sup>17</sup> Inscriptions of King Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) mention tribute coming from Tayma that included gold, silver, camels, and spices.<sup>18</sup> Tribute from Tayma is also attested for the year 691 B.C. during King Sennacherib's (704–681 B.C.) reign.<sup>19</sup>

Much more substantial, historically speaking, are the Aramaeans, or, more precisely, the influence the Aramaeans in Syria had on northern Arabia from the 6th century B.C. onward, that is, from the time the Babylonian king Nabonidus (555–539 B.C.) resided in Tayma. He had crushed an anti-Babylonian insurgence in the Ammonite region<sup>20</sup> and moved further south to Edom, where he had himself depicted on a rock relief at Sela', about 50 km north of Petra, worshipping the gods Sin, Šamaš, and Ištar. This relief commemorated his presence in that region.<sup>21</sup> From there, not later from Babylonia,<sup>22</sup> Nabonidus must have immediately traveled onward to Tayma.<sup>23</sup>

The motives for Nabonidus' extended stay in Tayma seem to be clear. On the one hand, they lie with his religious beliefs and the internal, religious, and political tensions resulting from those beliefs in Babylonia and the surrounding region.<sup>24</sup> On the other, they are rooted in the substantial economic interest Babylonia had in consolidating the caravan routes of Arabia under its own auspices.<sup>25</sup> These two reasons augment each other well.<sup>26</sup>

King Nabonidus remained in Tayma for ten years (about 552–542 B.C.). During this ten-year absence, his son Belshazzar ruled as his proxy.<sup>27</sup> Nabonidus' stay in Tayma is mentioned in Babylonian sources from

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Cavigneaux – Ismail 1990: 339, 346, 351.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the summary inscriptions 4 27'–33' and 7, 3'–5' in Tadmor 1994: 142f, 168f.

<sup>19</sup> Regarding inscription T 13 VII, 37', cf. Frahm 1997: 93, 95.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Lipiński 2006: 315.

<sup>21</sup> See Dalley – Goguel 1997; Zayadine 1999; Schaudig 2001: 544; Wartke 2004; Crowell 2007: 80–83. See also the cuneiform tablet from Tell Tawilan/Harran, dating to 521/520 B.C., reporting that two inhabitants of Harran sold livestock to an Edomite; cf. Dalley 1984: 19–22 and the picture in Rautenstrauch – Joest – Museum 1987: 178 no. 196.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the consideration in Knauf 1989: 75 and Wartke 2004: 130.

<sup>23</sup> So Eph'al 1982: 185–188; Dalley – Goguel 1997: 174; Zayadine 1999: 88; Crowell 2007: 78–80, 83–85; Hausleiter 2010: 220; Weippert 2010: 434.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Lambert 1972: 60–62; Dandamayev 1998–2001: 10; Beaulieu 1989: 183–185; Weippert 2010: 435.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Röllig 1964a: 246–252; Beaulieu 1989: 178–183; Müller – al Said 2002: 115f; Hausleiter 2010: 220f.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Röllig 1964a: 252; Bawdens – Edens – Miller 1980: 72; Beaulieu 1989: 178; d'Agostino 1994: 97–108; Schaudig 2001: 19.

<sup>27</sup> Beaulieu 1989: 154–160, 185–203.

Mesopotamia (Harran-Stele, Verse Account of Nabonidus, Babylonian Chronicles),<sup>28</sup> in sources from Tayma and the surrounding region,<sup>29</sup> as well as in an Aramaic text from Qumran (Prayer of Nabonidus).<sup>30</sup> Added to these textual mentions is the upper part of a stele from Tayma showing Nabonidus before Sin, Šamaš, and Ištar, its inscription almost illegible,<sup>31</sup> and an inscribed plinth of Nabonidus.<sup>32</sup> In 2009, the fragment of a cuneiform inscription was found with a mention of Nabonidus.<sup>33</sup> As yet, no architectural remains from the time of Nabonidus have been found at Tayma.<sup>34</sup> An iconographic remain of Nabonidus' stay in Tayma is a rock drawing of a horseman in Neo-Assyrian style.<sup>35</sup>

### 3. *Aramaic Inscriptions from Tayma and Vicinity*

It remains unanswered at what point the Aramaic language and script were introduced to Tayma. Considered possible, it could have been during Nabonidus' time,<sup>36</sup> but all known Aramaic inscriptions from that region date to the end of the 5th century B.C. and are thus not directly connected to Nabonidus' stay in Tayma.<sup>37</sup> For more precise information we must await the results of ongoing archaeological excavations at Tayma and the possible epigraphic finds that they may uncover.

The epigraphic exploration of Tayma is closely connected to the expeditions Charles Huber and Julius Euting undertook to Arabia in 1884 and 1885. During their stay in Tayma they rediscovered the so-called "Tayma Stone," which Huber had already found in 1880. At the time of its rediscovery, the large stele with its important Aramaic inscription (CIS II 113 = KAI 228) was used as spolia in a local building. Today it

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Röllig 1964a; Lambert 1972: 53–60; Grayson 1975 = 2000: 104–111; Eph'al 1982: 179–182; Beaulieu 1989: 149–174; d'Agostino 1994: 53–59; Crowell 2007: 78–80; Schaudig 2001: 335–449, 563–578; Eichmann – Schaudig – Hausleiter 2006; Weippert 2010: 440–449 nos. 268–270.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Eph'al 1982: 182–185; Beaulieu 1989: 174–178; Hayajneh 2001; Müller – al Said 2001; iid. 2002; Livingstone 2005; al-Said 2009; Weippert 2010: 435.

<sup>30</sup> Regarding 4QOrNab, edited by Collins 1996, see below, section 5.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Eichmann – Schaudig – Hausleiter 2006; Hausleiter 2010: 233; Hausleiter – Schaudig 2010a.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Hausleiter – Schaudig 2010b.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (ed.) 2010: 277f with fig. 13.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Hausleiter 2010: 233.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Jacobs – Macdonald 2009.

<sup>36</sup> E.g., Altheim – Stiehl 1973: 248.

<sup>37</sup> So Lemaire 1995c: 70f and id. 2006a: 182f.

is on exhibition at the Louvre (AO 1505), together with smaller Aramaic inscriptions<sup>38</sup> found by Huber and Euting.

As of 2010, there have been several different compilations of the Tayma Aramaic inscriptions, notably by R. Degen,<sup>39</sup> A. Livingstone,<sup>40</sup> K. Beyer, and A. Livingstone,<sup>41</sup> A. Lemaire,<sup>42</sup> as well as F. Briquel-Chatonnet and Chr. Robin.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4. *Religion*

Based on epigraphic and archaeological finds, three areas can be distinguished in the religion practiced at Tayma. They are the pantheon, temples and cultic activity, and burial practices.

##### 4.1 *Aramaean Deities in Tayma*

Several Aramaean deities have been recognized at Tayma. Their identification is sometimes controversial since further context, especially mythological background information, is lacking.

Ṣalm, Śengala', and Ašima' appear as the principal deities in inscriptions and iconography at Tayma. The interpretation that these three gods are in fact the gods in question, results, for lack of other more definite sources, from the etymology of their names and is, therefore, uncertain in some cases. The following points may illuminate the state of discussion regarding their identification.

Ṣalm definitively occupies the highest position among the Aramaean deities at Tayma. At what point his cult was introduced is much debated among researchers. Possibilities range from the 8th century B.C.<sup>44</sup> and later dates.<sup>45</sup> In comparison with the divine names Śengala' and Ašima' it is apparent that the name Ṣalm is written without a determinative. Since this deity is also connected with several place names in the region of the Arabian Peninsula (see below) it becomes evident that he does not originate with the Aramaean culture but belongs to northern Arabia.

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Briquel-Chatonnet – Robin 1997: 261 with bibliography, also add Euting 1914: 157–161.

<sup>39</sup> Degen 1974.

<sup>40</sup> Livingstone, in: Livingstone – Spaie – Ibrahim – Kamal – Taimani 1983: 104–111 and id. 2005.

<sup>41</sup> Beyer – Livingstone 1987.

<sup>42</sup> Lemaire 1995c.

<sup>43</sup> Briquel-Chatonnet – Robin 1997.

<sup>44</sup> E.g., Maraqtan 1996: 20.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. van den Branden 1949: 108 who pleads in favor of the 6th or 5th century B.C.

In research, *Ṣalm* has received several interpretations. While the etymological meaning (“picture”) of the divine name is clear, the inscriptions remain vague as to whose picture is referred to by the divine name. Thus, suggestions range from the sun-god,<sup>46</sup> the moon-god,<sup>47</sup> the morning star,<sup>48</sup> or even a deified King Nabonidus.<sup>49</sup> It is not only because of iconographical considerations (see below) that the interpretation of the god *Ṣalm* as sun-god is most plausible.

Inscriptions offer different cultic manifestations of *Ṣalm*, *ṣlm zy rb*, *ṣlm zy hgm*, and *ṣlm zy mḥrm*.<sup>50</sup> In all of these cases, a place name is appended to the divine name and signifies a major temple of *Ṣalm*. Therefore, these names should be understood as *Ṣalm of Rb*, *Ṣalm of Hgm*, and *Ṣalm of Mḥrm*. In the last two cases the place names might even be known.<sup>51</sup>

Another source for the religion of Tayma worth mentioning is personal names with a theophoric element *Ṣalm* from Tayma and its vicinity as well as the analyses conducted with this corpus.<sup>52</sup>

The great Aramaic inscription (CIS II 113 = KAI 228) reports on the introduction of the god *Ṣalm* of Hgm to Tayma:<sup>53</sup>

1. (On the ...) in the 22nd year of ... (the king)
2. *Ṣalm* [of Mḥrm and Ṣengala’
3. and Aš]ima’, the gods of Tayma (gave entrance into Tayma) to *Ṣalm*
4. [of Hgm. Therefore] they have appointed him this day (a place) in Tayma
5. ... which
- 6.–7. *Missing*
8. ... Therefore ... [this monument],

<sup>46</sup> Hehn 1913: 130; id. 1915: 40; Gibson 1975: 150; Dalley 1985; ead. 1986; Beyer – Livingstone 1987: 287f; Beaulieu 1989: 177; Maraqtan 1996: 19, 27. According to Lemaire 1995c: 69 it is an “interprétation... incertaine.”

<sup>47</sup> Teixidor 1977: 74f; Aggoula 1985b: 71f; Knauf <sup>2</sup>1989: 79; Novák 2001: 448–451; id. 2005a: 256.

<sup>48</sup> Cross 1986: 392f.

<sup>49</sup> On the discussion, cf. Winnett – Reed 1970: 92f; Harding 1971: 451; Beaulieu 1989: 176f; Knauf <sup>2</sup>1989: 78f; Maraqtan 1996: 19; Hayajneh 2009: 65.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. the instances in Maraqtan 1996: 20.

<sup>51</sup> For Mḥrm a town located 300 km to the east of Tayma is suggested, for Hgm a town in Yemen; cf. Gibson 1975: 150 and Maraqtan 1996: 20.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. the overview in Winnett – Reed 1970: 90 n. 19; Harding 1971: 358, 374f; Dalley 1986: 96f; Maraqtan 1996: 19–21.

<sup>53</sup> Translation after Gibson 1975: 150; on the translation, cf. also Euting 1914: 160; Donner – Röllig <sup>3</sup>1973: 278–280; Teixidor 1977: 71f; Aggoula 1985b: 61–65; Beaulieu 1989: 176–178; Briquel-Chatonnet – Robin 1997: 261–263.

9. which *Ṣlmšzb*, son of *Pṭsry*, [has set] up
10. [in the temple of *Ṣ*]alm of Hgm. Therefore the gods
11. of Tayma have dealt [gene]rously with *Ṣlmšzb*, son of *Pṭsry*,
12. and with his seed, in the temple of *Ṣalm* of Hgm. If any man
13. harms this monument, let the gods of Tayma
14. remove him and his seed and his posterity from
15. Tayma. This is the grant which
16. *Ṣalm* of *Mḥrm* and *Ṣngala'* and *Ašima'*,
17. the gods of Tayma, shall [give] to *Ṣalm* of Hgm, namely
18. from the (temple) estates 16 palms and from the property
19. of the king 5 palms, making
20. 21 palms in all, year by year. Neither gods nor men
21. shall ej[ect] *Ṣlmšzb*, son of *Pṭsry*,
22. from this temple, or his se[ed o]f his posterity,
23. priests in this [te]mple for ev[er].

According to the inscription the god *Ṣalm* of Hgm is brought to Tayma with the approval of the old local deities *Ṣalm* of *Mḥrm*, *Ṣngala'*, and *Ašima'*, and a new cult is established for him there. In other Tayma inscriptions both rejection and approval of the god *Ṣalm* are visible. The latter is exemplified by the use of *šlm* as a theophoric element in personal names.<sup>54</sup> The priest *Ṣlmšzb* is given twenty-one palms for his own livelihood and the assurance that he and his descendants will forever remain priests in this temple.

*Ṣlmšzb* is depicted on the narrow left side of the stele in an *orante* posture in front of a bucranium on an altar. Beneath the image is the inscription *šlmšzb kmr'* ("*Ṣlmzšb*, priest").

The god *Ṣngala'* was also interpreted differently by researchers. Due to differing etymologies, he is identified either as the great moon-god,<sup>55</sup> the moon-god of the palace,<sup>56</sup> the queen,<sup>57</sup> the Esangil,<sup>58</sup> or as a combination of the gods Sin and Ningal.<sup>59</sup> Fundamentally, though, he is the moon-god, as the iconography (see below) also documents.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Roschinski 1981: 51; Maraqtén 1996: 21f; Hayajneh 2009.

<sup>55</sup> Maraqtén 1996: 27 and Lemaire 1995c: 69 n. 52.

<sup>56</sup> Lipiński 1975a: 98f and Novák 2001: 449.

<sup>57</sup> Caquot 1951–1952: 58.

<sup>58</sup> Tallquist 1905: 60, 180 and Knauf <sup>2</sup>1989: 151.

<sup>59</sup> Leemhuis 1982: 54 n. 34.

Ašima' is already documented in Syria from the 8th century onward. According to the Old Testament, Ašima' is the god of the Aramaean population that was deported from Hamath to Samerina (2 Kgs 17: 30). This god is best documented in the Judeo-Aramaean documents from Elephantine in Upper Egypt. Ašima' occurs there in comparatively close connection with the god Yahu and also appears as Ašim-Bethel.<sup>60</sup> In the Tayma context, he is identified with Venus.<sup>61</sup>

There are several possibilities on how Ašima', a god originally from Hamath, made his way to Tayma. For one, trade or cultural contacts between the two cities could have facilitated the exchange.<sup>62</sup> It is also possible that the deportation of Arab tribes to Samaria by Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) was responsible.<sup>63</sup> One also cannot rule out the possibility that, since direct contact was maintained with Egypt,<sup>64</sup> Ašima' was passed to Tayma via Aramaeans living in Egypt.

The mention of deities in the Aramaic inscriptions gives a glimpse into the structure of the Aramaean pantheon at Tayma. The sequence of Šalm, Šengala', and Ašima' remains constant. Two conclusions may be drawn from this. First, Šalm is the principal god of the Tayma pantheon and based on later Thamudic inscriptions he is the "Schutzherr und Repräsentant der Stadtoase."<sup>65</sup> Second, Šengala' and Ašima' are not his partners. They are placed lower in the divine hierarchy of Tayma. This is substantiated by the inscription reporting on the construction of thrones for Šengala' and Ašima' before Šalm.<sup>66</sup> It is also evident that these three gods do not constitute the entire pantheon of Tayma.

The iconographic representation shows Šalm as sun-god. This motif is found on the narrow left side of the Tayma Stone, where above the depiction of a priest, a king is shown standing beneath a winged solar disk.<sup>67</sup> Below them is the above-mentioned cultic scene with a bucranium on

<sup>60</sup> On Ašima' cf. van der Toorn 1992: 86; Cogan <sup>2</sup>1999b; Niehr 2003: 191–195; Merlo 2009.

<sup>61</sup> Beyer – Livingstone 1987: 287 and Maraqtan 1996: 27.

<sup>62</sup> Cogan <sup>2</sup>1999b: 105. Regarding the discussion on northern Arabian personal names attested at Hamath, cf. Otzen 1990: 280f, 286f.

<sup>63</sup> The textual references from the Nimrud Prism DE IV, lines 37–49, is found in Gadd 1954: 179f; those from the cylinder inscription from Chorsabad, line 20, and the annals, lines 120–123, in Fuchs 1994: 34, 290, resp. 110, 320; cf. also Aggoula 1985b: 70; Cross 1986: 393; Lemaire 1995c: 70; Retsö 2003: 147–150; Weippert 2010: 301f no. 151 and 305f no. 158.

<sup>64</sup> See note 13, above.

<sup>65</sup> Roschinski 1981: 51.

<sup>66</sup> See below, section 4.2.

<sup>67</sup> Also Rashid 1974: 158f and Novák 2001: 449.



an altar. The bucranium, in this instance, represents the newly inducted god *Ṣalm* of Hgm.

The close connection between winged sun disk and bucranium becomes clear when one recalls the uninscribed pedestal found at the so-called Qaṣr al-Ḥamra near Tayma in 1979. It dates to the 5th or the 4th century B.C. and shows the god *Ṣalm* as a bull with a sun disk between his horns.<sup>68</sup>

As an explanation of the representation, it is convenient to refer to Egyptian influence and interpret the bull as an Apis bull. In favor of this interpretation, one can point to the Eye of Horus on the stele, and Pṭsry, the Egyptian name of *Ṣlmšzb*'s father.<sup>69</sup> This interpretation is undermined by several arguments. On the one hand, the solar disk above the supposed Apis bull is lacking, and on the other hand, the Uraeus snake and the Apis theology itself played no part in Tayma. Furthermore, the composition of the stele is based on Syro-Mesopotamian principles in which an Apis bull would simply not fit.<sup>70</sup> A Syrian interpretation of the iconography would fit well, though, as it also has the added advantage of the Syrian provenance of the Tayma gods.

This bull is a symbolic representation of the Syrian storm-god,<sup>71</sup> which in this case has been transformed into a solar deity. This makes the connection between *Ṣalm* as winged sun in the sky and *Ṣalm* as principal deity in the guise of the storm-god. Compare to the solar conversion of the storm-god's bull the representation of the storm-god as a lunar deity on a stele from Betsaida and other locations.<sup>72</sup> The bull from Tayma does not represent, as is frequently assumed, the moon-god.<sup>73</sup>

Furthermore, the god *Ṣengala*' is depicted as the moon-god and *Ašima*' as an eight-pointed star on the pedestal from Tayma. Consequently, the Tayma triad covers the entire course of the day, the sun-god for daytime, Venus for the evening and morning, and the moon for night time.

The pre-eminence of the god *Ṣalm* is also visible in the epigraphic and iconographic record on the stele from Qaṣr al-Ḥamra (see section 4.2). It depicts in its upper register the sun-god and in the one below, the moon, and Venus as a star. The pictorial representations agree well with the

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Dalley 1986: 87 fig. 2; Beaulieu 1989: 175f; Hausleiter – Schaudig 2010c.

<sup>69</sup> Dalley 1986: 86–88.

<sup>70</sup> Rashid 1974: 155–160 and Novák 2001: 450.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Vanel 1965: 31–41, 58–63 and Ornan 2001.

<sup>72</sup> See Niehr 2010a: 306f.

<sup>73</sup> For example Winnett – Reed 1970: 93, 100–104; Bawden – Edens – Miller 1980: 83f; Novák 2001: 448–451.

inscription, which reports that the donor of the stele had erected thrones for Ašima' and Šengala' before Šalm.<sup>74</sup>

#### 4.2 *Temples and Cults*

In excavation area E in the center of Tayma archaeologists uncovered a large building identified as a temple.<sup>75</sup> In 2004, a stele was found next to it, which names King Nabonidus and shows him worshipping the celestial gods Šamaš, Sin, and Ištar.<sup>76</sup>

Two kilometers away, in Qašr al-Ḥamra,<sup>77</sup> remains of another sanctuary were found in 1979. Included were offering tables, ash residue, and remains of bones, the aforementioned cultic pedestal, and a stele with a relief and with an inscription of ten lines.<sup>78</sup>

According to this inscription a throne (*mytb*) is built for the gods Šengala' and Ašima' before the god Šalm of Rb:

1. [Stele which in the temple] of Tayma
2. set up Pšgw šhdw, son of
3. [M]alky, for life. He made an offering in the temple
4. to Šalm of Rb; and as to his pedestal, thus
5. he set up this throne in front of
6. Šalm of Rb as the pedestal of Šengala'
7. and Ašima', the gods of Tayma
8. for the life of the soul of Pšgw
9. šhdw and his seed. May the lord [.]
10. [.] his soul. Of [...] <sup>79</sup>

In the great inscription (CIS II 113 = KAI 228) the cult of the god Šalm of Hgm was brought to Tayma with the approval of the god Šalm of Mḥrb. One further god is mentioned, the god Šalm of Rb.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Kottsieper 2001: 187.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Hausleiter 2010: 227 fig 4; 233.

<sup>76</sup> See note 31.

<sup>77</sup> On the archaeology of Qašr-al Ḥamra, cf. Bawden – Edens – Miller 1980: 79, 82–85; Abu Duruk – Murad 1985; Abu Duruk 1986; Hausleiter 2010: 233f with fig. 10.

<sup>78</sup> On the inscription and its translations, cf. Livingstone in: Livingstone – Spaie – Ibrahim – Kamal – Taimani 1983: 108–111; Aggoula 1985b: 66–68; Cross 1986: 388f; Beyer – Livingstone 1987: 286–288; MacDonald 1995: 1361; Kottsieper 2001: 187–189; Hausleiter – Schaudig 2010d.

<sup>79</sup> Text and translation according to Livingstone in: Livingstone – Spaie – Ibrahim – Kamal – Taimani 1983: 109.

The inscription CIS II 114 (= KAI 229) also reports on the donation of a *mytb* to Šalm.<sup>80</sup> A *mytb* is a throne or cultic pedestal for the deposition of a betyl. Mentions of *mytb* donations are attested especially in the Nabataean religion.<sup>81</sup>

#### 4.3 *Burial and Afterlife*

This chapter will not discuss the tombs and necropoleis of Tayma<sup>82</sup> but will focus on the Aramaic inscriptions on the funerary monuments. These inscriptions reveal the use of the Aramaic term *npš* in the sense of “spirit of the dead.” All twelve inscriptions on the monuments, which were also accompanied by a schematic rendering of a face, follow the same model: *npš* of PN, son/daughter of PN and sometimes a further filiation.<sup>83</sup> This combination of a *npš*-stele and schematic face is typical for Tayma and unique in this regard. Looking for the background on this particular combination one finds the stele of Kuttamuwa from Samʿal dating to the second half of the 8th century B.C.<sup>84</sup> This stele shows the deceased at his funeral banquet and for the first time in West Semitic epigraphy the designation of the stele as *npš* occurs.<sup>85</sup>

One specimen of the funerary monuments from Tayma shows on its upper register a face and on its lower a funeral banquet.<sup>86</sup>

Furthermore, an export of these types of funerary monuments to south Arabia can be established. There the heads of the deceased, modeled in alabaster, were set into the funerary stelae on which their names were recorded. Most of these stelae date to between the 3rd century B.C. and the 1st century A.D.<sup>87</sup>

However, evidence on the use of *npš* in the sense of “funerary monument” cannot be found in the inscription CIS II 115 (= KAI 230) from Tayma.<sup>88</sup> It is rather the last line of an originally much longer inscription,

<sup>80</sup> Inscription found in Livingstone in: Livingstone – Spaie – Ibrahim – Kamal – Taimani 1983: III.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Healey 2001: 158f.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Hausleiter 2010: 230–233.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Kühn 2005: 137f.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. section 3.6 in H. Niehr's article on religion in this volume.

<sup>85</sup> On the important attestations of *npš* in Nabataean epigraphy, cf. Kühn 2005: 101–282.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Knauf 21989: XII fig. 6.

<sup>87</sup> For an archaeological overview, cf. Antonini 2001: 127–173 and on the concept, cf. Kühn 2005: 157–162.

<sup>88</sup> Contra, e.g., CIS II 115; Donner – Röllig 31973: 281; Briquel-Chatonnet – Robin 1997: 264 no. 203.

which must be completed by: [...*lhyy*] *npš 'ln brt šb[n]* (“[for the life] of the spirit of ‘ln, daughter of Šb[n]”).<sup>89</sup>

The installation site of these *npš*-stelae must be on top of the tombs at Tayma, even though only two stelae were found in situ by regular archaeological excavations.<sup>90</sup>

### 5. *Perspectives*

A papyrus was found in Cave 4 at Qumran, which, paleographically, dates to the second quarter or the middle of the 1st century B.C. The surviving four fragments of the Aramaic text contain about 13 lines of the so-called “Prayer of Nabonidus” (4QOrNab). The text recounts that when Nabonidus suffered from boils for seven years while in Teman (the southern lands) and all other healing methods failed, an exiled Judaeen finally cured him.<sup>91</sup> The mention of ‘Teman’ is based either on an error, on an identification with Teman from the Old Testament,<sup>92</sup> or possibly an extension of the place name ‘Tayma’.<sup>93</sup>

The Prayer of Nabonidus also affects the interpretation of the Old Testament. After the publication of 4QOrNab, there was no denying the previously stated opinions that the textual passage about the fate of King Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel (Dan 3: 31–4: 34) was based on King Nabonidus and his extended stay at Tayma.<sup>94</sup>

The “boils” that Nabonidus suffered from may have been an affliction such as leprosy. For the duration of such an illness, a king would have been unable to perform cultic activities or even, temporarily at least, to rule.<sup>95</sup> An example is the narrative of King Azariah of Judah, who became afflicted with leprosy and was required to live in a separate house until his death. During that time his son Jotham took over state affairs (2 Kgs 15: 1–5). The discrepancy between the seven-year stay of Nabonidus at

<sup>89</sup> Livingstone in: Livingstone – Spaie – Ibrahim – Kamal – Taimani 1983: 105 and Kühn 2005: 138 n. 167.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Hausleiter 2010: 256.

<sup>91</sup> See the text in Meyer 1962; Röllig 1964b; Collins 1996; Kratz 2011: 254–260. On the relevance of this text on the interpretation of the Book of Daniel, cf. Meyer 1962: 34–94; Dommershausen 1964; Collins 1996: 85–87; Koch 2005: 408–415; Lemaire 2010a: 126–129; Kratz 2011: 262–266.

<sup>92</sup> Milik 1956: 410 n. 2.

<sup>93</sup> Meyer 1962: 21.

<sup>94</sup> For the research history, cf. Dommershausen 1964; Müller – al Said 2002: 117–119, and on the text from Daniel, cf. Koch 2005: 376–415.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Röllig 1964b: 30 and Knauf <sup>2</sup>1989: 75.

Teman in contrast to his historically proven ten-year stay in Tayma has been explained by the seven-year-long construction period of the Temple at Jerusalem under Solomon (1 Kgs 6: 37–38), after which Nabonidus came to worship the one true God.<sup>96</sup> In general, one could also point to the importance of the heptad as the number of completion<sup>97</sup> or to a connection with the seven stages of the destruction of the world tree in Dan 3: 22–23.<sup>98</sup> The transfer of the Nabonidus material to Palestine has probably been made via the Jewish diaspora in Babylonia.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. Lipiński 2006: 223.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Dommershausen 1964: 72f; Röllig 1964b: 29; Beaulieu 1989: 153; Lemaire 2010a: 128.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Meyer 1962: 45–48.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Lemaire 2010a: 129, 134–138.

## CHAPTER TEN

### ARAMAEAN HERITAGE

John F. Healey

There is a well-known series of books dedicated to the exploration of the impact various historic cultures had upon what came after, whose titles include *The Legacy of Greece* and *The Legacy of Rome*. Based on the same concept is *The Legacy of Mesopotamia*, edited by Stephanie Dalley, an excellent collection of papers on the impact of Mesopotamian civilization on surrounding cultures.<sup>1</sup> We might think that it would be impossible to devote a book of this kind to the ancient Aramaeans, partly because there is no period of Aramaean empire or cultural dominance to which we could refer back, partly because it is much more difficult to identify the legacy of the ancient, “pagan” Aramaeans, as opposed to that of the Christian Aramaeans. The latter retain an Aramaean identity, which has been reinvigorated in modern times as a result of political circumstances. These modern Aramaeans are culturally Christians, with an identity analogous to that of Jewish and Mandaean Aramaic-speakers.

In fact, the Aramaeans lived in a close symbiotic relationship with other distinct peoples of the Ancient Near East. In Mesopotamia and adjacent areas, the Aramaeans were, throughout most of their history, under the spell of cuneiform culture. Some of the earliest Aramaic texts are bilinguals in Aramaic and the Assyrian dialect of Akkadian.<sup>2</sup> Aramaean religious centers like Harran became the focus of attention to Mesopotamian deities,<sup>3</sup> and Aramaic traditional legal formulae as revealed in practical documents were not entirely separable from the Mesopotamian legal tradition.<sup>4</sup> In the West, Aramaean states were in close contact with Israel

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<sup>1</sup> Dalley 1998a.

<sup>2</sup> See the Tell Fekherye inscription, Abou-Assaf – Bordreuil – Millard 1982.

<sup>3</sup> In the Harran case, the moon-god Sin; Green 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Muffs 1969; Cussini 1992; Fales 2000; Gropp et al. 2001: 3–32; Lipiński 2000a: 557–597; id. 2010; Healey 2005a; id. 2005b; Lemaire 2010b.

and Phoenicia,<sup>5</sup> the Phoenician god Ba'alšamem being accepted into Aramaean tradition,<sup>6</sup> and with northern Arabia.<sup>7</sup>

It is thus not easy to identify distinct elements of the Aramaean heritage in later times. To take two examples, the earliest Syriac legal documents contain legal formulae that could be regarded as Aramaean, but that might alternatively be interpreted as Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian.<sup>8</sup> Again, at Palmyra the main temple is dedicated to Bel, a version of Babylonian Marduk<sup>9</sup>: should we regard him as part of the Aramaean heritage or part of the legacy of Mesopotamia?

The Aramaic script and Aramaic language are indisputably Aramaean artifacts. These were the main legacies to later ages. However, this inheritance is not a sure guide to Aramaean cultural influence. Communities with a shared language tradition may be very different from each other historically and culturally. The Aramaic script and language were adopted by peoples like the Jews and the Nabataeans in a process of Aramaicization in the last centuries B.C., though neither had much in common with the Aramaeans of earlier times: the Jews were eager to keep Aramaean religious influence at arm's length,<sup>10</sup> while the Nabataeans owed more culturally to Arabia than to Syria-Palestine.<sup>11</sup> Although the evidence is scanty, it appears that even Phoenicia, from which the Aramaeans originally borrowed the alphabet around 1000 B.C., was later colonized by Aramaic,<sup>12</sup> with Aramaic being used, at least for official purposes, from an early date: the Adon papyrus of 604/3 B.C. attests to this.<sup>13</sup> Traces of Aramaic impact are still to be found in the Anti-Lebanon range at Ma'lula and nearby villages north of Damascus.<sup>14</sup>

Arguably the script that the Aramaeans developed is one of their greatest gifts to posterity. While it was probably not the Aramaic form of the alphabet that, through transmission to the Aegean, gave birth to the western alphabetic tradition, the impact of Aramaic writing on

<sup>5</sup> Millard 1973.

<sup>6</sup> Niehr 2003: 89–184.

<sup>7</sup> Notably Tayma; see Abu Duruk 1986, but for an excellent recent summary, see Hausleiter 2010; cf. on Tayma also H. Niehr's chapter on northern Arabia in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> Healey 2005a.

<sup>9</sup> Teixidor 1979: 1–11 and Kaizer 2002: 67–79.

<sup>10</sup> Millard 1973: 148f; see 2 Kgs 16: 10–13 for Ahaz's introduction of an Aramaean cult to Jerusalem.

<sup>11</sup> Healey 1989 and id. 2001: 2–12.

<sup>12</sup> Segert 1965: 216.

<sup>13</sup> Gibson 1975: 110–116 no. 21 and Lipiński 1992b.

<sup>14</sup> Arnold 2000: 347–357.

the scripts of the Middle East and India is central. Both the standard Hebrew script and the Arabic script owe their direct origins to the earlier Aramaic scripts of the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid periods.<sup>15</sup>

The other cultural traces of the earlier Aramaeans are also widespread and varied. The reasons for this distribution and variety are political. Western Asia was united under the Achaemenid Persians and Aramaic was chosen as the official language of the imperial possessions. This led to the spread of Aramaic beyond the area it already inhabited: in the west to Elephantine and the Bosphorus, in the east to Northern India.<sup>16</sup> At these extremes, Aramaic never became the vernacular, functioning rather as the high language (H) in diglossic situations. From this “high language” role emerged what is called Standard Literary Aramaic,<sup>17</sup> a literary koiné sporadically evidenced in Elephantine (the Aḥiqar framework) and in the original form of the Biblical Aramaic texts (within Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah), though the latter have undergone later revisions, including vocalization. This Standard Literary Aramaic also had its impact on the Dead Sea Scrolls and even later Targumic Aramaic. The Aḥiqar text is, incidentally, the unique example of a literary work current in earlier Aramaic which left a legacy in the form of impact on later generations: it survives in modified forms in Syriac and many other languages.<sup>18</sup>

Under the Seleucids Aramaic lost prestige, slipping into second position as the low language (L) in Greek-Aramaic diglossia. The domination of Greek in the early Seleucid era results in there being precious little evidence of the continued use of Aramaic<sup>19</sup> until it began to re-emerge as the Seleucids lost their grip. Edessa, a Seleucid foundation, is the clearest example: a local dynasty took power shortly after 150 B.C. and by the 1st century A.D. there appear Aramaic inscriptions in the local dialect of Aramaic, known in later (Christian) contexts as Syriac.<sup>20</sup> Palmyrene and Hatran history are obscure in the Seleucid and early Roman periods, but Aramaic is visibly flourishing there in the early centuries A.D.<sup>21</sup>

Petra had resisted Seleucid control, but Aramaic was sufficiently strong in its region for its élite to turn to it for public purposes in the last

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<sup>15</sup> Naveh 1982.

<sup>16</sup> For a brief though concentrated survey, see Beyer 1984: 23–76 and id. 1986.

<sup>17</sup> Greenfield 1974.

<sup>18</sup> Lindenberger 1983; Contini – Grottanelli 2005; Niehr 2007.

<sup>19</sup> An exception is the Samaria papyri: Gropp et al. 2001 and Dušek 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Drijvers – Healey 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Hillers – Cussini 1996; Beyer 1998; Healey 2009: 43–49 and nos. 28–45 and 64–80.



century B.C. and the 1st century A.D.<sup>22</sup> Where evidence survives (Edessa and Petra) it is clear that the Aramaic legal tradition, represented earlier by the Elephantine and Samaria papyri, had continued to flourish.<sup>23</sup>

In Edessa and in Palestine (Jerusalem until 70 A.D. and then in Galilee, but also in the eastern Jewish diaspora) Aramaic flourished, developing new uses in religious literature. Thus Aramaic became both a Christian and a Jewish language, despite having its roots in the pagan world of the Ancient Near East.<sup>24</sup>

In other aspects of culture, each of the later communities that used Aramaic had its own distinctive features. There was no uniform inheritance of cultural and religious values shared by all. Aramaic had become a lingua franca for culture as well as commerce, which means that it was adopted and used by peoples and societies that were very different from each other. Of course some details were inherited from earlier times and to some extent these can also be identified as part of the Aramaean heritage.

In considering the impact of the earlier Aramaeans on the later Middle East, it is better, rather than treating the evidence purely geographically, to distinguish between (1) regions where Aramaic had always been and remained the main language; (2) areas where Aramaic had been adopted in a diglossic situation instead of the other available language; and (3) areas where another language replaced Aramaic, at least for formal purposes, though Aramaean cultural traditions were maintained. This can be imagined as a continuum with purely Aramaic/Aramaean regions at one end of the continuum and areas where Greek was preferred at the other:<sup>25</sup> (1) Aramaic predominant > (2) Aramaic preferred > (3) Greek predominant.

#### 1. EDESSA, HATRA, PALMYRA

So far as we can tell, the Edessa region was Aramaic-speaking from the earliest times. The Seleucid foundation or refoundation of the city itself

<sup>22</sup> Healey 1993; id. 2009: 38–40 and nos. 1–11.

<sup>23</sup> Healey 2005a.

<sup>24</sup> The respective roles of local languages (especially forms of Aramaic) and Greek in the Roman Near East have been explored in a long series of articles by Fergus Millar and were discussed in detail in his British Academy Schweich Lectures of 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Not every case falls neatly into one or other category; see Petra and the Hauran, below.

must have introduced Greek as the language of the élite,<sup>26</sup> but the city reverted to the use of the local dialect of Aramaic (conventionally called “Syriac”) in the public sphere when it gained its independence in the mid-2nd century B.C., though the linguistic situation is not simple, since there were several Aramaic dialects in the immediate region.<sup>27</sup> The prominence of Syriac continued even when the Romans took full control of the area in the early 3rd century A.D.

It is not easy to trace purely Aramaean elements in Edessan culture in either the pre-Christian or Christian periods. In religion what is most striking about the surviving evidence is the prominence of Mesopotamian deities such as Nabu, Bel-Marduk, Nergal, and Šamaš.<sup>28</sup> At nearby Sumatar, which seems to have belonged to the Edessa sphere, the moon-god Sin is to the fore, as he is also in the ancient city of Harran to the west, along with Nikkal.<sup>29</sup> In fact the whole region had been heavily influenced by Mesopotamian culture in earlier times, with the last Assyrian king taking up residence at Harran and Nabonidus having family connections with its temple.

There are, however, some local features to be noted. Ba‘alšamayin is of Phoenician origin, but his cult spread widely and he was assimilated by the Aramaic-speakers to their deity Hadad<sup>30</sup> to such an extent that from ca. 800 B.C. his cult came to be typical of the Aramaeans.<sup>31</sup> Hadad had a more local role, while Ba‘alšamayin became a transregional weather god. He and Atargatis (Tar‘atha) figure at Edessa at least in personal names.<sup>32</sup> They may have been popular among the lower echelons of society. Ba‘alšamayin may also appear under the title *mrlh’*, “lord of the gods,” a title used of Sin at Sumatar<sup>33</sup> and this popular level of religion may be reflected later in the Syriac translation of the New Testament, where the name of Zeus is rendered as *mārē ’alāhē* (Acts 14: 12–13).

There is also evidence of the Aramaean legal tradition surviving into the late pre-Christian period (240s A.D.), in the form of three legal texts drawn up in Syriac and using traditional legal formularies that are characteristic of Aramaic legal documents from earlier times (such as those from

<sup>26</sup> Beyer 1984: 46 and id. 1986: 31.

<sup>27</sup> Healey 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Drijvers 1980.

<sup>29</sup> Green 1992.

<sup>30</sup> Greenfield 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Niehr 2003: 89–184.

<sup>32</sup> Niehr 2003: 181 (pagan Edessa), 315–317 (in the Christian era).

<sup>33</sup> Drijvers – Healey 1999: As20, Cm 11, discussion p. 80.

the Cave of Letters and the Samaria papyri).<sup>34</sup> There is, however, a problem of definition here: much of this Aramaic legal tradition is very similar to and influenced by cuneiform law. No doubt it had been Aramaized, but it is not a purely Aramaean artifact.

The earliest known Syriac literature also displays the influence of Greco-Roman culture. Bardaiṣan's dialogue on the Laws of Countries, both in its form and in its philosophical terminology, shows that he presided over a Hellenic-style school at the court of Abgar the Great, in which the language was Syriac (probably), but what was going on was in spirit Greek,<sup>35</sup> and Greek influence became stronger through Christianization.

We know even less of Hatra to the east. Again, Ba'alšamayin's cult cohabits with the predominant cult of Mesopotamian Šamaš,<sup>36</sup> and a temple was dedicated to him,<sup>37</sup> linked with that of Atargatis, as also of Nanaya-Ištar and Nabu.<sup>38</sup> There is undoubted Iranian influence in Hatra: it owed more to the Parthians than to the West (though note some elements of Hellenistic architecture probably derived from the Parthians) and Hatran Aramaic draws on Iranian and Akkadian terminology in matters connected with administration of the kingdom and with religious architecture.<sup>39</sup> There are elements of this also in early Syriac.<sup>40</sup>

The emerging picture of mixed culture, with Mesopotamian elements and western elements cluttering the landscape to such an extent that the purely Aramaean elements are hard to identify, is confirmed by the consideration of Palmyra. The difference in this case is that Greek had a much more prominent and official role there, since Palmyra was from an indeterminate early date attached to the Roman Province of Syria (already in the 1st century A.D., if not earlier), as we see from Roman involvement in taxation arrangements, evident in the Palmyrene Tax Tariff.<sup>41</sup>

As in Edessa, the Mesopotamian gods dominate the scene. Bel appears to have taken over from the local Bol: Bel-Marduk was worshipped with other local deities in the main temple of the city, Nabu (probably) in

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<sup>34</sup> See conveniently Drijvers – Healey 1999: P1, P2, P3; Healey 2009: 252–265 nos. 62 and 63. There are some other papyri in Greek, with Syriac subscriptions and signatures.

<sup>35</sup> Drijvers 1965 and id. 1966.

<sup>36</sup> Niehr 2003: 169–179.

<sup>37</sup> Niehr 2003: 175–177.

<sup>38</sup> Vattioni 1994: 12–16 and Beyer 1998: 144–151.

<sup>39</sup> Healey 2009: 49.

<sup>40</sup> Healey 1995: 8f.

<sup>41</sup> See, conveniently, Healey 2009: 164–205 no. 37.

one of the others.<sup>42</sup> The Bel temple was dedicated to Bel in the distinctly Mesopotamian guise of Marduk, as is clear from iconography depicting elements of the Mesopotamia creation myth (*Enūma elish*).<sup>43</sup> He was worshipped alongside other deities, Yarḥibol (the local god of the Efqa spring) and ‘Aglibol, thus overshadowing these local deities. And, as in Edessa and Hatra, there was a discernible “Arab” element in the population, worshipping its own deities (such as Allat).

But Palmyra provides us with concrete evidence also of the role of Ba‘alšamayin/Hadad, with the Aramaeans forming the major element of the population of the city.<sup>44</sup> Ba‘alšamayin appears in inscriptions—associated with Duraḥlun,<sup>45</sup> apparently an alternate version of Ba‘alšamayin, perhaps of Ituraean origin in Raḥle<sup>46</sup> or of tribal importance—but is also represented by an elaborate temple complex.<sup>47</sup> Although this complex is not central to the official cult of the city in the way that the Bel temple is, as is clear from the latter’s connection to the colonnaded street (though evidently older than it), it does appear to be important.

Palmyra also provides us with an insight into traditional funerary culture. We can be confident that this tradition is local rather than imported (as so much else in Palmyrene architecture is imported from the West), because it is distinctive (using tomb-towers, though also hypogea, which are common in the Roman East), but especially because it is associated with exclusively Aramaic inscriptions: Greek appears commonly in public life (honorary inscriptions, taxation), but in matters directly related to the dead, Palmyrene Aramaic is almost always used.<sup>48</sup>

The importance given to the dead in Palmyra may appear distinctive (compare Nabataea, where there is a similar emphasis), but concern with the dead has ancient roots in Aramaean religious tradition and this may have been a factor. Particularly suggestive is the earlier evidence of a royal funerary cult at Sam’al.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Teixidor 1979 and Kaizer 2002.

<sup>43</sup> Du Mesnil du Buisson 1976, with modifications by Dirven 1997.

<sup>44</sup> Kaizer 2002: 79–88 and Niehr 2003: 103–163.

<sup>45</sup> Teixidor 1979: 21; Kaizer 2002: 84; Niehr 2003: 107–113.

<sup>46</sup> Niehr 2003: 221f, 225f. We may note the possible Aramaean origins of the Ituraeans; see recently Myers 2010: 136–140 and cf. Niehr on Phoenicia in this volume.

<sup>47</sup> For the inscriptions, see Dunant 1971.

<sup>48</sup> See examples in Healey 2009: 214–222 nos. 43–45; see Taylor 2002: 319, noting that this might not apply to legal texts related to tombs.

<sup>49</sup> Greenfield 1973a; Niehr 1994b; id. 2001; id. 2006: 112–119; Lipiński 2000a: 638f.

## 2. MESOPOTAMIA, JUDAEA, NABATAEA

To the east, in Mesopotamia proper, we have a situation in which Aramaization had been an ongoing process for centuries in a region where Akkadian had originally dominated.<sup>50</sup> By the last centuries B.C., the use of Akkadian was dying and dialects of Aramaic were coming to the fore, though Mesopotamian culture continued to flourish. The great temples at Babylon and Ashur remained important centers, but from Ashur we have evidence of the widespread use of Aramaic,<sup>51</sup> and this was probably the situation also in Babylonia and even further south. The Arabian Gulf itself was being Aramaized linguistically, while retaining local and Mesopotamian religious traits: the Šamaš inscription in Aramaic from ed-Dūr (UAE) provides a good example.<sup>52</sup> It is difficult to estimate how widespread Aramaic was in the Gulf when the Christian missionaries from the Church of the East in Seleukia-Ctesiphon set up their dioceses there, with Syriac as the official church language, but appeals to monks and priests in the area from the patriarch Īshō'yahb III, written in Syriac in the 7th century A.D., suggest it was widely understood.<sup>53</sup>

The Mandaean religious texts probably originate in the first centuries A.D. in southern Mesopotamia. Again, although they show influences from ancient Mesopotamian culture,<sup>54</sup> they are written in Aramaic, and Mesopotamian Jews, too, were using Aramaic as their literary language. Mandeans, Jews, pagans, and Christians wrote their magical texts (typically the magic bowls) in Aramaic, again incorporating ancient Mesopotamian magic and demons.<sup>55</sup>

Turning to the west, Jerusalem and its region were also Aramaized, though not obviously in the religious sphere. For the Jews, as for the Mesopotamians, Aramaization was exclusively a linguistic phenomenon, the gradual replacement of Hebrew as a vernacular by Aramaic—the change to the Aramaic script, replacing the Palaeo-Hebrew script, had taken place much earlier, in the time of Ezra (5th century B.C.[?]).<sup>56</sup> Perhaps symbolic of this linguistic shift is the fact that there have been

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<sup>50</sup> Especially Tadmor 1982.

<sup>51</sup> Aggoula 1985a.

<sup>52</sup> Healey – Bin Seray 1999–2000: 11 and Haerinck et al. 1992: 36f.

<sup>53</sup> Healey 2000.

<sup>54</sup> Müller-Kessler – Müller 1999. Note especially “The Book of the Zodiac”; Drower 1949.

<sup>55</sup> There is an extensive literature, but note the major recent work of Segal 2000.

<sup>56</sup> Naveh 1982: 112–124; Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 21b.

preserved for us some of the letters of Simon bar Kosibah, the charismatic leader of the 2nd Jewish Revolt of 132–35 A.D. There is clear evidence at this time of an attempt to use Hebrew as a nationalist gesture, but many of Simon's letters are written in Aramaic.<sup>57</sup> Of course the Bible continued to be copied, recited, and read in Hebrew, but even this tradition had to be adapted through the production of Aramaic translations (the targumim). And Jewish legal documents, contracts, etc., are drawn up in the traditional forms already established in Aramaic: the Jewish *ketubbah* is still written traditionally in Aramaic.<sup>58</sup>

Nabataea provides an illuminating example. Many aspects of Nabataean society are unique to it. The main deity of the Nabataeans was Dušara, an Arabian (or at least southern Jordanian) deity not worshipped outside northwest Arabia.<sup>59</sup> There is no trace of Dušara in Palestine or Palmyra or Edessa. But the probable Arabian origins of the Nabataean élite (whatever about the populations of Nabataean territories further north) were no barrier to the adoption of the Aramaic language,<sup>60</sup> legal practices, and some aspects of traditional religion: Ba'alšamayin gets incorporated into the Nabataean religion.<sup>61</sup> Atargatis, the goddess of Hierapolis/Manbiğ, appears also to have been worshipped by some Nabataean devotees.<sup>62</sup> In the more northerly Nabataean regions we seem to have an assimilation of well-established Transjordanian and Syrian deities to the predominant role taken by Dušara. Thus at Khirbet at-Tannur Edomite Qos and in the Hauran Bosran A'ra and again Ba'alšamayin.<sup>63</sup>

### 3. AREAS UNDER STRONG GRECO-ROMAN INFLUENCE (ANTIOCH TO DURA EUROPOS)

The Hauran region of southern Syria was intermittently ruled by the Nabataeans, and like Palmyra does not fit easily into any simple categorization, but north and west of the Hauran, we enter a region in which

<sup>57</sup> See Healey 2009: 122–129 nos. 19 and 20.

<sup>58</sup> Note on the Aramaization of Palestine Schwartz 1999 and see the contribution of Berlejung in this volume.

<sup>59</sup> Healey 2001: 85–107.

<sup>60</sup> Earlier Aramaization of the Jordan Valley is represented by the long Aramaic inscription from Tell Deir 'Alla dated around 800 B.C.; see Hoftijzer – van der Kooij 1976 and Hackett 1980.

<sup>61</sup> Niehr 2003: 265–279, on the Petra region 268–273 and Healey 2001: 124–126.

<sup>62</sup> Healey 2001: 140f.

<sup>63</sup> Healey 2001: 97–100, 124–126; Niehr 2003: 268 (Bosra), 265–268 (Hauran).

Greek came to be almost totally dominant, at least in the sphere of public life and religion.

Antioch is the parade-ground example, but the same situation seems to apply in Phoenicia (to which Aramaic had spread at a late stage),<sup>64</sup> Emesa and in the region extending eastward from Antioch through Cyrrhus and Aleppo (Beroea) to Hierapolis and the Euphrates as far as Dura Europos. In this whole region there is very limited evidence of the use of Aramaic in the Roman period, though there was a re-emergence of Aramaic/Syriac in the Christian era,<sup>65</sup> which suggests that Aramaic did not by any means disappear under the intensive Roman rule of the region.

Hierapolis is an interesting case. There is 4th-century-B.C. numismatic evidence in Aramaic of the worship of Hadad.<sup>66</sup> Later evidence, both epigraphic and literary (Lucian), is in Greek and Lucian in 'On the Syrian Goddess' provides an *interpretatio graeca* of the mythology and ritual associated with the temple there. But even in Lucian it is evident that there are some unusual iconographic features (unusual from a Greco-Roman point of view) that must be local. In the best-known instance, Apollo is bearded and is thought in reality to be a version of Nabu.<sup>67</sup>

Dura Europos was a Seleucid foundation where Greek predominated, but there are some signs of the use of Aramaic, even apart from the Palmyrene Aramaic used by soldiers.<sup>68</sup> Culturally, there are clear evidences of the local Aramaean religious traditions, represented, e.g., by the worship of Azzanathkona, identified with Artemis and originally from 'Anah,<sup>69</sup> Ba'alšamayin/Zeus Kyrios;<sup>70</sup> and Atargatis.<sup>71</sup>

The Aramaeans constitute a counterintuitive example of cultural contact. The Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans successively invade and dominate the Aramaean homelands. Small-scale political structures, which had existed there previously, are replaced by imperial-colonial administrations. The stage is set for Assyrianization, Babylonianization, Iranization, Hellenization, and Romanization, as predicted by the colonization model. There are indeed clear signs of these

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. also H. Niehr on Phoenicia in this volume.

<sup>65</sup> See inscriptions in Littmann 1934.

<sup>66</sup> Greenfield 1987: 69 and Lightfoot 2003: 4f.

<sup>67</sup> Lightfoot 2003: 456–466 in relation to § 35.

<sup>68</sup> Bertolino 2004.

<sup>69</sup> Downey 1988: 99–101 and Edwell 2008: 107.

<sup>70</sup> Du Mesnil du Buisson 1939: no 23; Downey 1988: 101–102; Niehr 2003: 163–169; Bertolino 2004: 42f.

<sup>71</sup> Downey 1988: 102–105.

processes: Marduk's mythology spreads westward, Iranian and Greek loan words enter Aramaic, and Hellenistic-Roman architecture comes to dominate the landscape. But these are not the predominant features on the linguistic level. Rather, the predominant feature, perhaps outside the region under the direct influence of Antioch and the Roman Empire, is the Aramaization of the colonizers. Assyria is Aramaicized; Greeks intermarry and lose their *graecitas* and any connection with the Aegean; Romans are ultimately conquered by a Jewish-Aramaic religious movement, Christianity; and this leaves in the Middle East a Byzantine-Aramaean legacy in which Syriac, in particular, flourishes. In other words, it is arguable that the main outcome is the extension of the significance of Aramaic and Aramaean culture: Jews translate their Bible into Aramaic, Nabataeans write their inscriptions in Aramaic and worship Aramaean gods. In the context of colonial and postcolonial situations, there seem to be few examples like that of the politically dominated, linguistically dominating, and culturally mixed Aramaeans.

There is some discussion of how the process described above applies to the last of the great invasions, that of the Arabs in the 7th century A.D. The conventional view is that the Arabs arrive and there begins a long period in which the pre-existing populations of the Fertile Crescent, along with those of Egypt, Iran, and ultimately Turkey, are gradually Arabized: they come to speak or write in Arabic; most are converted to Islam, the religion revealed through the Arabian Prophet; most adopt new social customs that have their cultural origins in the Arabian peninsula; and many of the Christians eventually use Arabic in their liturgy and sing hymns in Arabian-oriental style.

But there is an alternative view of the expansion of Islam—that the Arabs too should be seen as having been conquered by the conquered, i.e., that they were Aramaized.<sup>72</sup>

First of all, the Arabs had begun to infiltrate the Fertile Crescent long before Islam: their presence is either evident or probable in Nabataea, Palmyra, Edessa, and Hatra. Christianity was established among the northern Arabs in pre-Islamic times: the Ghassānids/Jafnids of Syria and

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<sup>72</sup> The Aramaization of the Arabs in early Islam is implied, of course, in works like Crone – Cook 1977 and associated publications, but I can only find explicit discussion of it in Dr. Muhammad Sh. Megalommatis's article at [www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/166730](http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/166730), dated June 30th, 2010, referring back to his earlier internet publications (though not to any conventional academic outputs). I thank my colleague Dr. Andrew Marsham for his confirmation that so far as he is aware the topic is not tackled directly otherwise in the scholarly literature on early Islam.



the Lakhmids/Naṣrids of Iraq.<sup>73</sup> These Christian Arabs, apart from adopting a non-Arabian faith, had also come into close contact with the Syriac-speaking churches of Syria and Seleukia-Ctesiphon. They were already partly Aramaized. Symbolic of this is the first inscription of any length that can be described without dispute as being in Arabic, the Namārah inscription of the king Imru'qays ("King of the Arabs"), dated 328 A.D: it is written in the (Nabataean) Aramaic script.<sup>74</sup>

Did the arrival of Islam reverse this process of Aramaization or advance it? The conventional view would say that this Aramaization of the Arabs was halted, that the Arabs turned from cringing minor players in the Byzantine-Sasanian wars into the dominant power, imposing their faith and way of life. But there are many aspects of the development of Islam that point in the opposite direction: the Quran comes in part from a Judaeo-Christian matrix, as is evident from its constant allusions to the Bible, its concept of Allah entirely consistent with Judaeo-Christian monotheism. The newly arrived Muslims imitate the cultural norms of the conquered peoples, soon adopting kingship and courtly life (thinly veneered with a pretence that the *khalīfah* is not a king). They adapt their Arabian culture to the existing cultures further north, using traditional Aramaic legal formulae,<sup>75</sup> adopting coinage, taxation systems, and the like. Undoubtedly, much of this can be accounted for by the fact that many "Aramaean" Christians were converted to Islam, but in any case the process is one of Aramaization.

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<sup>73</sup> Trimmingham 1979 and the many works of Irfan Shahīd.

<sup>74</sup> Louvre (AO 4083); cf. Calvet – Robin 1997: 265–269 no. 205.

<sup>75</sup> Khan 1994.

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## INDEX OF PERSONS

- Aba-Enlil-dari 293  
 Abdilim 332  
 Abgar the Great 396  
 Abisalamu 27–28  
 Absalom 363  
 Abraham 344, 364  
 Adad-nirari II 23, 27, 67, 230, 261,  
     273–274, 345  
 Adad-nirari III 29, 31, 331, 354  
 Adda-Guppi 119, 192  
 Addu-rēmanni 29  
 Adini, Adinu 29, 342  
 Adon III, 367, 392  
 Adon-Ba'al 352  
 Adrame/Adramu 152, 174  
 Ahab 345, 352  
 Ahas 355, 365  
 Ahazya 345  
 Aḥiqar 3, 73, 111, 123–125, 135–136, 138,  
     293, 362, 367–368, 374, 376–377, 393  
 Aḥirom 54  
 Aḥuni 23, 29–30, 221  
 Ain'el 333  
 Alexander 326  
 Amasis 372  
 Antiochus XII 199  
 Apries 366  
 Ariyahina 221  
 Artaxerxes 324  
 Ashurbanipal I, 136, 141, 274–275,  
     284–285, 293, 295, 298, 378  
 Ashur-nirari V 141, 150–152, 154, 336  
 Ashur-uballit II 141  
 Aššur-bēl-kala 15–16, 273, 340  
 Assur-dān 17, 173–174, 273–275  
 Assurnasirpal II 22, 27–31, 67, 246,  
     273–275, 298, 331  
 Atalia 295  
 Attarsumki 26, 152  
 Azariah 389  
 Azriyau 355  
  
 Ba'al of Tyre 153  
 Ba'ana' 333  
 Ba'asa 344, 352  
 Baḥian(u) 27–28, 342  
 Bala'am 122–123, 200, 360  
 Banah 158  
  
 Bani Komare 203  
 Bardaišan 396  
 Bar-Gayah 26, 121, 150–151  
 Bar-Gush 168  
 Bar-Hadad (of Arpad) 73, 76, 117, 152,  
     174, 231, 336  
 Bar-Hadad/Ben-Hadad (of Damascus)  
     60, 168, 174, 194, 196, 348, 354, 363  
 Bar-Rakkab 26, 32, 44, 49–51, 53–55,  
     58–59, 63–64, 67–68, 74–75, 112–113,  
     116–118, 158, 160, 163–164, 171–173, 177,  
     187–188, 212–215, 217, 236, 241,  
     244–245, 251, 320  
 Bar-Šur 118  
 Belshazzar 380  
  
 Chaldaeans 298–300  
  
 Daniel 389–390, 393  
 Darius III 325  
 David 350, 363  
  
 Eni-ilu 355  
 Esarhaddon I, 124, 153, 159, 210, 215,  
     274–276, 284–285, 293, 337, 377–378  
 Ešmunazor 192  
 Ezra 398  
  
 Gabbar 23, 26, 32, 157–158, 183  
 Gindibu 352  
 Gush/Gusi 31, 342  
  
 Hadad 196  
 Hadad-Ezer/Hadad-Idri (of Damascus)  
     194, 196, 345, 348, 352  
 Hadad-Ezer (of Šobah) 34–35, 342  
 Haddayis'i 28–29, 86, 90, 118, 130–131,  
     138, 140, 149, 237  
 Hadyanu (of Guzana) 27  
 Hadyanu/Hezyon (of Damascus) 355, 363  
 Hamiyata 135, 221  
 Harran 344  
 Hayya(n) 23, 26, 48, 159, 184, 210, 320  
 Hazael 35, 48, 51, 60, 114, 165, 168, 181,  
     194–195, 197, 200, 247, 252, 330, 345,  
     348, 350, 352–354, 363  
 Hazza'il 378  
 Hiram 331, 355

- Iabâ 295  
 Irhuleni 352  
 Isaac 344
- Jacob 344, 364  
 Jehu 352–353  
 Jeroboam I 351, 355  
 Jeroboam II 350, 354–355  
 Joash 350, 353–354  
 John the Baptist 202, 256  
 Joram 345, 352  
 Jotham 389  
 Julian the Apostate 201
- Kammaki 55–56, 129, 148–150  
 Kapara 27–29, 49, 129–130, 137–139, 144,  
 146, 148, 217–218, 220, 332  
 Kulamuwa 1, 26, 32, 41, 45, 48–53, 63,  
 68, 113, 157–160, 162–163, 171–172,  
 183–184, 212–213, 234, 244, 320, 332  
 Kuttamuwa 33, 54–55, 75, 86–87, 106,  
 110, 119–120, 148, 161, 163, 178, 183,  
 188–190, 192, 240–242, 320, 388
- Libanios 201  
 Lucian of Samosata 201, 400
- Maacah 342, 363  
 Mannu-ki-Aššur 67  
 Marcus Aurelius Antoninus 202  
 Marduk-apla-iddina 301–303, 305, 317  
 Matî'el 15, 26, 31, 121, 141, 150–152, 154,  
 174, 182, 336  
 Mattin-Ba'al 352  
 Menahem 355  
 Miptaḥiah 369
- Na'amān 363  
 Nabonidus 119, 134, 141, 192, 362, 378,  
 380–381, 383, 387, 389–390, 395  
 Nabusumiskun 124  
 Nadin 124, 377  
 Nahor 344  
 Naqia 294–295  
 Nebuchadnezzar II 175, 322, 389  
 Neriglissar 322  
 Nesuḥor 366  
 Nicholas of Damascus 197  
 Ninurta-bēl-ušur 222–223
- Omri 345, 352
- Panamuwa I 4, 26, 32, 44, 48, 50–51, 53,  
 55, 63, 67, 74, 112, 115–116, 160, 162–164,  
 171–172, 177, 184–186, 189, 225–226,  
 234–235, 320–321
- Panamuwa II 26, 33, 50–51, 53–54, 59,  
 63–64, 75, 113, 116, 118, 163–164, 171–172,  
 177, 185, 187–188, 236, 241, 244, 248, 251,  
 320, 355  
 Parata 23, 33  
 Pekah 355
- Qarli 185
- Razyan *see* Reṣon/Rezin  
 Rehov/Ruhub 342, 344, 352  
 Reṣon/Rezin 34–35, 331, 355
- Šamaš-nūri/Sasnuri 28, 130  
 Šamaš-šum-ukin 299  
 Šamši-Adad V 298  
 Šamši-ilu 31, 222, 355  
 Sargon II 1, 34, 54, 56, 155, 210, 274–275,  
 280, 284–285, 295, 298, 301, 303–304,  
 317–318, 320, 385  
 Sennacherib 1, 124, 136, 274–275,  
 284–285, 293–294, 298–299, 302–303,  
 305, 318, 337, 376–378, 380
- Sem 344  
 Septimius Severus 199  
 Shalman 355  
 Shalmaneser III 1, 25, 30, 32–34, 68–69,  
 141, 174, 210, 222, 252, 273–274, 280,  
 320, 331, 345, 352–353  
 Shalmaneser IV 355  
 Shalmaneser V 1, 195, 320  
 Shay-Si 363  
 Šiḡabbar 54, 56, 119, 133, 155, 191–192,  
 241–242  
 Simon bar Kosibah 399  
 Sin-uballiṭ 362  
 Sin-zera-ibni 120, 133, 155, 191–192,  
 241–242  
 Šlmšzb 384, 386  
 Solomon 269, 389  
 Šuppiluliuma I 6, 263
- Tabnit 192  
 Tab-Ramman/Tab-Rimmon 196, 363  
 Taitas 12, 20  
 Talmay 363  
 Telipinu 53  
 Terah 344  
 Theodosius 201  
 Tiglath-Pileser I 1, 6, 15–17, 19, 22, 37–38,  
 110, 273, 300, 339  
 Tiglath-Pileser III 1, 25, 31, 33, 35, 54, 59,  
 64, 112, 164, 166, 171–172, 187, 198, 227,  
 248, 252, 274–275, 295, 298, 300, 303,  
 305, 318, 330–331, 349–350, 355,  
 380

- Tobit 293  
Tukulti-Ninurta I 339  
Tukulti-Ninurta II 67, 230–231, 274, 317  
  
Uratami 23, 33, 224  
Urḫilina 23, 33, 167, 224  
  
Varius Avitus 202  
  
Xerxes 326, 375  
  
Yariri 2  
Ya'ubidi 200  
  
Zakkur 4, 31, 48, 56, 60, 73, 110, 112–115,  
117–118, 120, 167–169, 173–174, 181, 200,  
224, 257, 261, 336, 340  
Zakutu *see* Naqia

## INDEX OF DEITIES

- Adad/Addu 129–132, 139, 154, 166, 174,  
     221, 229, 374  
 Adados 197  
 Adon(is) 167, 195  
 ‘Aglibol 133, 202–203, 397  
 Ahuramazda 327  
 ‘*lh* ‘*bh* 163, 186  
 ‘*lhn* 136, 196, 360  
 Allat 203  
 Anat 153, 201, 372, 374, 377  
 Anat-Bethel 153, 372  
 Anat-Yahu 153  
 Anu 135  
 Apis 386  
 Apollo 400  
 Apollo (Daphnephoros) 165, 251  
 A‘ra 399  
 Arq-Rešep 162, 320  
 Aršu 162  
 Artemis 400  
 Ashur 135, 143, 157, 160, 171, 336  
 Ashurbel 203  
 Ašima’ 169–170, 382–385, 387  
 Ašim-Bethel 170, 385  
 Aštar 195, 360  
 Astarte 164, 166, 170, 176, 179, 201  
 Atargatis 193–194, 196, 198–203, 336,  
     395–396, 399–400  
 Athena 251  
 Atta 374  
 Attar 374  
 Attaršamayin 378  
 Azaelos 197  
 Azzanathkona 400
- Ba‘al 143, 157–158, 164, 175–176, 179, 193,  
     202, 227, 229, 232, 256, 268, 360–361,  
     374, 377–378  
 Ba‘al Hammon 158, 320, 336  
 Ba‘al Harran 164, 172, 320  
 Ba‘al of the Heavens 169  
 Ba‘al Qdš 135, 143  
 Ba‘al of the Spring 193  
 Ba‘alšamayin/Ba‘alšamem 48, 56, 112,  
     114–115, 120, 134, 167–169, 173–174, 181,  
     195–196, 201, 203, 228–229, 323,  
     335–336, 378, 392, 395–397, 399–400  
 Ba‘al Šaphon 158, 232  
 Ba‘al Šemed 157–158, 161, 186, 320
- Ba‘alat 166–167, 170, 335  
 Banit 321, 369, 373–374  
 Barada 195  
 Barmaren 203  
 Bel 3, 202–203, 327, 374, 377, 392,  
     395–397  
 Belit 377  
 Belos 336  
 Belsamen *see* Ba‘alšamayin/Ba‘alšamem  
 Bethel 153, 170, 369, 373–374, 377  
 Bol 202–203, 396
- Dagan 132, 151, 230  
 Day and Night 151–152  
 Demarus 336  
 Duraḥlun 397  
 Dušara 399
- El 48, 118, 123, 125, 136–138, 151, 159–163,  
     186, 195, 212, 320, 360–361, 374  
 El Elyon 151  
 Elagabal 202  
 Elkunirša 162  
 Elyan 151  
 Enlil 135  
 Enmešara 129  
 Eshem 374  
 Ešmun 151
- g(n)d’* 203
- Hadad 35, 48–49, 51–52, 55, 86, 91, 98,  
     112, 114–115, 118, 121, 128–132, 136–140,  
     149, 151, 154–155, 157, 160–161, 163,  
     165–166, 171–172, 174, 177, 179, 182,  
     184–186, 193–198, 200–202, 212,  
     225–227, 229, 234, 237, 256–257, 320,  
     360–361, 374, 379, 395, 397, 400  
 Hadad (of) Qrpd 161, 189  
 Hadad Rimmon 199  
 Hadadsikani/Hadad of Sikani 118,  
     130–131, 140, 159  
 Hadad of the Vineyards 90, 160–161, 189  
 Ḥaldi 132  
 Heaven and Earth 151–152  
 Ḥebat 154, 164, 179  
 Helios 203  
 Heracles-Nergal 203  
 Ḥerem 374

- Horon 135, 143  
Horus 374, 377, 386
- Iluwer 48, 117, 120, 168–170  
Inurta 182  
Ir 157  
Ištar 129, 134–135, 156, 164, 221, 380–381, 387, 396
- Jupiter 202  
Jupiter Damascenus 194–195, 199, 202, 256  
Jupiter Heliopolitanus 193, 196, 199  
Jupiter of Yabrud 336
- Kadiah 157  
Karhuha/Karhuḫas 150–151, 212  
Kemosh 361  
Kotharu 157  
Kubaba 135, 150–151, 155, 159–160, 164, 167, 189, 212, 264, 269, 320, 323  
Kumarbi 132
- Laş 157
- Malakbel 203  
Malkat-Shemayin 369, 373–374  
Mami 377  
Mar 374, 377  
Marah 374, 377  
Maran 203  
Marduk 157, 202, 374, 392, 395–397, 400–401  
Martan 203  
Melqart 2, 117, 151–152, 231, 336  
Milkom 361  
Mulliš 157  
Muşuruna 151
- Nabu 157, 369, 373–374, 377, 395–397, 400  
Nanai/Nanaya 374, 377, 396  
Nergal 131–132, 157, 374, 395  
Nikarawas 189  
Nikkal/Ningal 120, 134, 155, 157, 191–192, 384, 395  
Nikkar 157  
Nur 157  
Nusku 134, 142, 155, 157, 191–192, 374
- Osiris 374–375, 377
- Pahalatis 166–167, 170, 179–180, 335  
Palil 151  
Ptah 373–374
- qdšn* 137  
Qos 399  
Queen of Heaven *see* Malkat Shemayin
- Rakkab'el 48–49, 112, 118, 155, 157–160, 163–164, 171–172, 212, 244, 320  
Ramman/Rimmon 151, 194, 199, 378–379  
*rapi'ūma* 196–197  
Rešep 48, 155, 160, 162, 186, 320  
Ruḫa 162
- šadday/šdyn* 123, 196, 360  
Šadrafa 232  
Šagar 195, 360  
Šahr/Šahr/Šeru 56, 119–120, 133–134, 155, 169, 176, 191–192, 195, 203, 242, 323, 374  
Šala 129, 132, 139  
Šalm 382–388  
Šamaš/Shamash 48, 118, 124–125, 134, 136–137, 155, 157, 160, 162–163, 169, 189, 191, 195, 203, 212, 244, 320, 323, 374, 380–381, 395–396, 398  
Šarpanitu 157  
Šarruma 221  
Sasam 135, 143  
Šauska/Šawuška 156, 221  
Seabed and Springs 151–152  
Sebetti 151  
Šengala' 382–387  
Si'/Sin 119, 132–134, 140–142, 157, 164, 176, 242, 244, 362, 380–381, 384, 395  
Συμβεταλος 170  
Šuwala 131–132, 140, 149  
Šyy 143
- Tar'atha *see* Atargatis  
Tarhunzas/Tarḫunzas/Tarḫunt 150, 161, 167, 179–180, 212, 227–229  
Tašmetu 157  
Teššub/p 179, 221, 229
- Venus 134, 193, 361, 386
- Wer/Mer 168
- Yahu 176, 375, 385, *see also* YHWH  
Yarhibol 202–203, 397  
YHWH 153, 200, 361, 363, 369, 373, *see also* Yahu
- Zeus 201, 395  
Zeus Damascenus 194, 196, 199  
Zeus Kyrios 400  
*zgyq'* 203



## INDEX OF LANDS, PEOPLES, TRIBES, CITIES, SITES

- Abel Bit Maacah 349  
 Abydos 369, 375  
 Adana 227  
 Afghanistan 70, 322  
*aḥlamu* 5–6, 15–20, 37–38, 273, 293, 297,  
 300, 302–303, 339  
 ‘Ain al-Arab 236–237  
 ‘Ain Dara 25, 31–32, 150, 156, 176,  
 267–270, 340, 357  
 Alalaḥ 5, 176, 179, 265  
 Aleppo 2, 4, 12, 15, 23–24, 31–32, 73, 132,  
 134, 150–152, 154, 158, 164, 170, 174–175,  
 180, 201, 207, 231–233, 241, 267–270,  
 336, 352, 357, 400  
 al-Ġawf *see* Duma  
 Aliṣar 263  
 al-Minah 329  
 al-Yahudu 365  
 Amida 259, 319  
 Ammon 343, 351, 355  
 Amrit 231–232, 329  
 Amuq 168  
 Amurru 231–232, 267, 300  
 ‘Anah 168, 257, 336, 400  
 Anatolia 43, 52, 127, 167, 190, 194,  
 262–263, 319–329, 379  
 Antakya 174  
 Antioch 400–401  
 Apium/Upi 256  
 Arabia 378–390, 392  
 Aram 13, 23, 25, 34–36, 58, 69, 122, 159,  
 194–196, 198, 256, 339, 341–342,  
 344–345, 351–356, 359–360, 363  
 Aram Naharayim 8, 342  
 Arbela 284–285  
 Armanum 263  
 Arne 25–26  
 Arpad 4, 15, 25–26, 31, 43, 67, 70, 117,  
 150–152, 154, 157, 182, 258, 290,  
 341–342, 354, 372  
 Arslan Tash *see* Hadattu  
 Arwad 329, 331–333, 352  
 Ashur/Aššur 50, 63, 141, 205, 275, 278,  
 280, 286, 300, 378, 398  
 Assyria 2–3, 31, 47, 67, 187, 205, 215,  
 218, 244, 251, 258–259, 262, 267,  
 273–296, 334, 336–337, 354–355, 365,  
 376, 401  
 Aštamakku 25  
 Athens 251  
 ‘Awas 194, 349  
 Azran 86, 131  
 Ba‘albek 193, 197–199  
 Babylon 175, 321, 334, 377, 398  
 Babylonia 2–3, 7, 262, 275, 297–318, 365,  
 380, 390, 398  
 Baliḥ 28, 129, 132–133  
*b’rrm* 41  
 Baširu 263  
 Beqa’ 24, 193, 329, 335, 342–344  
 Beroea 201, *see also* Aleppo  
 Beth Laha 153  
 Bethel 372  
 Betsaida 133, 193–194, 198–199, 234, 346,  
 348–349, 353, 357, 360–361, 386  
 Bet Šullul *see* Kitikka  
 Bit Adini 23–24, 27, 29–30, 39, 128–129,  
 134–135, 142, 221, 237–238, 246, 257,  
 341  
 Bit Agusi 23–26, 31–32, 39, 141, 150–151,  
 174, 176–177, 181, 238, 258, 336, 341  
 Bit Ašalli 319  
 Bit Baḥiani 24, 27–29, 39, 128–129, 131,  
 137, 217, 238, 258, 319, 341  
 Bit David 343, *see also* Judah  
 Bit Gabbari 23–24, 32–33, 39, 157, 258,  
 341  
 Bit Ḥalupe 24, 69  
 Bit Ḥumri 343, 353 *see also* Israel  
 Bit Maacah 342, 345–351, 353, 365  
 Bit Rehov 342–344  
 Bit Zamanni 24, 39, 67, 69–70, 319, 340  
 Breḡ 2, 152, 174, 196, 231, 336  
 Bukan 80, 110, 122, 132  
 Burma’ina *see* Tell Shiouq/Shuyuk  
 Fawqani  
 Byblos 5, 76–77, 166–167, 169, 329, 331,  
 333, 335, 352  
 Calah 44, 210, 246, 248–250, 275–276,  
 278–279, 285–286, 288, 290, 294–295,  
 334  
 Cappadocia 326–328  
 Carchemish 2, 4, 12, 16, 20–21, 37, 148,  
 155, 167, 178, 209, 212, 221–222, 227,  
 238, 252–253, 255, 263–264, 266–267,  
 269–270, 290, 319, 339

- Caria 324  
 Carthage 336  
 Çatal Höyük 270  
 Cebelireis Dağı 321  
 Chaldaea 364  
 Chaldaeans 275, 282, 297–300  
 Cilicia 320–323, 326, 328  
 Çineköy 227, 321  
 Crete 250, 330  
 Cyprus 330, 347  
 Cyrrhus 400  
  
 Damascus 4–5, 7–8, 23, 25–26, 34–36,  
 51, 58–59, 65–67, 69–70, 73, 114–115,  
 165–166, 171, 174, 180, 187, 194–202, 207,  
 224–225, 238, 246–247, 252, 256–257,  
 263, 267–268, 329–331, 341, 344–345,  
 348, 350–357, 359–360, 363, 365, 372,  
 379, 392  
 Dan *see* Tel Dan  
 Danuna/Danunians 26, 45, 212  
 Daskyleion 325  
 Decapolis 196  
 Diyarbakır *see* Amida  
 Domuztepe 227  
 Dor 356  
 Duma 378–379  
 Dür-Katlimmu 284  
 Dür-Şarrukin 246, 275, 278, 284–285  
 Dura Europos 201, 400  
  
 Ebla 52, 146, 154, 162, 176  
 ed-Dür 398  
 Edessa 201, 393–397, 399, 401  
 Edfu 369  
 Edom 341, 343, 351, 354–356, 380  
 Egypt 6, 123–124, 247, 322, 331, 347,  
 352, 361–362, 366–377, 385, 401  
 Ein Gev 346–348, 357  
 Ekron 111, 367  
 Elephantine 3, 43, 62, 73, 111, 123,  
 153, 170, 176, 322, 362, 366–377, 385,  
 393–394  
 Emar 6, 176, 179, 263, 339  
 Emesa 128, 202, 400  
 Eretria 165–166, 251, 330  
 Etruria 251  
 et-Tell *see* Betsaida  
 eṭ-Ṭurra 194, 349  
  
 Fort Shalmaneser 210, 248–249, 279  
  
 Gabala 329  
 Gath 353  
 Gaza 227, 355, 379  
  
 Gaziantep 194, 349  
 Gerçin 61, 160, 163, 171, 177, 184–188,  
 225–227  
 Geshur 193–194, 329–330, 342–343,  
 345–351, 353, 363, 365  
 Gidara 261  
 Gözne 323  
 Gordion 326  
 Gosen *see* Guzana  
 Greece 197, 250–251, 347  
 Gurgum 26, 168, 238, 319  
 Guzana 2–5, 14–15, 24, 26–29, 43, 46, 49,  
 51–52, 55–56, 59–60, 62, 67–68, 110, 118,  
 129–132, 137–139, 144–150, 154, 178, 183,  
 185, 201, 206–207, 209, 217–221, 223,  
 226–227, 237, 240, 242–243, 258–259,  
 261, 263–267, 270, 274, 284, 290, 319,  
 332, 341, 365  
  
 Hadattu 4, 129, 135, 142–143, 207,  
 221–223, 229, 236, 245, 247, 258–260,  
 332, 336  
 Hadrak/Hazrak/Hatarikka 4, 14, 18–19,  
 24–26, 33–34, 69, 113, 150, 168–170, 173,  
 180–181, 207, 234, 252–253, 256–257,  
 261, 267–270, 290, 355  
 Ḥalab *see* Aleppo  
 Hama/Hamath 4–5, 12, 14, 23–26, 31,  
 33–34, 48, 54, 60, 65–66, 69, 73, 110,  
 112, 114, 117–118, 120, 134, 142, 150,  
 166–170, 173–174, 179–181, 190, 200, 202,  
 206–207, 223–225, 245, 247, 256–257,  
 263–264, 267, 329, 331, 335–336,  
 340–341, 345, 352, 355, 372, 385  
 Ḥanigalbat 261  
 Harran 5, 42, 46–47, 54, 56, 64–65,  
 132–135, 140–142, 164, 172, 176, 194, 201,  
 232–234, 242, 244, 268, 284, 290, 319,  
 360–362, 381, 391, 395  
 Hassan Beyli 169, 321  
 Hatra 128, 201, 203, 396–397, 401  
 Hattusa 162, 263  
 Hauran 234, 352, 399  
 Hazor 176, 178, 253, 351, 353  
 Heğra 379  
 Hermopolis 369, 371  
 Hgm 383–384, 386–387  
 Hierapolis (Manbiğ) 201, 399–400  
 Hilakku 275, 321  
 Homs *see* Emesa  
 Ḥuzirina 2, 132, 319  
  
 Idlib 260  
 Idumaea *see* Edom  
 Imgur-Ilil 285

- Incirli 152–153, 181, 321  
 India 392–393  
 Irqanat/Irqata 331, 352  
 Israel 8, 26, 35, 114, 331, 343, 350–355,  
 360, 362–365, 372, 391  
 Ituraeans 334–335, 338  
 Ivriz 321  
  
 Jerusalem 176, 179, 269, 357, 361, 390,  
 394, 398–399  
 Judaeah 398  
 Judah 35, 244–245, 352–353, 355,  
 363–365, 389, *see also* Yehud  
  
 Kannu' 285  
 Karapınar Höyük 184  
 Karapınar Mezarlık 184  
 Karatepe 152, 162, 169, 227, 321  
 Kār-Esarhaddon 337  
 Kār-Šalmaneser/Kār-Šulmānu-ašarēd 30,  
 222  
 Kār-Tukulti-Ninurta 259  
 Khirbet at-Tannur 399  
 Khorsabad *see* Dūr-Šarrukin  
 Kinneret 253, 346–348, 350–351, 354  
 Kitikka 26, 31, 116, 150, 157, 174, 176–177  
 Korobis 369  
 Kummuh 210, 238, 319  
 Kunulua 12, 14–15, 23, 70, 150, 166, 176,  
 178–179, 223, 264, 266–267, 268–270,  
 290, 357  
 Kuşaklı 263  
  
 Laqe 24, 69, 229–230  
 Layish 343  
 Lefkandi 251  
 Leuke Kome 379  
 Lindos 251  
 Lu'aš 24, 26, 31, 33–34, 48, 117–118, 168,  
 257  
 Lutibu 210  
 Luwians 10–13  
 Luxor 369  
 Lycia 323–324  
 Lydia 324–325  
  
 Maacah *see* Bit Maacah  
 Ma'allanate 62, 129, 284, 365  
 Maganuba 285  
 Malaḥa 195  
 Malatya/Melid 12, 168, 209–210, 238  
 Ma'lula 7, 392  
 Mannaeans 275  
 Manṣuate 354  
  
 Maraş 225, 227, 238  
 Mari 5, 38, 132, 140, 154, 256  
 Masuwari/Mazuwati *see* Til Barsib  
 Maubai/Naubai *see* Tell Šaiḥ Ḥassan  
 Megiddo 351, 353, 356  
 Memphis 369, 371–372  
 Mḥrm 383–384, 387  
 Milet 251  
 Mittani 6, 132  
 Moab 343, 351, 355  
 Mukish 12  
 mškbm 41, 63  
  
 Nabataea 397, 399, 401  
 Nasibina/Nusaybin *see* Nisibis  
 Neirab 54, 56, 110, 119–120, 150, 154–155,  
 176, 190–192, 241–242  
 Nimrud *see* Calah  
 Niniveh 275–278, 285, 293, 337  
 Nippur 300, 303, 310–311, 318  
 Nisibis 24, 201, 259, 261, 274, 319  
 Northern Arabia 378–390  
 Nuḥaše 257  
 Nuzi 263  
  
 Ördেকburnu 75, 150, 155, 158–160,  
 183–184, 190, 320  
 Olympia 250–251  
  
 Pale *see* Bit Baḥiani  
 Palestine 7, 73, 77–78, 110, 127, 234, 253,  
 337, 339–365, 389, 394, 399  
 Palistin(a)/Walistin 12, 20–21, 23, 31–32,  
 319  
 Palmyra 3, 7, 15–16, 24, 128, 133, 162,  
 193, 201–203, 300, 335, 392, 396–397,  
 399, 401  
 Pattina-Unqi 23, 69–70, 150, 165–166,  
 181, 252, 319  
 Pazarçık 174  
 Persepolis 322, 373  
 Petra 379–380, 393–394,  
 Philistia 347, 354  
 Philistines 346, 355  
 Phoenicia 65, 68, 329–338, 347, 359,  
 392, 400  
 Pithecusae 330  
 Pitru 260  
  
 Qadbun 232  
 Qadeš 335  
 Qarqar 25–26, 34, 58, 169, 200, 331, 352  
 Qaṣr al-Ḥamra 386–387  
 Qatna 5–6, 25, 34, 69, 146, 202, 271

- Qedar 378  
 Qipanu 319  
 Qir 363  
 Que 168, 238, 275, 290, 320–321  
 Qumran 381, 389–390
- Raḥle 335, 397  
 Raqammatu *see* Gidara  
 Ras Ibn Hani 19  
 Ras Shamra *see* Ugarit  
 Rasm et-Tanjara 252–253  
 Rb 383, 387  
 Rhodes 330  
 Rome 202
- Saba 380  
 Ša-imērišu 34–36, 256  
 Sakçağözü 210, 225, 248–250, 266  
 Sam'al 3–5, 14, 24, 26, 32–33, 41, 43–45, 48–55, 59–64, 66, 68–69, 74–75, 78, 90, 98–99, 101, 105–106, 110, 112–113, 115–117, 119, 148, 150, 152, 154, 157–165, 170–173, 177–178, 183–190, 197, 206–207, 209–218, 223–227, 234–236, 238, 240–241, 243–246, 248–253, 258–261, 263–264, 266–267, 270, 319–321, 328, 332, 341, 388, 397  
 Samaria 170, 338, 351, 354–356, 362, 385, 394, 396, *see also* Samerina  
 Samerina 153, 169, 385, *see also* Samaria  
 Samos 165–166, 251–253, 330  
 Saqqara III, 367, 369, 371, 376  
 Sardinia 330  
 Sardis 324–325  
 Sefire 53, 56–58, 61, 73, 82, 84, 90, 110, 116, 121, 150–154, 157, 174, 176, 181–183  
 Sela' 380  
 Seleukia-Ctesiphon 398, 402  
 Sheikh Sa'ad 225  
 Sheizar 192  
 Shianu 352  
 Sicily 330  
 Sidon 192, 331, 333, 336, 353–354  
 Sikani 2, 4–5, 14–15, 24, 26–29, 61, 72–73, 75–76, 78–79, 82, 85, 89–90, 97–98, 100, 102–103, 105–106, 110, 118, 121–122, 128, 130–132, 137–139, 159, 177, 186, 237, 263, 266, 268, 274, 281  
 Sim'alites 5  
 Simyra 231  
 Širqu 229–231  
 Siyannu 331  
 Šobah 34–35, 193, 329–330, 335, 342–343
- Suḥu 6, 16, 57, 300, 339  
 Sultantepe *see* Huzirina  
 Sumatar Harabesi 201, 395  
 Şumur 33  
 Susa 324  
 Suteans/Sutians/Sütû 5, 297, 301, 303–305, 317  
 Syene 367–369, 371–373, 376–377
- Tabal 161, 321  
 Tadmara/Tadmor *see* Palmyra  
 Ta'idu 263  
 Tahtalı Pınar 163, 185, 187, 236  
 Tartous 232  
 Tayma 170, 190, 378–390  
 Tel Dan 26, 110, 114, 134, 194, 196, 200, 343, 345, 348, 350–351, 353, 359, 361  
 Tel Hadar 347  
 Tell Afis *see* Hadrak/Hazrak/Hattarikka  
 Tell Aḥmar *see* Til Barsib  
 Tell Ašara 3, 229–230  
 Tell Aušariya *see* Pitru  
 Tell Billa 340  
 Tell Deinit 18, 252  
 Tell Deir 'Alla 73, 79, 109, 122–123, 142, 195–196, 200, 360  
 Tell el-Amarnah 343  
 Tell el-Ash'ari 194, 349  
 Tell el-Oreimeh *see* Kinneret  
 Tell el-Qadi *see* Tel Dan  
 Tell es-Salihiye 238  
 Tell eš-Šeriā 361  
 Tell Fekheriye *see* Sikani  
 Tell Hadar 346–347  
 Tell Halaf *see* Guzana  
 Tell Kazel *see* Simyra  
 Tell Mastuma 34, 260, 270  
 Tell Mishrife *see* Qaṭna  
 Tell Qarqur 14, 25, 34  
 Tell Qasile 178  
 Tell Rifa'at *see* Arpad  
 Tell Šaiḥ Ḥassan 258, 260, 266  
 Tell Šeḥ Ḥamad 62  
 Tell Shiouq/Shuyuk Fawqani 30, 62, 150  
 Tell Sifr 150, 155  
 Tell Sukas 19  
 Tell Tayinat *see* Kunulua  
 Teman 389–390  
 Thaj 379  
 Thebes 369  
 Til Barsib 4–5, 15, 23, 29–30, 62, 66, 129, 134–135, 206–207, 221–223, 228, 232–234, 237–238, 245–246, 256–259, 263–264, 267, 270

- Tilmen Höyük 265–266  
 Tob 342–343  
 Transeuphratene 337  
 Tripolis 329  
 Tripolitania 330  
 Troy 263  
 Tur ‘Abdin 7, 24, 274, 340  
 Tuttul 168  
 Tyre 152, 158, 329–331, 333–334,  
 336–337, 353–354  
  
 Ugarit 5, 54, 76, 143, 148, 153–154,  
 157–159, 161–162, 175, 178, 186, 190,  
 196–197, 232, 265, 329  
 Umq/Unqi *see* Pattina  
 Ur 133, 280  
 Urartu 31  
  
 Uruk 79, 293, 302  
 Usanat/Usnu 331, 352  
  
 Xanthos 324–325  
  
 Yabrud 336  
 Yādiya 23, 26, 32–33, 90, 116, 118, 163,  
 185, 212, 258, 320  
 Yaḥanu 31  
 Yaminites 5  
 Yanuh 334–335  
 Yazılıkaya 52  
 Yeb 176  
 Yehud 338, 356 *see also* Judah  
  
 Zephon 377  
 Zincirli *see* Sam’al

## PLATES





Plate I. Series of orthostats, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the Western part of the outer citadel gate, Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Luschan 1902: pl. 37 c.





Plate II. Divine trias, Sam'al (Zincirli), orthostats from the Eastern part of the outer citadel gate, Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after Orthmann 1975: fig. 357.



Plate III. King Bar-Rakkab, Sam'al (Zincirli), orthostat from *hilani* IV, Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 1992: no. 170.



Plate IV. High officials, Sam'al (Zincirli), orthostat from *hilani* III, Museum of Ancient Near East Istanbul, after Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 1992: no. 167.

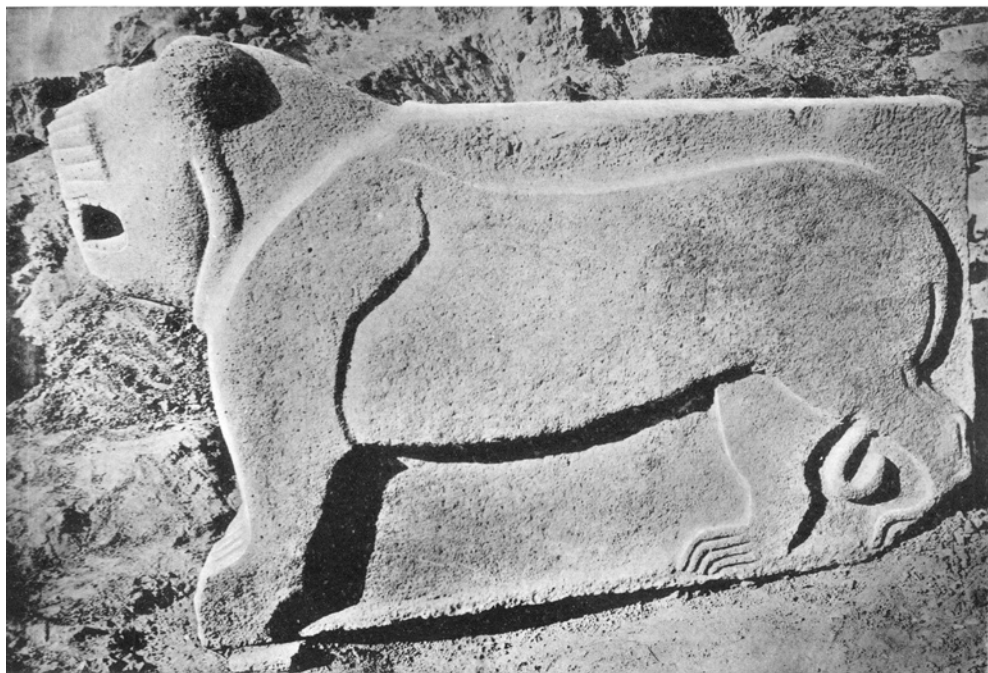


Plate V. Portal lion, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the area of the inner citadel gate (not in situ), Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Luschan 1902: pl. 46, below.



Plate VI. Portal lion, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the area of the inner citadel gate (not in situ), Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Luschan 1902: pl. 47, below.



a



b



c

Plate VII a-c. Orthostats, Guzana (Tell Halaf), from the Western Palace, Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Oppenheim 1955: pls. 65a, 92b, 33a.



Plate VIII. Statue of a seated couple, Guzana (Tell Halaf), from the cult room in the lower city, after Bonatz 2000a: pl. VI. B9.



Plate IX. Statue, Guzana (Tell Halaf), from the cult room in the lower city, after von Oppenheim 1955: pl. 149a.





Plate X. Stele, Til Barsib (Tell Ahmar), Museum Aleppo, after Hawkins 2000:  
pl. 99D, Tell Ahmar 1.



Plate XI. Stele, Hadattu (Arslan Tash), Musée du Louvre Paris, after Orthmann 1975: fig. 217.

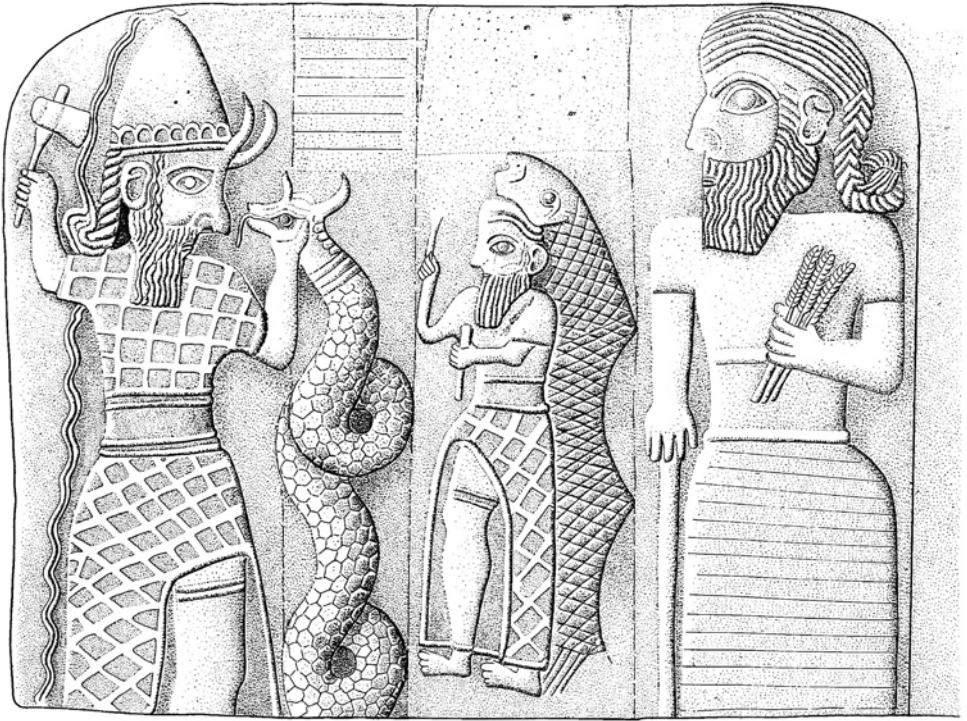


Plate XII. Stele, Terqa (Tell Ašara), Museum Aleppo, drawing C. Florimont in Masetti-Rouault 2001: fig. 9.



Plate XIII. Stele, Qadun, Museum Tartous, after Abou Assaf 1992: pl. 40.



Plate XIV. Stele, Til Barsib (Tell Aḥmar), Musée du Louvre Paris, after Green – Hausleiter 2001: fig. 10.



Plate XV. Statue on double-lion base, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the citadel, Museum of Ancient Near East Istanbul, after Bonatz 2000: pl. II. A6.



Plate XVI. Statue, 'Ain al-Arab, Museum Aleppo, after Bonatz 2000a: pl. I. Al.

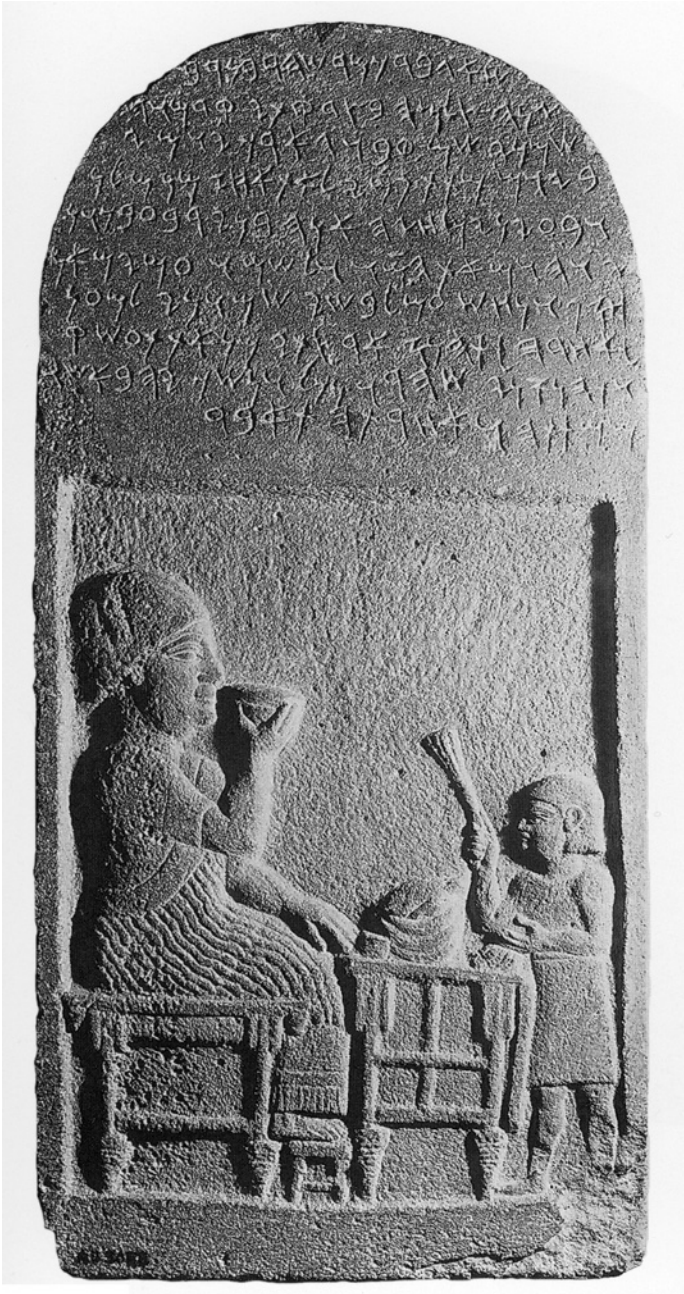


Plate XVII. Funerary stele, Neirab, Musée du Louvre Paris, after Bonatz 2000a:  
pl. XV. C35.





Plate XVIII. Funerary statue, Guzana (Tell Halaf), Museum Aleppo, after Bonatz 2000a: pl. V. B54.



Plate XIX. Funerary stele, Neirab, Musée du Louvre Paris, after Bonatz 2000a: pl. IX. CII.



Plate XX. Funerary stele, Sam'al (Zincirli), from the lower city, Gaziantep Archaeological Museum, after Struble – Herrmann 2009: fig. 3.



Plate XXI. Bulla with impression of king Bar-Rakkab's seal, Sam'al (Zincirli), Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after Wartke 2005: fig. 77.



Plate XXII. Scarab, carnelian, Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, after Avigad 1997:  
no. 763.



Plate XXIII. Ivory plaque, Hadattu (Arslan Tash), Aleppo Museum, after Winter 1981: pl. 13a.

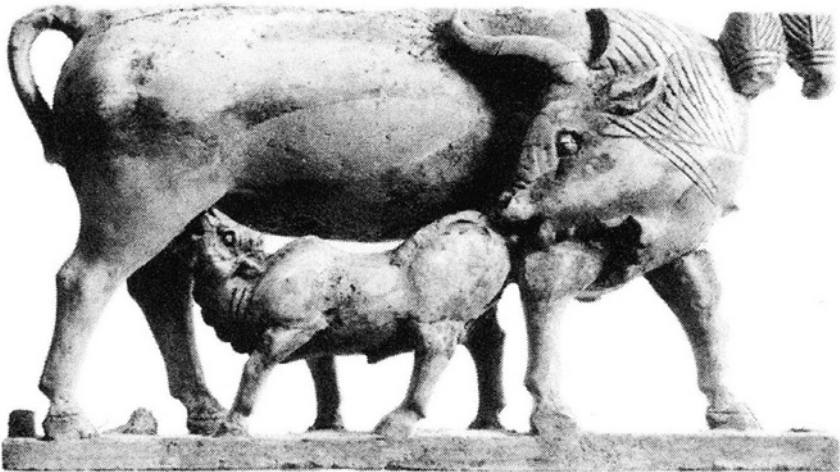


Plate XXIV. *à-jour* ivory plaque, Hadattu (Arslan Tash), Musée du Louvre Paris, after Winter 1981: pl. 10a.

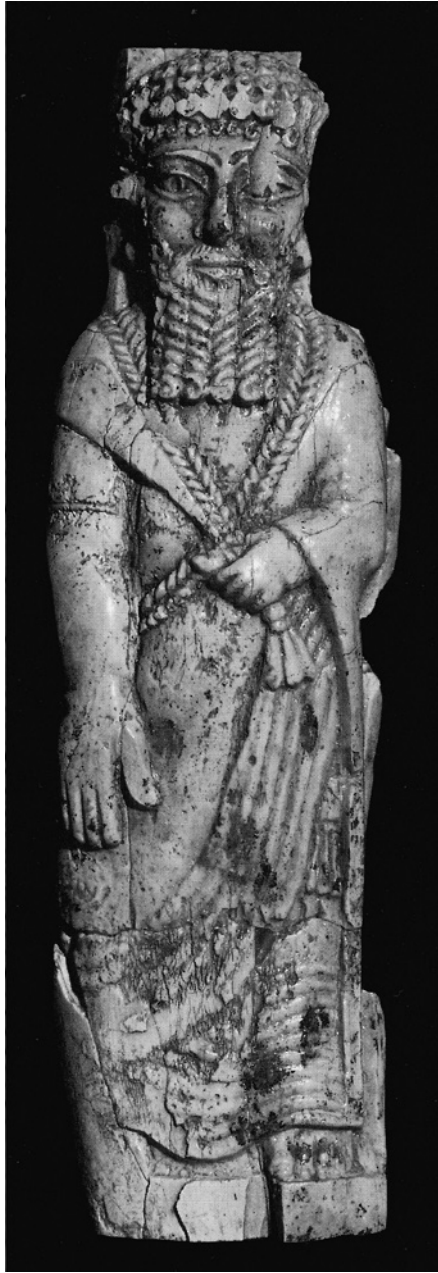


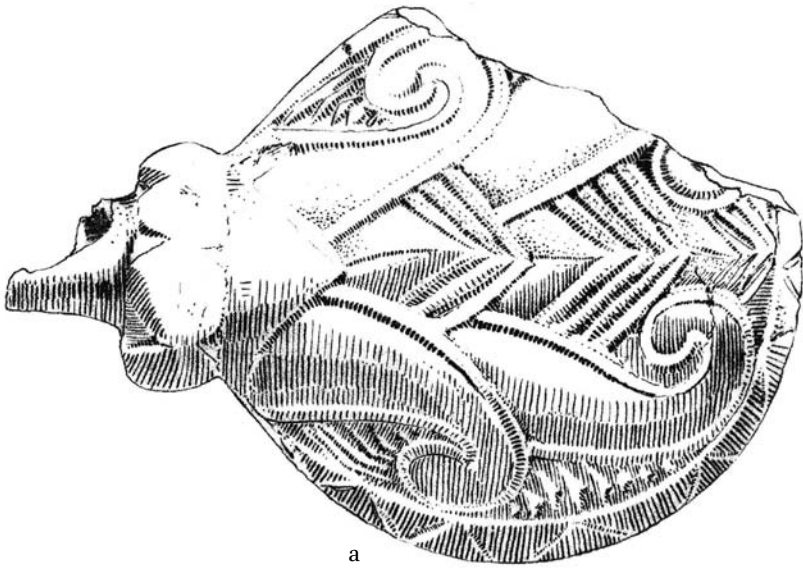
Plate XXV. Ivory panel, Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, Room SW 37, Iraq Museum, after Herrmann 1986: pl. 230 no. 891.



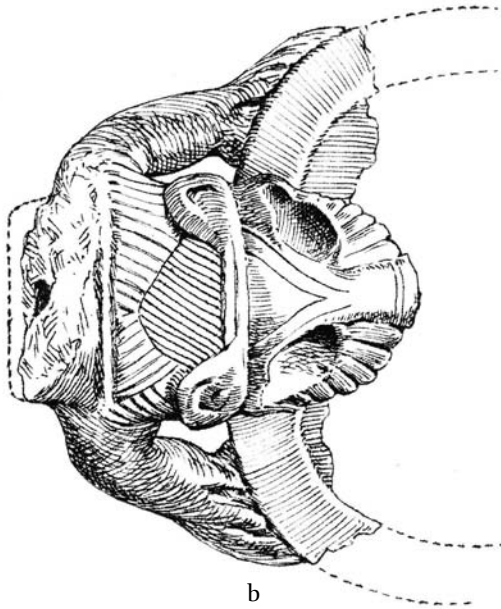


Plate XXVI. Horse frontlet, bronze, Heraion Samos, after Kyrieleis – Röllig 1988: pl. 9.



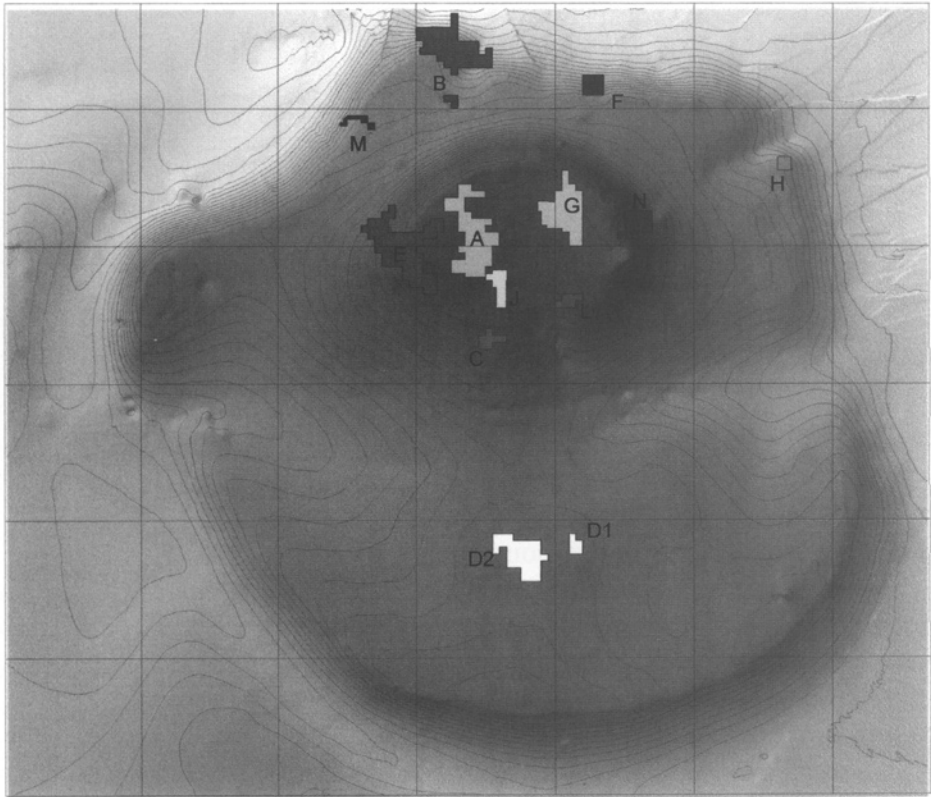


a



b

Plate XXVII a-b. Hand-lion bowls, serpentine, Sam'al (Zincirli), Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin, after von Luschan 1943: pl. 14.



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Plate XXVIII. Hazrak (Tell Afis), after Soldi 2009: 99 fig. 1.

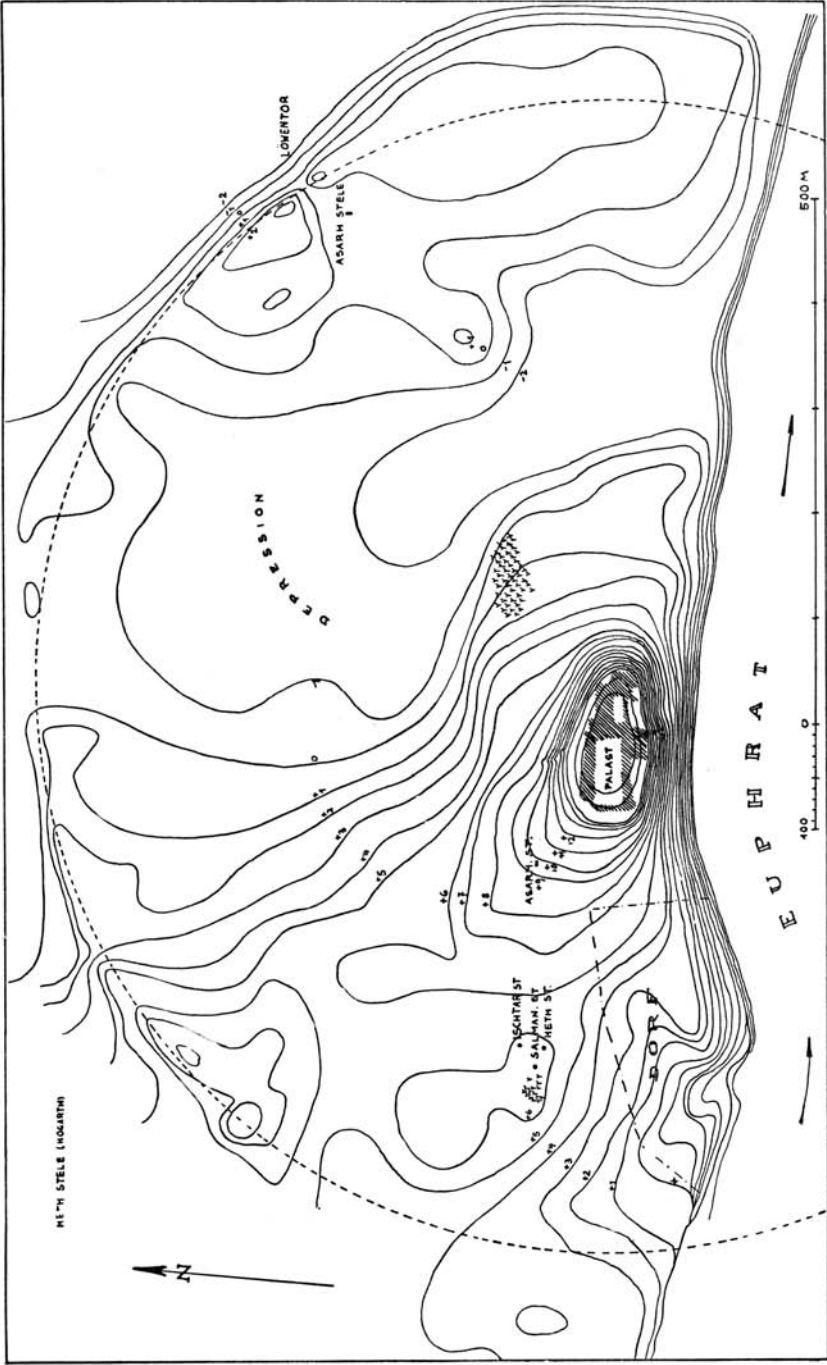


Plate XXIX. Til Barsib (Tell Ahmar), after Naumann 21971: 233 fig. 299.



Plate XXX. Guzana (Tell Halaf), after von Luschan 1950: pl. I.



Plate XXXI. Sam'al (Zincirli), after Schloen – Fink 2009b: 4 fig. 3.

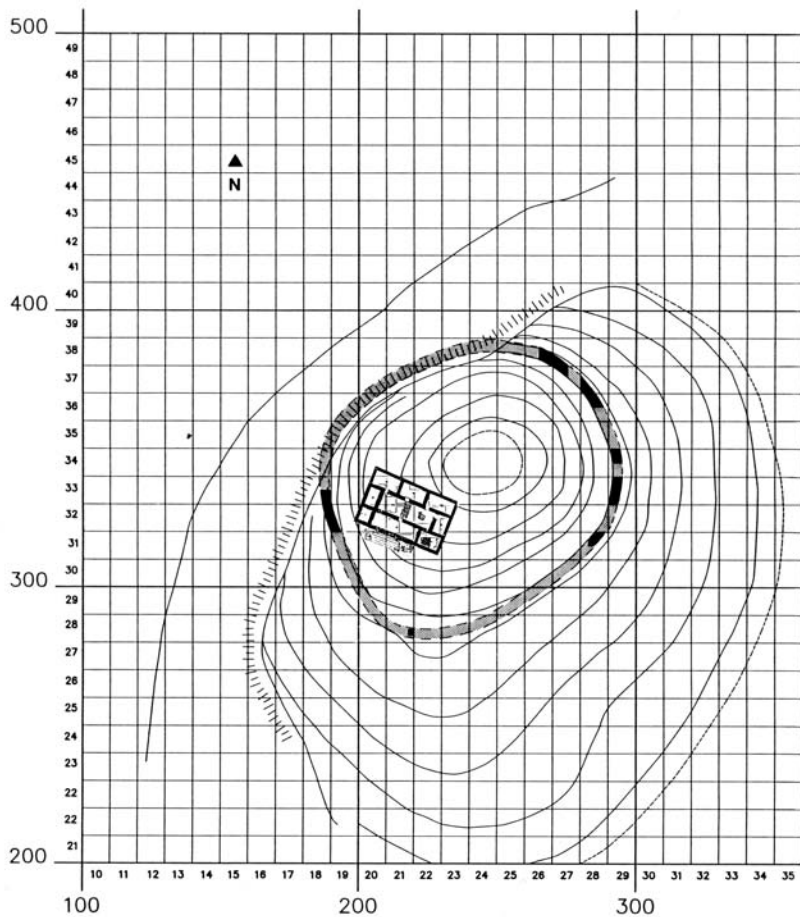


Plate XXXII. Tell Šaiḥ Ḥassan, after Boese 1995: 247 fig. 4.

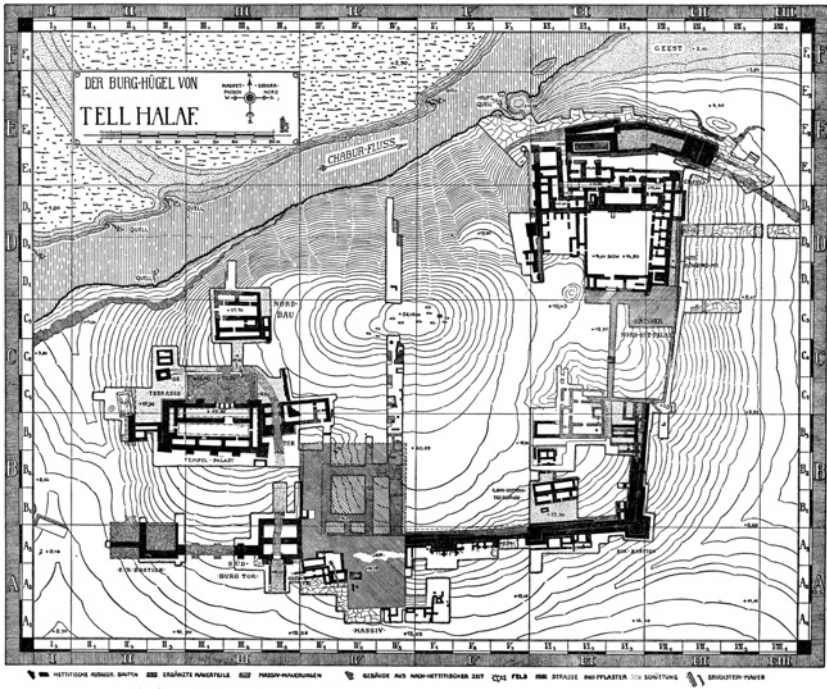


Plate XXXIII. Citadel of Guzana (Tell Halaf), after von Luschan 1950: pl. II.

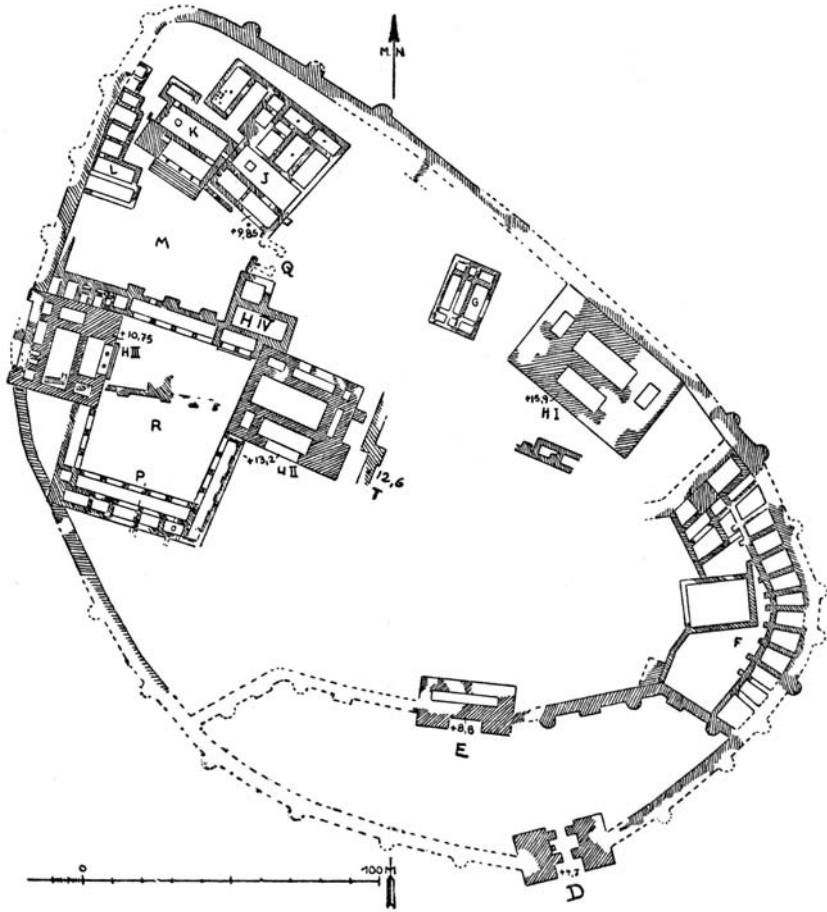


Plate XXXIV. Citadel of Sam'al (Zincirli), after Naumann 21971: 418 fig. 550.



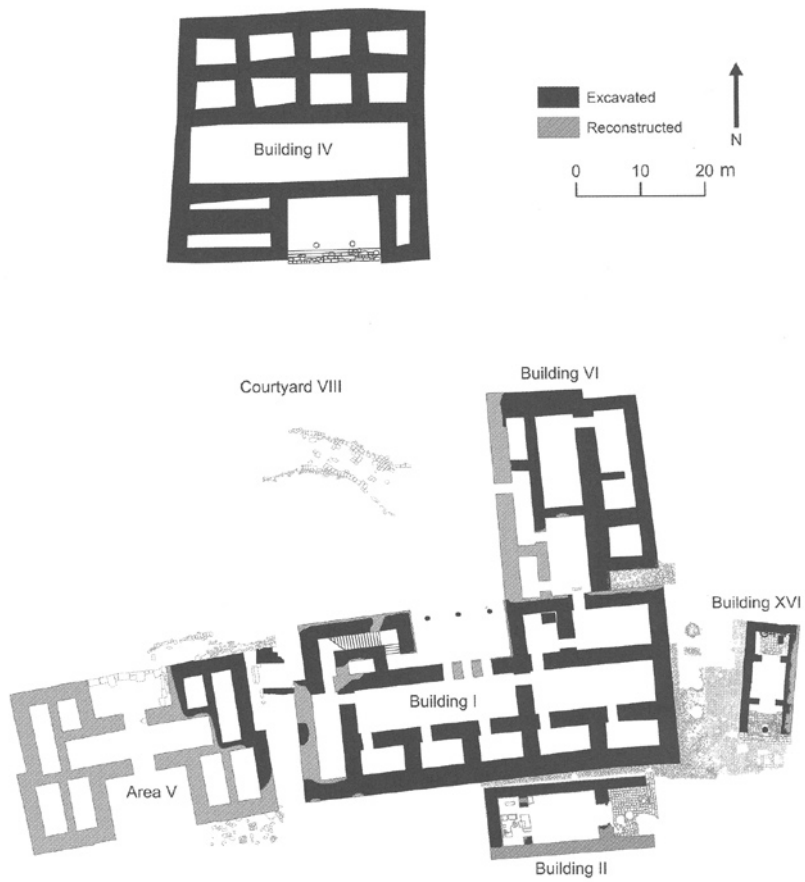


Plate XXXV. Citadel of Kunulua (Tell Tayinat) with palaces of the *hilani*-type and two temples *in antis*, after Harrison 2012: 6 fig. 3.

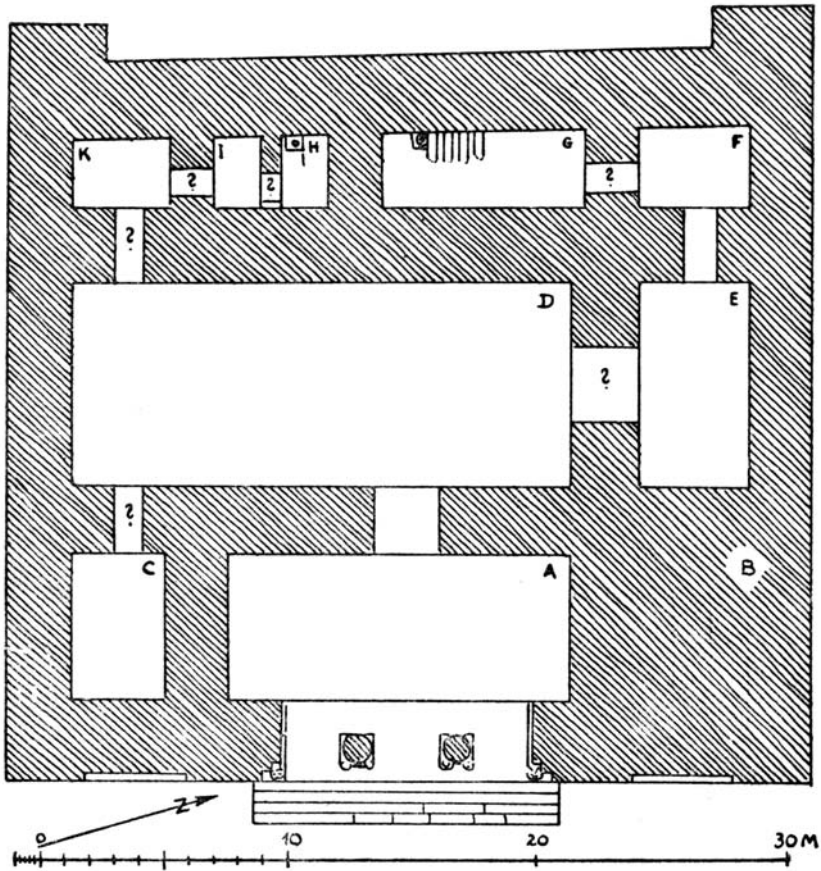


Plate XXXVI. Palace of the *hilani*-type (*hilani* III) in Sam'al (Zincirli), after Naumann <sup>2</sup>1971: 419 fig. 553.

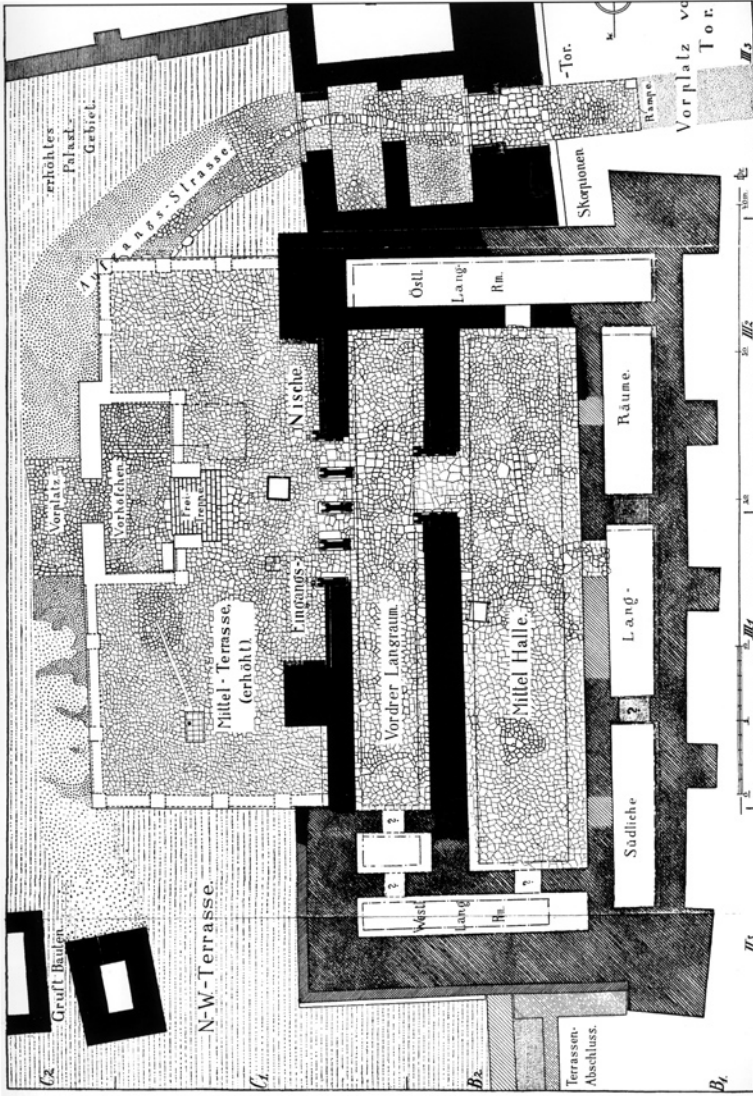


Plate XXXVII. Palace of the *hitani*-type in Guzana (Zincirli), after Cholidis – Martin (eds.) 2010: 72 fig. V. 5.



Plate XXXVIII. Temple of the Storm-God of Aleppo, after Gonnella – Khayyata – Kohlmeier 2005: 88 fig. 117.

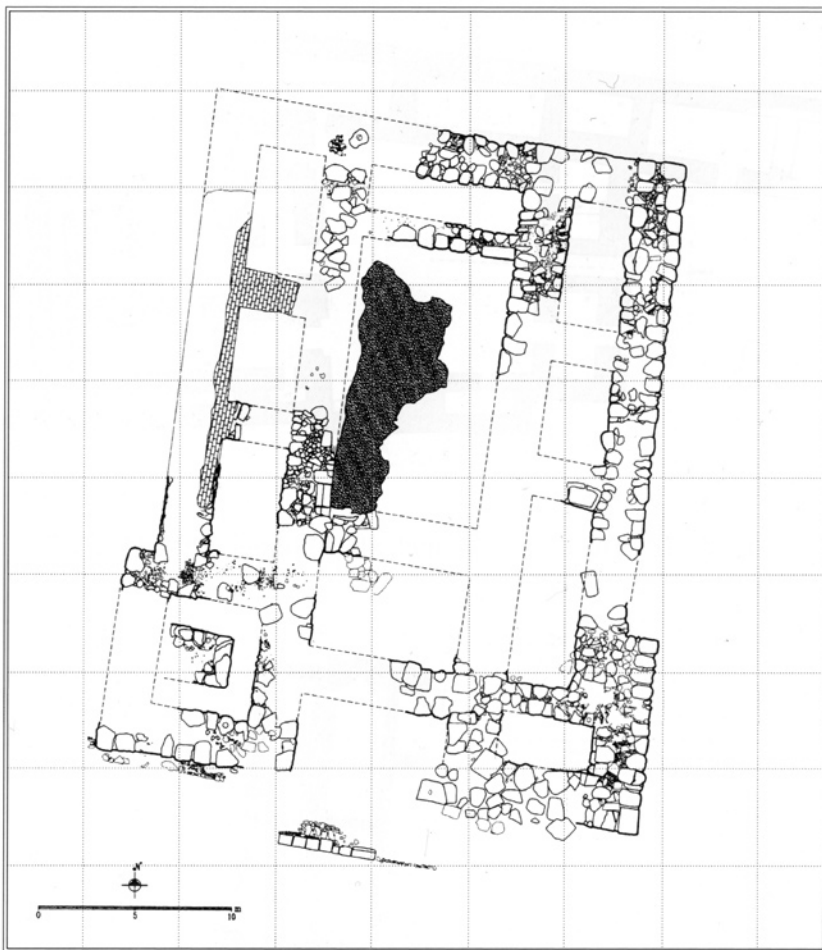


Plate XXXIX. Temple in Hazrak, after Mazzoni 2010: 376 fig. 10.

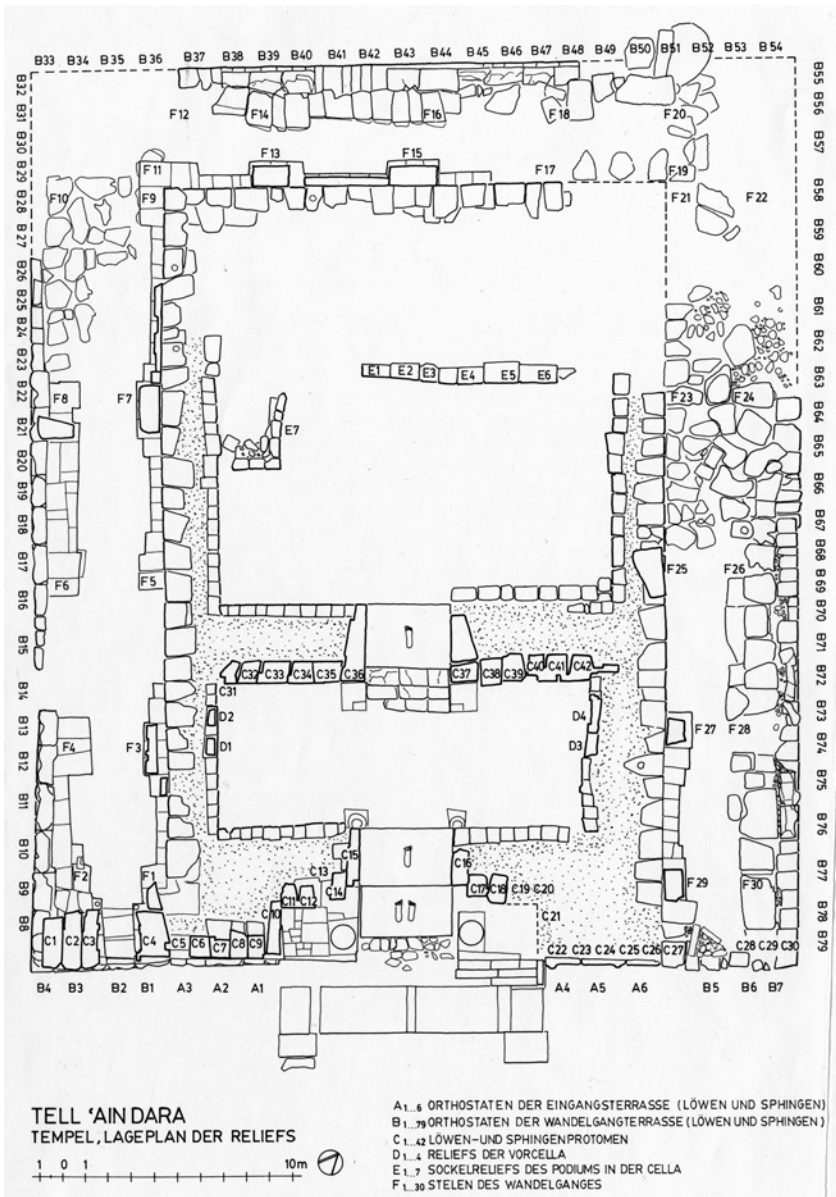


Plate XL. Temple of 'Ain Dara, after Abou Assaf 1990: fig. 18.



Plate XLI. Dwelling quarter in Tell Mastuma, after Braemer 1997: 67 fig. 5c.







Plate XLIII. Stele of Betsaida, after Bennett – Keel 1998: fig. 1c.



Plate XLIV. Stele (?) of Gath; courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority; photo Benjamin Sass.



o. 33

Plate XLV. Stele from Saqqara, after *CIS* II/1 no. 122 pl. XI.