Edward Lipinski (orientalist)

Edward (Edouard) Lipiński (born 18 June 1930 in Lodz, Poland) is a Belgian Biblical scholar and Orientalist.

His first major work, published in 1965, was a monumental monograph entitled *La royauté de Yahwé dans la poésie et le culte de l'ancien Israël*. In 1969, he was appointed professor at the Catholic University of Leuven, where he taught i.a. the comparative grammar of Semitic languages and history of ancient Near Eastern religions and institutions. He was head of the Department of Oriental and Slavonic studies at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from 1978 to 1984. He directed the publication of the *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique* (1992) and the *Studia Phoenicia* series (from 1983). He also published *Semitic Languages. Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (1997, 2001) and dealt extensively with Old Aramaic dialects and history, in particular in his *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics* (1975, 1994, 2010) and in *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (2000). Referring to the latter work a reviewer noted that it "embodies the accumulated insights of one of the greatest Semitic scholars of our time". Professor Edward Lipiński was awarded a doctorate honoris causa by the Lund University in 2003. Although he retired from KU Leuven in 1995, he continues teaching and doing research mainly in Aramaic and Phoenician studies.

The WorldCat database lists over a hundred publications by Edward Lipiński in his various fields of expertise.

A complete bibliography was published by The Enigma Press. Here is a short list of his major publications:

- *La Royauté de Yahwé dans la poésie et le culte de l'ancien Israël* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Letteren, Jaarg. XXVII, Nr 55), Paleis der Academiën, Brussel 1965, 560 pp. ; second edition, Brussel 1968.
- *Le Poème royal du Psaume LXXXIX, 1-5.20-38* (Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 6), J. Gabalda et Cie, Paris 1967, 110 pp.
- *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics I –III* (Orient. Lov. An. 1, 57, 200), Leuven University Press, Peeters & Oriëntalistiek, Leuven 1975, 1994, 2010, 240 pp., 273 pp., XX + 308 pp.
- Author of volumes 1, 5 and 6 of *Studia Paulo Naster Oblata: Orientalia antiqua* published 1982 Peeters Publishers[7]
- (Ed.), *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique*, Brepols, Turnhout 1992, XXII + 502 p., 14 colour pls.
- *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique* (Orient. Lov. An. 64; Studia Phoenicia XIV), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 1995, 536 p.
- *Semitic languages: outline of a comparative grammar*, 2000. ISBN 978-90-429-0815-4
- *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (Orient. Lov. An. 80), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 1997, 756 pp.; 2nd ed., Leuven 2001, 780 pp.
- *The Aramaeans: their ancient history, culture, religion*, 2001. ISBN 978-90-429-0859-8
- *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (Orient. Lov. An. 100), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2000, 697 pp.
- *Itineraria Phoenicia* (Orient. Lov. An. 127; Studia Phoenicia XVIII), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2004, XXVI+ 622 pp.
- *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age. Historical and Topographical Researches* (Orient. Lov. An. 153), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2006, 484 pp.
- *Prawo bliskowschodnie w starożytności. Wprowadzenie historyczne* (The Near Eastern Law in Antiquity. A Historical Introduction; Studia historico-biblica 2), Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2009, 492 pp.
- *Resheph. A Syro-Canaanite Deity* (Orient. Lov. An. 181; Studia Phoenicia XIX), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2009, 297 pp.

CHAPTER I

ARAMAEAN PRE-HISTORY AND PROTO-HISTORY

The Levant underwent significant changes and transformations between 1200 and 900 B.C., a period which corresponds to the end of the Late Bronze Age and to Iron Age I. The North-Syrian and Canaanite city-state system of the Bronze Age was then replaced by an ethno-political structure in which the various regions of the Levant were inhabited by different peoples. This change was accompanied by the collapse of the Hittite empire, by a considerable shrinking of the Assyrian power basis, and by the evanescence of the Egyptian control in Syro-Phoenicia and in Canaan, with concomitant and widespread destructions of the urban centres. The consequence was the abrupt end of historical records provided by the cuneiform archives of Hattusha, Emar, and Ugarit, which were not replaced by a sufficient amount of reliable indigenous sources. The immediate cause of the momentous changes in the Levant seem to have been the large-scale migrations that occurred at the end of the Bronze Age and were probably brought about by a severe and protracted famine in Anatolia. Syria and Palestine were affected directly by the arrival of displaced "Sea Peoples", that were moving along the Mediterranean coast, and by the migrations of the Aramaeans, who spread inland all over the Fertile Crescent where they had already occupied steppes, high grounds, and fringes of arable land, apparently without being noticed by the sedentary and literate populations of the region.

I.J. Gelb could state in 1961 that, "staying on safe historical ground, the first real reference ... to the Aramaeans" is to be found "in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I"[1]. However, the occurrences of the name *Aram* in cuneiform texts of the second part of the third millennium and in those of the early and mid-second millennium B.C., as well as the systematic use of the appellation *Aḥlamū* to designate the Aramaeans in the first millennium B.C., repeatedly raised the question of the Aramaean prehistory and of the Aramaean origins. Besides the early attestations of the name *Aram*, the supposed relations between the Aramaeans and the *Aḥlamū*, the *Sutū*, and the Chaldaeans have to be dealt with. Also the

---

[1] I.J. GELB, *The Early History of the West Semitic Peoples*, in *JCS* 15 (1961), p. 27-47 (see p. 28, n. 5).

biblical traditions and the alleged Aramaean emigration from Qīr belong to this range of problems.

1. Early Occurrences of *Aram*

A toponym *A-ra-mu*[ki] is already attested in the third millennium B.C. at Ebla[2], in a list of geographical names first known from Tell Abū Ṣalābīḫ and partly attested also among the lexical texts from Uruk. These versions of the list must derive from an older source which was probably composed in Mesopotamia[3], in a period when the often alleged Hurrian origin of the toponym[4] can probably be dismissed. The place name ought to be considered as pre-Semitic, pre-Sumerian, and pre-Hurrian, just as many geographical names of Northern Syria in the third and second millennia B.C. that reveal a protopopulation of unknown linguistic affiliation, neither Semitic nor Hurrian[5]. Since *A-ra-me*[ki] is apparently the genitive of *A-ra-mu*[ki], the same place name may occur in a date formula from the reign of Naram-Sīn, found on two tablets from Tell Ḫafaǧe[6]:

---

[2] G. PETTINATO, *L'atlante geografico del Vicino Oriente antico attestato ad Ebla e ad Abū Ṣalābīkh*, in *Or* 47 (1978), p. 50-73 and Pl. VII-XII (see p. 70, No. 233); ID., *Testi lessicali monolingui della biblioteca L. 2769* (MEE 3), Napoli 1981, p. 224, No. 56, XI, 4; cf. p. 237, No. 234. Also similar place names, as *Arimu*[ki], *Arramu*[ki], *Ar-'à-mu*[ki], occur in documents from Ebla, but they cannot be reasonably linked with the Aramaeans. References to the texts are collected in A. ARCHI - A. PIACENTINI - F. POMPONIO, *I nomi di luogo dei testi di Ebla* (ARES II), Roma 1993, p. 109-110, 150-151, 168-169, while references and an attempt at locating the places, at least approximately, can be found in M. BONECHI, *I nomi geografici dei testi di Ebla* (RGTC 12/1), Wiesbaden 1993, p. 45-46, 50-51, 56. Besides the area of Ebla itself, proposed for *Arramu*[ki], the region of the Middle Euphrates, between Carchemish and Emar, is taken into account by the author, who quotes earlier suggestions as well.

[3] R. BIGGS, *The Ebla Tablets. An Interim Perspective*, in *BA* 43 (1980), p. 76-87 (see p. 84-85); ID., *Ebla and Abu Salabikh*, in L. CAGNI (ed.), *La lingua di Ebla*, Napoli 1981, p. 121-133 (see p. 130-132).

[4] Thus, recently, R. ZADOK, *Elements of Aramean Pre-History*, in M. COGAN - I. EPH'AL (eds.), *Ah, Assyria... Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor* (Scripta Hierosolymitana 33), Jerusalem 1991, p. 104-117 (see p. 106).

[5] Cf. I.J. GELB, *art. cit.* (n. 1), p. 39-40; ID., *Ebla and the Kish Civilization*, in L. CAGNI (ed.), *La lingua di Ebla*, Napoli 1981, p. 9-73 (see p. 64-66).

[6] I.J. GELB, *Sargonic Texts from the Diyala Region* (MAD 1), Nos. 217 and 224. See also D.R. FRAYNE, *Narām-Sîn. A*, in *RLA* IX/3-4, Berlin 1999, p. 169-174, in particular p. 173, §4.13.4.

Kh. 1934, 22	Kh. 1934, 25	
in 1 MU	*in* [1 MU]	"In the year (when)
^d*Na-ra-am*-^dE[N.ZU]	^d*Na-ra-am*-[^dEN.Z]U	Naram-Sīn
˺˺˺˺˺˺˺ *Ba-ba*	˺˺˺˺˺˺ *Ba-ba*	captured Baba,
ENSÍ *Si-mu-ur*₄-*ri-im*^{ki}	ENSÍ *Si-mu-ur*₄	the ruler of Simurrum,
Dub-ul ENSÍ	[*Dub*]-*ul* ENSÍ	(and) Dubul, the ruler
[*A-r*]*a-me*^{ki} *ik-mi*-ME	*A-ra*-[*me*^{ki}]	of Aramu".
	ik-mi-ù	

Simurrum, later Šimurrum, should be located somewhere between Altin Köprü, on the Lesser Zab, and the Diyāla river, most likely on the (Āb-i) Sirwān, as upper Diyāla is called[7]. The Sirwān river seems indeed to have been named after the ancient city of Simurrum, a neighbour to the land of Lullubi, which lay in the district of Sulaimaniyya, as indicated by the rock-reliefs of Naram-Sīn[8]. The city of Aramu has to be looked for probably in the same region, also on the Diyāla river, but south of the point where the river broke through the Ğebel Ḥamrīn[9].

Aram was believed to be mentioned also in a copy of a Naram-Sīn's inscription published in 1911 by Fr. Thureau-Dangin and widely discussed by scholars[10] until E. Sollberger made it clear, in 1970, that EN *A-ra-am* was no "lord of Aram" but the preterite *en'aram* of the Old

---

[7] D.R. FRAYNE, *On the Location of Simurrum*, in G.D. YOUNG - M.W. CHAVALAS - R.E. AVERBECK (eds.), *Crossing Boundaries and Linking Horizons. Studies in Honor of M.C. Astour*, Bethesda 1997, p. 243-269. See also E. F. WEIDNER, *Simurrum und Zaban*, in *AfO* 15 (1945-51), p. 75-80; A. GOETZE, *Ḫulibar of Duddul*, in *JNES* 12 (1953), p. 114-124 (see p. 120 and 123); W. W. HALLO, *Simurrum and the Hurrian Frontier*, in *RHA* 36 (1978 [1980]), p. 71-83, with map.

[8] S. SMITH, *Early History of Assyria*, London 1928, p. 96-97; E.A. SPEISER, *Southern Kurdistan in the Annals of Ashurnasirpal and To-day* (AASOR 8), New Haven 1928, p. 8 and map; C.J. EDMONDS, *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs*, London 1957, p. 360 and map facing p. 440; ID., *Some Ancient Monuments on the Iraqi-Persian Border*, in *Iraq* 28 (1966), p. 159-163 and Pl. XLV-XLVIII (see Pl. XLV*b*).

[9] D.R. FRAYNE, *The Early Dynastic List of Geographical Names* (AOS 74), New Haven 1992, p. 70; ID., *art. cit.* (n. 7), p. 263.

[10] F. THUREAU-DANGIN, *Une inscription de Narâm-Sin*, in *RA* 8 (1911), p. 199-200. Thureau-Dangin regarded his interpretation as partly uncertain and warned against a too rush identification of *A-ra-am* with the Aramaeans. É. DHORME, *Abraham dans le cadre de l'histoire*, 2nd art., in *RB* 37 (1928), p. 481-511 (see p. 487-488 = *Recueil Édouard Dhorme*, Paris 1951, p. 219-220), did not resist the temptation of identifying this problematic *A-ra-am* with the Aramaeans. See also B. HROZNÝ, *Narâm-Sin et ses ennemis d'après un texte hittite*, in *Archiv Orientální* 1 (1929), p. 65-76, in particular p. 75-76, and A. DUPONT-SOMMER, *Sur les débuts de l'histoire araméenne*, in *Congress Volume: Copenhagen 1953* (VTS 1), Leiden 1953, p. 40-49. Instead, I.J. GELB, *Inscriptions from Alishar and Vicinity* (OIP 27), Chicago 1936, p. 6, n. 60, and J. LEWY, *Tabor, Tibar, Atabyros*, in *HUCA* 23/1 (1950-51), p. 357-386 (see p. 368-376), have identified *A-ra-am* with *Armānum*.

Akkadian verb *na'ārum*, "to smite", "to strike", with the morpheme *-am* of the ventive[11]. In consequence, the much discussed passage of this text should be read [^{d}Na-ra-am-^{d}]EN.ZU LUGAL [*ki-ib-ra-t*]*im ar-ba-im i-nu Ḫur-ša-ma-at*^{ki} *en-a-ra-am* ù AM *in qáb-lá-ni Dì-ba-ar sa-dú-im su$_4$-ma u-sa-am-qí-it-sú*, "Naram-Sīn, king of the four (world's) quarters, when he had smitten Ḫuršamat and he himself had killed a wild bull in the middle of the mountain Dibar..." The location of the land or town of Ḫuršamat and of Mount Dibar is unknown, because it is unlikely that Ḫuršamat has something in common — apart its name — with the North-Anatolian city of Ḫuršamma[12].

However, a city *A-ra-mi*^{ki} is mentioned after *Áš-nun*^{ki}, i.e. Ešnunna, present-day Tell Asmar, in a Sumerian administrative document from the Ur-III period, which lists animals brought to the central cattle-park at Puzriš-Dagan, near Nippur, at the site now called Drehem[13], while an Old Babylonian tablet refers to *Ar-ra-mu*^{ki} in Subartu[14]. Since Ešnunna lies east of the Tigris, while the Subarians of that time probably lived in the east-Tigridic foothills of the Kurdish mountains, *A-ra-mi*^{ki} and possibly *Ar-ra-mu*^{ki} must be the same city as the *A-ra-me*^{ki} mentioned with Simur-rum at the time of Naram-Sīn. In any case, these texts clearly refer to a town and *A-ra-me*^{ki} was governed in the 22nd century B.C. by an *ensí* or *išši'akkum*, while most Aramaeans of the 12th-11th centuries B.C. were still half-nomadic tribesmen of the Ğazira and of the Syrian steppe. There can hardly be any relation between these various ethnic entities.

Nevertheless, the mention of the town of *A-ra-mi*^{ki} in the Ur-III document and the almost contemporaneous reference to an employee called *A-ra-mu* in another text from Puzriš-Dagan[15] were considered in some quarters as a sufficient evidence of Aramaean presence in the east-Tigridic region of Mesopotamia[16]. However, a distinction should be

---

[11] E. SOLLBERGER, *Princes fantômes*, in *RA* 64 (1970), p. 173-174; ID. - J.-R. KUPPER, *Inscriptions royales sumériennes et akkadiennes* (LAPO 2), Paris 1971 p. 108, § IIA4f.

[12] H. OTTEN, *Ḫuršam(m)a*, in *RLA* IV, Berlin-New York 1972-75, p. 521b.

[13] The text was published by P. DEIMEL, *Miszellen*, in *Orientalia* 2 (1920), p. 62 (Wengler 22). Cf. D.O. EDZARD - G. FARBER, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der Zeit der 3. Dynastie von Ur* (RGTC 2), Wiesbaden 1974, p. 15; D.R. FRAYNE, *art. cit.* (n. 7), p. 263.

[14] J.J. FINKELSTEIN, *Subartu and the Subarians in Old Babylonian Sources*, in *JCS* 9 (1955), p. 1-7 (see p. 2).

[15] C.E. KEISER, *Cuneiform Bullae of the Third Millennium B.C.* (Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan 3), New York 1914, No. 159.
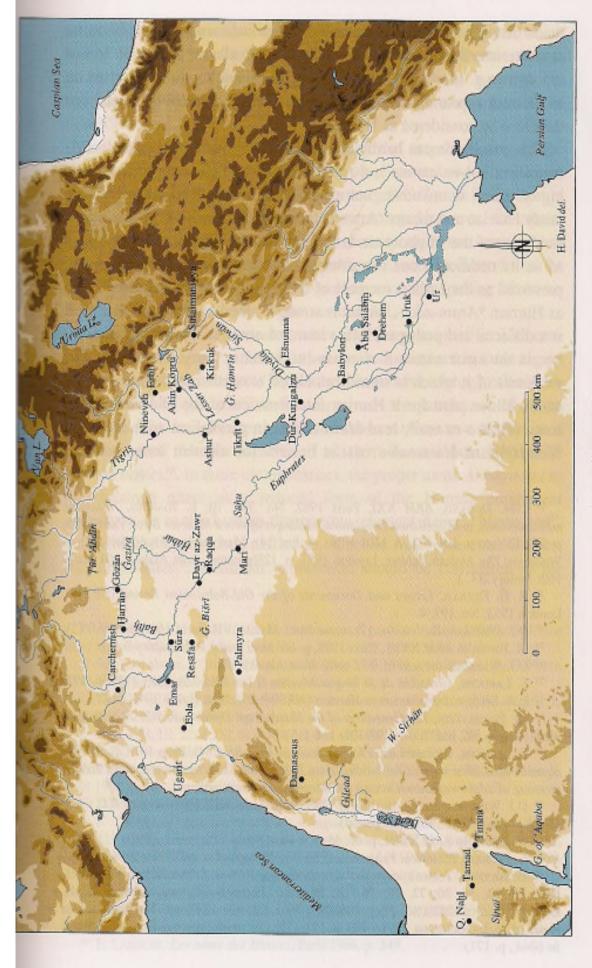
[16] The relative cautiousness shown by N. SCHNEIDER, *Aram und die Aramäer in Ur III-Zeit*, in *Biblica* 30 (1949), p. 109-111, is conspicuously missing in the articles by S. MOSCATI, *Sulle origini degli Aramei*, in *RSO* 26 (1951), p. 16-22, and A. DUPONT-SOMMER, *art. cit.* (n. 10), p. 40, 43.

1. Middle East.

made between the place name and the personal name, which shows no characteristic Semitic morpheme indicating the alleged derivation from a toponym, e.g. *-ī* or *-ay*. On the contrary, the name seems to be based on an element appearing also in compound Hurrian anthroponyms and can therefore be considered as Hurrian.

This conclusion can hardly be deduced from one-word names like *A-ra-am-mu*[17], *A-ra-am-me*[18], *A-ra-ma*[19], or *A-ra-mu*[20], because the meaning of *aram-* is unknown, but a name like *A-ra-am-mu-šu-ni*[21] is certainly Hurrian and means "Aram is the righteous one"[22]. Considering the weakness of the *r/l* phoneme in Hurrian and the occasional interchange *r/l* in its notation[23], one can interpret the name of *A-ra-am-ma-da-ra*, presented as the earliest member of the first dynasty of Babylon[24], also as Hurrian **Aram-adal-*, "Aram is strong"[25]. Besides, it seems that *arim* is a dialectal and perhaps a later variant of *aram*; it appears, among others, in the same names *A-ri-mu-šu-[ni]*[26] and in *A-ri-im-a-da-al*[27]. The weakness of *r*, which is sometimes elided altogether in the middle of a name, allows also for a Hurrian interpretation of the Old Babylonian name *Mu-ti-a-ra-mu*[28], read *Mutri-aramu* in parallelism with *Mu-ut-ri-* *[d]Tešub(ub)* and *Mu-tara/i-*STORM at Emar[29]. The element *'arm* vocalized

[17] J.-M. Durand, *ARM* XXI, Paris 1982, No. 399, 10; F. Joannès, *Nouveaux mémorandums*, in *Miscellanea Babylonica. Mélanges offerts à Maurice Birot*, Paris 1985, p. 97-113 (see p. 101-102: A 1401 = No. 4, line 14): Mari (early 17th century); D. J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, London 1953, p. 128b: names from Alalakh VII (early 16th century B.C.).

[18] H. H. Figulla, *Letters and Documents of the Old-Babylonian Period* (UET 5), London 1953, No. 197, 4.

[19] D.J. Wiseman, *loc. cit.* (n. 17): name from Alalakh VII (early 16th century B.C.).

[20] M. Birot, in *ARM* XVI/1, Paris 1979, p. 66: Mari (early 17th century B.C.).

[21] D.J. Wiseman, *loc. cit.* (n. 17): name from Alalakh VII.

[22] E. Laroche, *Glossaire de la langue hourrite* II (= *RHA* 35), Paris 1979, p. 173.

[23] E.A. Speiser, *Introduction to Hurrian* (AASOR 20), New Haven 1941, p. 27.

[24] J.J. Finkelstein, *The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty*, in *JCS* 20 (1966), p. 95-118 (see p. 96, line 1; cf. p. 98-101, 114-115).

[25] E. Laroche, *Glossaire de la langue hourrite* I (= *RHA* 34), Paris 1978, p. 35. The equation *a-da-al-lu = ga-áš-ru*, "strong", in a Babylonian list of synonyms shows that the meaning of *adal-* was known among the Assyro-Babylonian scribes.

[26] D.J. Wiseman, *op. cit.* (n. 17), p. 129b: from Alalakh IV (15th century B.C.). See also *A-ri-mu-še* (*ibid.*, the same period).

[27] M. Birot, in *ARM* XVI/1, p. 66: Mari, a slave (early 17th century B.C.).

[28] L. Legrain, *Historical Fragments* (PBS 13), Philadelphia 1922, No. 56, 4.

[29] D. Arnaud, *Textes syriens de l'âge du Bronze Récent*, Sabadell-Barcelona 1991, Nos. 20, 20; 36, 30; 72, 28; 76, 19; 84, 1.10. Hieroglyphic seal impressions: H. Gonnet, *ibid.*, p. 202 (No. 36c), 206 (No. 76b), 207 (No. 84); etc. For the element *mutri*, cf. E. Laroche, *op. cit.* (n. 22), p. 171-172, s. v. *mudri*, and see also *mu-ti-be-eš-ša* (*ibid.*, p. 171).

aram does not appear until now in Hurrian names from Ugarit, which belong to a later phase of the Hurrian onomastics, but the word *'arm* occurs there in the alphabetic Hurrrian phrases *Ṯ'uṯk tzġ 'arm Ttp* and *tzġ 'arm Ṯṯb Ṯ'uṯk*, which must mean "Šauška is the *tzġ 'arm* of Tešub"[30].

Since the 18th-17th centuries B.C. mark the very beginning of the Hurrian occupation of western Syria, the place name *Ar-ra-mu*[ki] attested on the territory of Ebla about the 23rd century B.C.[31] must be brought in relation with the protopopulation of the country. However, we cannot suppose that people living in this region were speaking the same kind of language as the protopopulation of southern Kurdistan. Therefore, one might prefer to consider this *Ar-ra-mu*[ki] as a variant spelling of *Ar-'à-mu*[ki], i.e. /'Arhamu/, attested in the same area[32].

As for *Bn-'Army*[33], *Ar-me-ia*[34], and *eqlēt*[meš] *a-ra-mi-ma*[35] in 13th century texts from Ugarit, some authors were inclined to see in them a gentilic meaning "Aramaean(s)"[36], while others have rightly called this interpretation in question[37]. In fact, *Armeya* is the patronymic of a man called *Zi-di-ia*, in one case, and, in the other, *Armeya* is a witness to a deed in which the two parties and all the witnesses bear Hurrian or Luwian names[38]. In these circumstances, the proper name *Armeya* has to be explained either as a reduced form of the Hurrian component *aram/arim* or as the Luwian theophorous element *Arma*, "Moon god", both with the hypocoristic suffix *-ya*, which is well represented in Hurrian onomastics[39]. A similar explanation should be considered in the

---

[30] *KTU* 1.148, 17; 1.149, 10. Cf. E. LAROCHE, in *Ugaritica* V, Paris 1968, p. 517. The word *tzġ* probably means "chief"; cf. ID., *op. cit.* (n. 22), p. 263, s. v. *tešuḫi*.

[31] See here above, p. 26, n. 2, in particular TM. 75.G.1444, transliterated by G. PETTINATO, *Ebla, un impero inciso nell'argilla*, Milano 1979, p. 115.

[32] TM. 75.G.1789, published by P. MANDER, *Administrative Texts of the Archive L. 2769* (MEE 10), Roma 1990, No. 3, I, 11.

[33] *KTU* 4.63, III, 22; 4.232, 9; 4.309, 10. See also *Bn.'Arm* (*KTU* 4.232, 5) and *'Army* (*KTU* 4.232, 7), probably the same village as *'Arm* (*KTU* 4.750, 5).

[34] J. NOUGAYROL, *PRU* III, Paris 1955, p. 35, RS. 15.37, line 13; ID., *Ugaritica* V, Paris 1968, p. 181, No. 86, RS. 20.176, line 25.

[35] J. NOUGAYROL, *PRU* III, p. 148, RS. 16.178, line 10.

[36] F. THUREAU-DANGIN, *Une tablette bilingue de Ras Shamra*, in *RA* 37 (1940-41), p. 97-118 (see p. 115, n. 6); A. DUPONT-SOMMER, *art. cit.* (n. 10), p. 46; J.-R. KUPPER, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie au temps des rois de Mari*, Paris 1957, p. 114; G.G.G. REINHOLD, *Die Beziehungen Altisraels zu den aramäischen Staaten in der israelitisch-judäischen Königszeit*, Frankfurt a/M 1989, p. 27.

[37] Already M. LIVERANI, *Storia di Ugarit* (Studi Semitici 6), Roma 1962, p. 153-154.

[38] See here above, note 34.

[39] E. LAROCHE, *Les noms des Hittites*, Paris 1966, p. 349.

case of the early Urarṭian leader *Ar(r)āmu* (9th centuryB.C.)[40], whose name would instead mean "Aramaean" according to some authors[41]. As for the noun *a-ra-mi-ma* at Ugarit, it is the Ugaritic genitive plural in -*īma* of a noun *'aram, haram,* or *'aram* which qualifies a certain type of fields. It is used without any determinative and, in consequence, can hardly be considered as a gentilic. Since Babylonian *arammu,* South-Arabian *'rm,* and Arabic *'arim* mean "dam", one could propose for *eqlēt*[meš] *a-ra-mi-ma* the translation "fields with dams", i.e. "dammed fields". This interpretation is strongly supported by the Arabic derivative *'arīm,* "irrigated land", developed from the notion of fields surrounded by ridges of earth which retain water for irrigation[42]. A derivative of the verbal root *'rm,* "to heap", occurs in Ugaritic as a place name[43].

Attempts have also been made in order to discover a mention of the Aramaeans in Egyptian texts. A toponym *P3-irm(w)* occurs in a topographic list of Amenhotep III's (*ca.* 1386-1349 B.C.) funerary temple[44] and in Papyrus Anastasi III from *ca.* 1210 B.C.[45]. Since this name does not have the "country" determinative, but rather the "man" determinative, it was interpreted as "(Place) of the Aramaeans" and tentatively located somewhere in southern Syria, perhaps in the Beqa' Valley or in the oasis of Damascus[46]. According to Papyrus Anastasi III, this was the district including the "Town of Merneptah". This indication seems to preclude any identification of *P3-irm(w)* with a region of Syria. In fact, Egyptian suzerainty was not maintained in inner Syria under Merneptah, although there is clear evidence of the restoration of Egyptian power in

---

[40] *APN,* p. 28a; *PNA* I/1, p. 132-133.

[41] M. van Loon, *Urartian Art,* İstanbul 1966, p. 7, n. 24; p. 26, n. 131; M. Salvini, *La formation de l'État urartéen,* in *Hethitica* 8 (1987), p. 393-411 (see p. 399-400); Id., *Geschichte und Kultur der Urartäer,* Darmstadt 1995, p. 26-27.

[42] M.A. Ghūl, *Early Southern Arabian Languages and Classical Arabic Sources,* Irbid 1993, p. 189-193. This explanation is now more appealing than our previous attempt to divide *a-ra-mi-ma* into two distinct words; cf. E. Lipiński, *Aramäer und Israel,* in *TRE* III, Berlin-New York 1978, p. 590-599 (see p. 591).

[43] *KTU* 4.68, 22: place name *'rm; KTU* 4.33, 5, and 4.51, 13: gentilic *'rmy.* One should also mention the personal name *'rmn* (*KTU* 4.93, II, 13), *Ar-mu-na* in syllabic cuneiform (J. Nougayrol, *PRU* III, p. 203, lines 10-12 and 20).

[44] E. Edel, *Die Ortsnamenlisten aus den Totentempel Amenophis III.,* Bonn 1966, p. 28-29.

[45] BM. 10246, rev. V, 5, facsimiled in G. Möller, *Hieratische Lesestücke* III, Leipzig 1935, p. 27. Transcription into hieroglyphic in A.H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 7), Brussels 1937, p. 32. Passage in *ANET,* p. 258b-259a.

[46] E. Edel, *op. cit.* (n. 44), p. 28-29; M. Görg, *Aram und Israel,* in *VT* 26 (1976), p. 499-500; Id., *Namenstudien* III. *Zum Problem einer Frühbezeugung von Aram,* in *BN* 9 (1979), p. 7-10, reprinted in Id., *Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte der Anfänge Israels. Dokumente-Materialien-Notizen* (Ägypten und Altes Testament 2), Wiesbaden 1989, p. 157-160.

southern Palestine[47]. This is confirmed by the epithet "subduer of Gezer" given to Merneptah in an inscription at Amada[48]. Besides, another topographic list of the same Amenhotep's temple mentions Damascus[49], thus precluding the identification of *P3-irm(w)* with this city or its oasis.

A simple explanation of the toponym would consist in equating *P3-irm* with biblical *P'rn*, in the central Sinai Peninsula, on the way from Midian to Egypt (I Kings 11, 18). This large desertic region[50] was traversed by the Egyptians who were exploiting the Timna' copper mine, in operation at least from the beginning of the 13th century to the time of Ramses V (1145-1141 B.C.)[51]. In this hypothesis, the "Town of Merneptah" mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi III was a manned strong-point on this difficult desert route through the Sinai Peninsula. This route may correspond to the Darb al-Ḥağğ of the pilgrims travelling from Egypt to Mecca. It crosses the Tīh desert, ancient P(h)aran, by way of Qal'at an-Naḥl and At-Ṭamad to reach Rās an-Naqb and the northern tip of the Gulf of 'Aqaba. The place called *Phara* on the Peutinger Table is undoubtedly Pharan and it should correspond to At-Ṭamad, since the milage indicated there for the trip from Haila (Aila) to Pharan is 50 Roman miles[52]. The difference *m/n* in the spelling of the toponym *P3-irm/P'rn* does not constitute any difficulty, since the two phonemes frequently alternate, especially at the end of a word[53].

Since Egyptian *r* regularly corresponds to Semitic *l*, *P3-irm(w)* might be identified also with the important oasis of Elim (*'ylm*), which was known in biblical times[54]. It has long been suggested to locate it in Wādī Ġarandal, near the western shore of the Sinai Peninsula[55], on the way to

---

[47] This results from the so-called Israel Stela, studied by W. SPIEGELBERG, *Der Siegeshymnus der Merneptah auf der Flinders-Petrie Stela*, in *ZÄS* 34 (1896), p. 1-25. For the best reference to this text and its duplicate, see K.A. KITCHEN, *Ramesside Inscriptions* IV, Oxford 1982, p. 12-19. There are several translations, also in *ANET*, p. 376-378, with a reproduction in *ANEP*, Nos. 342-343.

[48] For the inscription, where the numeral should be read "Year 5" (E. WENTE, in *ErIs* 18 [1985], p. 62*, n. 2), see K.A. KITCHEN, *op. cit.* (n. 47), p. 34. Cf. also A.H. GARDINER, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, Oxford 1961, p. 273.

[49] E. EDEL, *op. cit.* (n. 44), p. 11.

[50] The limits of the desertic area are difficult to determine; cf. Y. AHARONI, *The Land of the Bible. A Historical Geography*, London 1967, p. 180-183.

[51] B. ROTHENBERG, *Timna: Valley of Biblical Copper Mines*, London 1972; ID., *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna*, London 1988.

[52] However, the well-watered Feiran oasis is pointed at by Ph. MAYERSON, *The Clysma-Phara-Haila Road on the Peutinger Table*, in *Numismatic and Other Studies in Honor of B.L. Trell*, Detroit 1981, p. 167-176 (see the map on p. 169).

[53] LIPIŃSKI, *Semitic* §11.7; 27.30; 29.26; 31.12; 36.1, 5; 41.35; 48.5; 61.2.

[54] Ex. 15, 27; 16,1; Numb. 33, 9-10.

[55] ABEL, *Géographie* II, p. 210 and 312.

Ṣerābiṭ al-Ḥādim where mining operations went on under Merneptah's reign[56]. The place was known to Diodorus and Strabo[57], and to pilgrims in Late Roman times, as vividly expressed in the appendix to the *Itinerarium Egeriae*, which calls the site *Arandara*[58], and in the *Antonini Placentini Itinerarium*, where this pleasant place, *ubi applicuimus duos dies delectati*, is called *Surandala*[59]. However, no pre-Roman remains were discovered there and an alternative location was thus proposed for Elim at Bi'r Qaṭya, the largest oasis in northern Sinai, about 10 km south of the Al-'Arīš - Qanṭara road[60]. Extensive Nabataean ruins have been uncovered on the site, going back to the Hellenistic period[61], but there is no evidence pointing to Merneptah's time. Thus, the equation with *P'rn* seems at present to provide the best location for *P3-irm(w)*, that no indications link so far with the Aramaeans.

This equation may also provide an explanation of the name. In fact, a descendant of Seir is called *'Ărān* in the Hebrew text of Gen. 36,28 (= I Chron. 1,42) and Αραμ in the Greek text, also in other versions and in some Hebrew manuscripts. Mount Seir is personified in the genealogy of Gen. 36,20-30 as the fictitious ancestor of the indigenous tribes and clans living in the Negev and the Sinai Peninsula. Their location in this area is decidedly suggested by the juxtaposition of Mount Seir with Mount P(h)aran and Mount Sinai in early poetic texts, like Deut. 33,2 and Hab. 3,3. Egyptian *P3-irm* seems thus to refer to one of these tribes. In later times, Φαραν occurs in

[56] A.H. GARDINER - T.E. PEET, *The Inscriptions of Sinai*, 2nd ed. by J. ČERNÝ, London 1952, Nos. 266-267A.
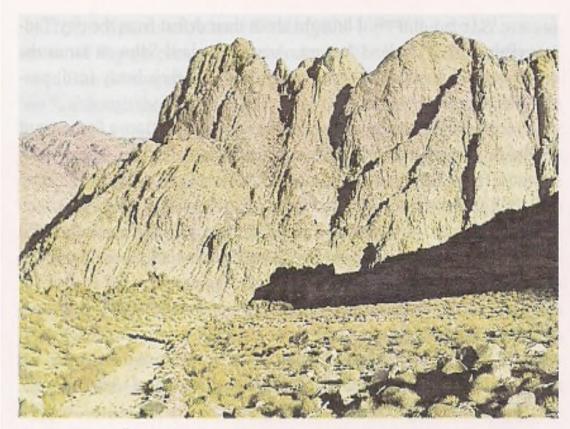
[57] DIODORUS SICULUS, *Bibliotheca Historica* III, 43 (Γαρινδανεις); STRABO, *Geography* XVI, 4, 18 (Γαρινδαῖοι).

[58] *Itineraria et alia geographica* (CCSL 175), Turnhout 1965, p. 102, §12. Also At-Ṭūr, in the southwestern part of the Sinai, was identified in the Late Antiquity with Elim; cf. P.-L. GATIER, *Les traditions et l'histoire du Sinaï du IVe au VIIe siècle*, in T. FAHD (ed.), *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel*, Leiden 1989, p. 499-523, in particular p. 500-503.

[59] *Itineraria et alia geographica* (n. 58), p. 150, §41, 2-7, and p. 172, §41, 8-13.

[60] M. DU BUIT, *Élim*, in *DEB*, Turnhout 1987, p. 402.

[61] J. CLÉDAT, *Fouilles à Qasr Gheit (mai 1911)*, in *ASAÉ* 12 (1912), p. 145-168 and Pl. I-III; Y. MARGOVSKY, *Three Temples in Northern Sinai* (in Hebrew), in *Qadmoniot* 4 (1971), p. 19-20; E.D. OREN - E. NETZER, *Settlements of the Roman Period at Qasarweit in Northern Sinai* (in Hebrew), in *Qadmoniot* 10 (1978), p. 94-107; E.D. OREN, *Survey of Northern Sinai*, in Z. MESHEL - I. FINKELSTEIN (eds.), *Sinai in Antiquity* (in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1980, p. 129-146; ID., *Excavations at Qasrawet in North-Western Sinai*, in *IEJ* 32 (1982), p. 203-211 and Pl. 27-29; Y. TSAFRIR, *Qasrawet: Its Ancient Name and Inhabitants*, in *IEJ* 32 (1982), p. 212-214; E.D. OREN, *Qasrawet*, in *NEAEHL*, Jerusalem 1993, vol. IV, p. 1213-1218.

Ğebel Musa in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula.

Ptolemy's *Geography* V, 16,1-3, also as a tribal name Φαρανῖται, but it is unlikely that this connotation echoes the Egyptian use of *P3-irm* with the determinative of "man", viz. the land "of the Aran/m" men.

The first incontestable use of the name "Aramaeans" occurs in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I of Assyria (1114-1076 B.C.), who is described as fighting the "Aramaean Aḫlamū", *Aḫ-la-mì-i* (genitive) kurAr-ma-iameš62. He engaged them "from the edge of the land Sūḫu to the city of Carchemish of the land Ḫatti", thus along the Middle Euphrates, crossed the river pursuing them, and conquered six of their settlements at the foot of Mount Bišrī, — seventeen according to another inscription[63]. The Aramaean activity around Mount Bišrī and along the Middle Euphrates suggests that regions in the West have been raided by nomads as well, as far as Tell Afis which was destroyed in the 12th century B.C.[64]. Summarizing his campaigns against the Aramaeans, Tiglath-pileser I says in his later annalistic texts: "I have crossed the Euphrates twenty-eight times, twice in one year, in pursuit of the Aramaean Aḫlamū (kurAḫ-

[62] *RIMA* II, text A.0.87.1, p. 23, lines 46-47; text A.0.87.2, p. 34, line [28]; text A.0.87.3, p. 37, lines 29-30; text A.0.87.4, p. 43, line 34.

[63] Six: *RIMA* II, text A.0.87.1, p. 23, lines 43-63; text A.0.87.2, p. 34, lines 28-29. Seventeen: *RIMA* II, text A.0.87.12, p. 59-60, lines 4'-8'.

[64] Cf. F. VENTURI, *Le premier âge du Fer à Tell Afis et en Syrie septentrionale*, in BUNNENS, *Syria*, p. 531-562, in particular p. 558-562.

la-me-e ^{kur}*Ar-ma-a-ia*^{meš}). I brought about their defeat from the city Tadmar (Palmyra) of the land Amurru, Anat of the land Sūḫu, as far as the city Rāpiqu of Karduniash (Babylonia). I brought their booty (and) possessions to my city Ashur"[65].

A somewhat different picture of the events emerges from a fragment of a Middle Assyrian chronicle which describes a serious famine that occurred in the later part of Tiglath-pileser's reign, probably in 1082 and 1081[66]. The Assyrians, pressured by starving Aramaean tribes, took then refuge in Kirruri, in the Zagros area, northeast of Erbil[67], and the Aramaeans probably captured Nineveh before Tiglath-pileser I could respond to the threat by marching to Katmuḫu, on the eastern edge of the Ṭūr 'Abdīn[68], from which the Aramaeans had apparently pushed their way into Assyria proper by advancing down the Tigris river. The text, though very fragmentary and in parts obscure, certainly refers to the "houses" or clans of the Aramaeans, without characterizing them as *Aḫlamū*:

2') "[…], the people ate flesh of each other, […]
3') […] the 'houses' of the Aramaeans
4') […] the relief, they seized the roads,
5') […] they conquered, they took [the…] of Assyria.
6') […] to the mountains of Kirruri […] life.
7') […] took their [gold], silver, and all their property.
8') Marduk-nādin-aḫḫē passed away; Marduk-šāpik-zēri,
9') [his son], entered [the house of his fathe]r. Marduk-nādin-aḫḫē had reigned 18 years.
10') […] the entire crops of the land of Assyria […]
11') […] became numerous, they seized (or: afflicted) the 'houses' of the Aramaeans,
12') […] the side of the fortress of Nineveh, the country downstream […]
13') […Tiglath-pil]eser, the king of Assyria, [went] to Katmuḫu"[69].

---

[65] *RIMA* II, text A.0.87.4, p. 43, lines 34-36; cf. text A.0.87.3, p. 37-38, lines 29-35, with the variant: "… their defeat from the foot of Mount Lebanon, the city Tadmar…". "Lebanon" is probably an error for "Bišrī", which is mentioned in earlier inscriptions, *ibid.*, text A.0.87.1, p. 23, line 59; text A.0.87.2, p. 34, line 29.

[66] The events are dated by the mention of the death of Marduk-nādin-aḫḫē, king of Babylon (*ca.* 1099-1082 B.C.), and that of the accession of his son, Marduk-šāpik-zēri (*ca.* 1081-1069 B.C.); cf. J.A. BRINKMAN, *Marduk-nādin-aḫḫē* and *Marduk-šāpik-zēri*, in *RLA* VII, Berlin 1987-90, p. 377 and 378.

[67] For the geographical location of this area, see L.D. LEVINE, *Kirruri, Kirriuri*, in *RLA* V, Berlin 1976-80, p. 606-607.

[68] For the location of Katmuḫu, see J.N. POSTGATE, *Katmuḫu*, in *RLA* V, Berlin 1976-80, p. 487-488.

[69] A.K. GRAYSON, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS 5), Locust Valley, N.Y., 1975, p. 189. For a discussion of this passage, cf. H. TADMOR, *The Decline of Empires*

The inscriptions of Ashur-bēl-kala (1073-1056 B.C.), the second successor of Tiglath-pileser I, simply refer to "the land of the Aramaeans" or to "the Aramaeans", KUR *A-ri-me*, KUR *A-ri-mi*, KUR *A-ra-me*, *A-ra-ma*[70], although they contain a few mentions of the *Aḫlamū* as well[71]. The later usage of *Aḫlamū* in Assyro-Babylonian texts as an appellative for "Aramaic" and "Aramaean" clearly indicates that the Aramaeans were perceived in Mesopotamia as linked closely to the *Aḫlamū*[72], but the question of the exact relationship between the two names and the two groups cannot be answered in a definite way as yet.

The *Aḫlamū*, who were nomadic or seminomadic tribes, partly settled along the fringes of Syrian and Mesopotamian society, are mentioned in southern Babylonia as early as the second half of the 18th century B.C., at the time of Rīm-Anum, when a text refers to "Aḫlamaean messengers", DUMU.MEŠ LÚ.KIN.GI₄.A *Aḫ-la-ma-iu*[73]. They appear later, in the 16th century B.C., at Tell ed-Dēr, the ancient Sippar-Amnānum, where the *Aḫ-la-mu-ú* were expected to bring barley[74]. Their name clearly reflects the *nisba*-formation of Semitic gentilitial names[75] and indicates that the appellation *Aḫlamū* was perceived among the sedentary population of Babylonia as a proper name. However, the etymology relates the word to Westsemitic *ġlm*[76], known from Ugaritic (*ġlm*), Hebrew (*'elem*), Arabic (*ġulām*), South-Arabian (*ġlm*),

in Western Asia ca. 1200 B.C.E., in F.M. Cross (ed.), *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900-1975)*, Cambridge, Mass, 1979, p. 1-14 (see p. 12-13).

70 *RIMA* II, text A.0.89.3, p. 94, line 6'; text A.0.89.6, p. 98, line 7'; text A.0.89.7, p. 101, col. III, 1, 2; p. 102, lines 8, 10, 13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23; p. 103, lines 25, [26], 30; text A.0.89.9, p. 107, line 4'.

71 *RIMA* II, text A.0.89.6, p. 98, line 14'; text A.0.89.9, p. 107, line [9'].

72 G.M. Schwartz, *The Origins of the Aramaeans in Syria and Northern Mesopotamia*, in O.M.C. Haex et al. (eds.), *To the Euphrates and Beyond. Archaeological Studies in Honour of M.N. van Loon*, Rotterdam 1989, p. 275-291.

73 O. Loretz, *Die ASĪRUM-Texte* (I), in *UF* 10 (1978), p. 121-160 (see p. 129 and 149, No. 20). I wish to thank my colleague K. Van Lerberghe for this reference.

74 K. Van Lerberghe - G. Voet, *Sippar-Amnānum. The Ur-Utu Archive* I (Mesopotamian History and Environment. Texts 1), Ghent 1991, No. 87 (Di 227), lines 16-22.

75 Lipiński, *Semitic*, § 29.41.

76 *AHw*, p. 21a; E. Lipiński, *"Mon père était un Araméen errant". L'histoire, carrefour des sciences bibliques et orientales*, in *OLP* 20 (1989), p. 23-47 (see p. 32). The previously proposed etymology was rightly criticized by S. Moscati, *The "Aramaean Ahlamû"*, in *JSS* 4 (1959), p. 303-307, who failed, however, to give an acceptable explanation of the name. The difficulty in accepting Moscati's argument that Aḫlamū is a proper name for a tribal group was already pointed out by Brinkman, *PKB*, p. 277-278, n. 1799.

and Aramaic (*'ulīm*). This word means "lad", "boy", and its form *Aḫ-la-a-mu*[77] marking *'aǵlām* with a long second vowel points to a so-called "broken" or "internal" plural, which in reality is a collective noun[78]. The pattern *'af'āl* may be used in Classical Arabic to express the plural of collective nouns of persons[79], as *'anṣār(un)*, from *naṣr(un)*, that designated the groups of Mohammed's Medinan followers who had granted him refuge after the Heǵira. Similarly the *'aǵlāmu* must have been, initially, "bands of lads" belonging to the tribes that were moving along settled areas and between urban centres. The word is thus a common noun, but it does not belong as such to the Assyro-Babylonian vocabulary that borrowed it from the language of nomadic or seminomadic populations. If this interpretation is correct, *Aḫlamū* 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.[80]. In the language of the sedentary population, this word became an appellation of the members of nomadic clans making such razzias. The Aramaeans have obviously belonged to this category of roaming tribes and they became its most conspicuous representatives towards the end of the second millennium B.C.

The relation between the Aramaeans and the Sutaeans raises similar questions[81]. According to the evidence provided by the Mari correspondence in the 18th-17th centuries B.C., the Sutaeans were a confederation of nomadic tribes, active over the Syrian steppe to the west of the Middle Euphrates[82]. Their presence in the Syro-Palestinian area in the 19th-18th centuries B.C. is confirmed by the repeated mention

[77] This spelling of the personal name *Aḫlāmu* occurs in *ARM* XI, 208. References to this name can be found in *ARM* XVI/1, p. 54; see also J.-R. KUPPER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 109, n. 1.

[78] LIPIŃSKI, *Semitic*, § 31.23 ff.

[79] W. FISCHER, *Grammatik des klassischen Arabisch* (Porta linguarum Orientalium, N.S. 11), Wiesbaden 1972, p. 50, §86, Anm. 3.

[80] Compare A. JAUSSEN, *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab*, Paris 1908, p. 165-166.

[81] The fundamental study on the Sutaeans is that of J.-R. KUPPER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 83-145. See further ID., *Sutéens et Ḫapiru*, in *RA* 55 (1961), p. 197-200; M. HELTZER, *The Suteans*, Naples 1981, where the question of their identification with the Aramaeans is raised explicitly on p. 86-99. Cf. also G.G.G. REINHOLD, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 29-34.

[82] The essential elements of this description can be found in M. ANBAR, *Les tribus amurrites de Mari* (OBO 108), Freiburg-Göttingen 1991, p. 88-89, 97, 110, 115-116, 117, 133-134, 205-207. See also J.-M. DURAND, *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari* II (LAPO 17), Paris 1998, p. 505-511.

of the *Šwtw* in the Egyptian execration texts[83], while only scattered intruders appear in Babylonia at the time of the First Babylonian Dynasty[84]. In a later period, in the 15th-13th centuries, the Sutaeans appear in Syria and in Canaan[85], and they even reach the eastern Delta, at least if the *Š3św* of the Egyptian sources are to be identified with the Sutaeans[86]. But this identification is questionable from a phonetic point of view[87], and it hardly finds a support in the frequent mention of the *Sutū* in the Amarna corespondence[88] and in the single reference of Numb. 24, 17 to the *bənē-Šēt*, living in southern Transjordan where the *Š3św* appear.

The available sources give the impression that the proper area of the *Sutū* bedouin was situated to the west and to the southwest of Mesopotamia, while the main older centres of the Aramaeans were located in Upper Mesopotamia. A distinction appears also in Assyrian royal inscriptions which do not seem to identfy the "Sutaean Aḫlamū" with the "Aramaean Aḫlamū". Adad-nirari I (1300-1270 B.C.), recording his achievements, mentions his victory over the *Aḫ-la-mì-i Su-ti-i Ia-ú-ri*[89], where only one Sutaean tribe is meant, since Aḫlamū is a general designation of these nomadic populations, while Yauru is a Sutaean tribe, as shown by a Middle Assyrian deed said to have come from Tell ʿĀmūda: *iš-tu Su-ti-e I-ia-ú-ra-ie*[90]," from the Yauraean Sutaean". Much later, however, Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.) says: *assuḫ nagab* [lú]*Aḫ-la-me-e* [lú]*Su-ti-i*[91], "I uprooted all the Sutaean Aḫlamū", where Aramaeans are really meant, like in Sargon II's inscription which mentions [lú]*A-ra-me*

---

[83] K. SETHE, *Die Ächtung feindlicher Fürsten, Völker und Dinge auf altägyptischen Tongefäßscherben des Mittleren Reiches*, Berlin 1926, e 4-6; G. POSENER, *Princes et pays d'Asie et de Nubie*, Bruxelles 1940, E 52-53.

[84] J.-R. KUPPER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 86-95; M. HELTZER, *op. cit.* (n. 81), p. 57-75.

[85] J.-R. KUPPER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 96-104; M. HELTZER, *op. cit.* (n. 81), p. 79-88.

[86] The Egyptian sources concerning the Shasu have been collected by R. GIVEON, *Les bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens* (Documenta et monumenta Orientis Antiqui 18), Leiden 1971.

[87] Egyptian *š* and *s* can transcribe Semitic etymological *t̠*, like in ʿ-*š-t-r-t* and ʿ-*s-t-r-t*, but they do not transcribe *t*. Etymologies of *Š3św* have been looked for in Egyptian *š3s*, "to travel", and in Semitic *šsy*, "to plunder". The first one is most likely correct and gives the meaning "Bedouin".

[88] *EA*, p. 1580, index.

[89] *RIMA* I, text A.0.76.1, p. 132, line 23.

[90] M.-J. AYNARD - J.-M. DURAND, *Documents d'époque médio-assyrienne*, in *Assur* 3/1 (1980), p. 1-54, see p. 44-46, No. 11 (AO. 21.382), lines 3-4. Tell ʿĀmūda is possibly the ancient Kulišḫinaš; cf. K. NASHEF, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der mittelbabylonischen und mittelassyrischen Zeit* (RGTC 5), Wiesbaden 1982, p. 171.

[91] *Sennacherib*, p. 77, line 13.

[lú]*Su-ti-i*[92]. Two groups are apparently distinguished in an inscription of Simbar-Šihu (1025-1008 B.C.), the first king of the second dynasty of the Sealand, who recorded the attack of "hostile Aramaeans and Sutaeans", [lú]*nakru A-ra-mu ù Su-tu-ú*[93], under the reign of Adad-apla-iddina (1068-1047 B.C.). The various texts referring to this invasion show however that Aramaeans and Sutaeans were no distinguishable groups by that time[94]. Certainly in the first millennium B.C., the Sutaeans seem to have lost their actual significance and they are rather referred to as a historical reminiscence of nomadic populations which were comparable with early Aramaeans because of their way of life, but cannot be identified with them on strictly historical grounds in an earlier period, before the 11th century B.C.[95].

2. THE LAND OF QĪR

According to an obscure tradition reported in Am. 9, 7, Qīr was the original homeland of the Aramaeans. This biblical passage clarifies the significance of Amos' threat of exiling the people of Aram to Qīr (Am. 1, 5), a threat fulfilled by Tiglath-pileser III according to II Kings 16, 9[96]. "Thus, what the prophet is actually implying is that the Aramaeans are about to experience a reversal of their history by being sent back to their ultimate place of origin"[97]. On the basis of Is. 22, 6, which lists Qīr alongside of Elam, the opinion was sometimes expressed that Qīr should be located in the vicinity of Elam, but the poetical parallelism of that verse does not justify any geographical conclusions. Unjustifiable, as

---

[92] C.J. GADD, *Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud*, in *Iraq* 16 (1954), p. 173-201 and Pl. XLIII-LI (see p. 192-193, lines 57-58; cf. also p. 186-187, lines 71-72). Elsewhere Sargon II describes the Aramaean Gambūlu, Hindāru, and Puqūdu tribes of Babylonia as "Sutaeans, people of the steppe of the land Yadburu", thus in line 32 of the inscription published by G. FRAME, *The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var*, in *Or* 68 (1999), p. 31-57 and Pl. I-XVIII.

[93] *RIMB* II, text B.3.1.1, p. 73, line 10; cf. A. GOETZE, *An Inscription of Simbar-Šihu*, in *JCS* 19 (1965), p. 121-135 (see p. 121-122, lines 10-14).

[94] See here below, p. 409-412.

[95] Cf. J.-R. KUPPER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 106-107, 138-145; M. HELTZER, *op. cit.* (n. 81), p. 92-98.

[96] The reading "to Qīr" does not appear in II Kings 16, 9 as read in several manuscripts of the Septuagint, but it is confirmed by the Lucianic recension απωκισεν την πολιν, which reveals a correct understanding of the noun *qīr*, that means "city" in some of the Westsemitic languages.

[97] Sh.M. PAUL, *Amos*, Minneapolis 1991, p. 55.

well, are the suggestions, made in the past, that the text is corrupt or that Qīr is the Aramaic name for Ur[98].

Since *qīr* simply means "wall", the full name of the place would be expected to contain some kind of qualification, like *Qīr-Mō'āb* in Hebrew (Is. 15,1), probably *Qí-ir-Da-ḫa-at*[ki] in texts from Mari and Chagar Bazar[99], and *Gi-ra-a* [uru]*A-za-ar-ìli* in Ashurbanipal's reports on his campaigns against the Arabs[100], but no *Qīr-'Aram* is attested so far. Instead, Pilsu-Dagan, king of Emar in the early 12th century B.C., also bore the title of "king of the people of the land of Qīr": *Pilsu-Dagan mār Baal-kabar šar Emar šar ṣābē māt Qīri*[101]. The phrase used to designate the people of Qīr may suggest that this was a nomadic or seminomadic population living in the sphere of influence of Emar. Now, *qīr* is a "Canaanite" noun, which was used also in the language of Emar. This

[98] See the references *ibid.*, p. 55-56, n. 114-120.

[99] Mari: J.-R. KUPPER, in *ARM* XVI/1, Paris 1979, p. 19; Chagar Bazar: C.J. GADD, *Tablets from Chagar Bazar and Tall Brak, 1937-38*, in *Iraq* 7 (1940), p. 22-66 and Pl. I-V (see p. 48); Ph. TALON, *Old Babylonian Texts from Chagar Bazar* (Akkadica. Supplementum 10), Brussels 1997, Nos. 19, 7; 22, 7. The variant *Qar-Da-ḫa-a*[*t*ki] in *ARM* VII, 210, r. 9', may support this interpretation of *Qí-ir-*, and one should compare Old Babylonian *dūr* ("wall") *de-ḫu²-ú-tim* in E.M. GRICE, *Records from Ur and Larsa dated in the Larsa Dynasty* (YOS 5), New Haven 1919, No. 181,7. The place name or gentilitial *Da-ḫa-ti-um*[ki] occurs at Tell Beydar: F. ISMAIL - W. SALLABERGER - Ph. TALLON - K. VAN LERBERGHE, *Administrative Texts from Tell Beydar* (Subartu II), Turnhout 1996, No. 68, IV, 3. It does not result from the copy of the tablet that a sign is really missing between *ti* and *um*. It should have been indicated [(x)] as in line 2. The name seems to be Semitic.

[100] R. BORGER, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals*, Wiesbaden 1996, p. 61, A VII, 108; cf. p. 245. The spelling *Gi-ra-a* shows an interesting example of the use of GI to express the voiced pronunciation of *qāf*, like later in Ḥiǧāzi Arabic.

[101] D. ARNAUD, *Recherches au Pays d'Aštata. Emar VI. Textes sumériens et akkadiens*, Paris 1985-87, No. 42, 8-9. The reading *Ḫur-ri* instead of *Qí-ri*, suggested by J.-M. DURAND in *NABU* 1989, p. 34-35, and *RA* 83 (1989), p. 183, is hardly supported by the copy and requires either the addition of the conjunction *u* and the correction of *ilammin* into *ilamminū* or *lemnū*, or the change of *ilammin* into *ulammin*, already proposed by C. ZACCAGNINI, *Golden Cups Offered to the Gods at Emar*, in *Or* 59 (1990), p. 518-520 (see p. 519, n. 6), or some other grammatically problematic explanation, as the one advocated by S. SEMINARA, *L'accadico di Emar* (Materiali per il vocabulario sumerico 6), Roma 1998, p. 354, n. 48, and p. 380. Besides, it is not clear why the Hurrian king should be called LUGAL ERIM.MEŠ KUR *Ḫur-ri*, like the kings of Mittanni in the 16th-14th centuries B.C. (G. WILHELM, *RLA* VIII, Berlin 1993-97, p. 292-293), whereas he is simply called LUGAL KUR *Ḫur-ri* in an Emar text published by M. SIGRIST, *Seven Emar Tablets*, in A.F. RAINEY (ed.), *Kinattūtu ša dārâti. Raphael Kutscher Memorial Volume*, Tel Aviv 1993, p. 165-184 and Pl. I-IX, see Tablet 6, lines 11 and 13, on p. 176 and Pl. VII. The Editor's translation of following line 10 (vol. VI/3, p. 58), [uru]*Emar ilammin*, ought to be corrected in "misfortune was to befell Emar", literally "Emar was to go to the bad". In fact, the *iparras* form of a stative verb like *lemēnu* should have an inchoative connotation (*GAG*, p. 102, §78a). Our former interpretation of the whole passage should thus be changed accordingly: E. LIPIŃSKI, *art. cit.* (n. 76), p. 39.

appears from some proper names like ^{f}A-bi-qi-ri[102], "My father is my wall / rampart", ^{m}Qi-ri-^{d}KUR[103], "My wall / rampart is Dagan", or the hypocoristicon ^{m}Qi-ri-ia[104]. However, the text refers to "the people of the land of Qīr", thus implying a wider area, the centre of which was a stronghold, called Qīr[105]. One might think of the fortress of Tell Faq'ūs, some 12 km below Emar, on the right bank of the river. This place, excavated in 1978, was certainly depending from Emar in the period concerned[106]. Since *šūr* is the Aramaic equivalent of *qīr*[107], one might also surmise that Qīr corresponds to the place called later in Aramaic *Šūrā də-Rūmayē*, "Šūrā of the Romans", in Greek Σουρα, in Parthian *Šwr'y*, and in Arabic *Sūra r-Rūm*, an important centre located east of Al-Ḥammām, some 63 km by road to the southeast of Emar[108]. Despite the distance involved, one might finally propose to identify Qīr with the important Roman fortress of Qraya, located about 200 km by road to the southeast of Emar and 14 km above Dayr az-Zawr (Der ez-Zor)[109]. This site seems to be called *Byrt' Kwpn* in the Parthian version of the great inscription of Sapor I from Naqš-i Rustam[110]. In other words, one might suppose that the first element of the full old name Qīr was simply translated in Sapor's inscription by *Byrt'*, "fortified place", while it was somehow preserved in the local toponymy. In fact, Qraya is a

---

[102] D. ARNAUD, *op. cit.* (n. 101), No. 31, 8; ID., *La Syrie du Moyen-Euphrate sous le protectorat hittite: contrats de droit privé*, in *Aula Orientalis* 5 (1987), p. 211-241 (see p. 236, No. 15, 11); ID., *Textes syriens de l'âge du Bronze Récent* (Aula Orientalis. Supplementa 1), Sabadell-Barcelona 1991, No. 39, 33.

[103] D. ARNAUD, *op. cit.* (n. 102), Nos. 24, 8.9; 36, 24; 67, 12.

[104] D. ARNAUD, *Tablettes de genres divers du Moyen-Euphrate*, in *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici* 30 (1992), p. 195-245 and Pl. I-II (see p. 198, No. 2, 5).

[105] The translation "town" in *DNWSI* II, p. 1025, is too general, as indicated by the military context of *qr* in the Mesha inscription.
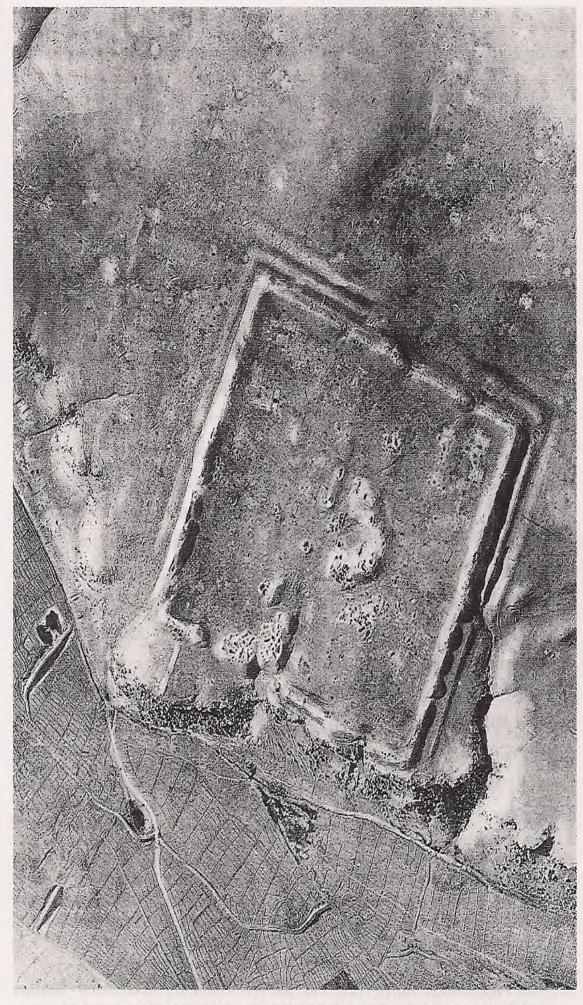
[106] J.-Cl. MARGUERON, *Aux marches de l'Empire hittite: une fouille à Tell Faq'ous (Syrie), citadelle du pays d'Ashtata*, in *La Syrie au Bronze Récent*, Paris 1982, p. 47-66.

[107] It is used in Old Aramaic inscriptions and proper names, where it appears as the predicate of a nominal clause which has a deity as subject, e.g. *Hadad-šūrī*. In this context, *šūrī* does not mean "my wall" in general, but "my rampart", "my circumvallation". Cf. *DNWSI* II, p. 1190.

[108] On Sura, see A. MUSIL, *The Middle Euphrates* (Oriental Explorations and Studies 3), New York 1927, p. 190-191, 323-325; ID., *Palmyrena* (Oriental Explorations and Studies 4), New York 1928, p. 242-243.

[109] The site of Qraya (or Ġariya) was discovered by A. POIDEBARD, *La trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie* (BAH 18), Paris 1934, p. 85-88 and 149, Pl. LXXXVI-LXXXVII.

[110] E. HONIGMANN - A. MARICQ, *Recherches sur les Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, Bruxelles 1953, p. 146, No. 2, and p. 161-163; P. GIGNOUX, *Glossaire des inscriptions pehlevies et parthes*, London 1972, p. 50. It is the Βείρθα Οκβανων (metathesis *kw//ok*) of Pap. Euphr. 2. The same place is possibly called Γαδειρθα, "the fortress", by PTOLEMY, *Geography* V, 18.

Air view of the Roman fortress of Qraya, photographed by A. Poidebard
(*La trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie*, Pl. LXXXVII).

dialectal form of *qarya*, "village", which is phonetically and even etymologically related to *qīr*. The "land of Qīr" would then correspond to the area between the Ǧebel al-Bišrī and the Middle Euphrates.

These hypotheses are based not only on toponymy, but also on the fact that we first meet the "Aramaeans" some seventy years later in the Euphrates valley, from the land of Sūḫu as far as Carchemish[111]. Crossing the Euphrates in pursuit of the Aramaeans Tiglath-pileser I burnt six "towns" at the foot of Mount Bišrī, that is, near Dayr az-Zawr. We may assume therefore that "the people of the land of Qīr", mentioned in the Emar text, were already Aramaeans who began settling down on the fringes of the Syrian desert around 1200 B.C. For the same reason, the Aramaeans may have been responsible for the fall of Emar[112]. Judging from a tablet found on the floor of a private house in Emar and dated to the 2nd year of king Meli-Shipak of Babylon, the fall of the city had taken place sometime after 1185 B.C., if we date the reign of Meli-Shipak to *ca.* 1186-1172[113]. However, this hypothesis needs to be substantiated by some new information. The latter should have a bearing also on the link between the title "king of the people of the land of Qīr" and the events alluded to in the same Emar inscription: "Misfortune was to befell Emar, but Pilsu-Dagan lifted his eyes to Adad and Adad rewarded him in accordance with his wish[114]. The troops of the inner city and of the rampart went with him, he fought and saved the city of Emar"[115]. These events could be linked with the phrase "Year of war and hardship", often found on Emar records[116]. Instead, they cannot be identified, as it seems, with the siege of Emar by the Hurrians[117], which probably was the time when the king of Emar had to give his four

---

[111] See above, p. 35-36.

[112] As rightly assumed by H. KLENGEL, *Geschichte des hethitischen Reiches*, Leiden 1999, p. 318, n. 35. Instead, it is unlikely that the "Sea Peoples" have ever reached the Euphrates and destroyed Emar, as suggested by G. BECKMAN, *Emar and Its Archives*, in M.W. CHAVALAS (ed.), *Emar: The History, Religion, and Culture of a Syrian Town in the Late Bronze Age*, Bethesda 1996, p. 1-12 (see p. 5).

[113] D. ARNAUD, *op. cit.* (n. 101), No. 26, 9-12. Cf. J.-Cl. MARGUERON, *Meskene (Imar*/Emar). B. Archäologisch*, in *RLA* VIII, Berlin 1993-97, p. 84-93 (see p. 85a). Date proposed by J.A. BRINKMAN, *Meli-Šipak*, in *RLA* VIII, Berlin 1993-97, p. 52a.

[114] We propose reading tentatively *Adad igrēti ḫuggi ša libbišu iddinašu*, supposing that *igrēti* is a dialectal plural for *igrē*, "wages, reward", and that *ḫuggi* corresponds to the Old Arabian preposition *ḫg / ḫng*, "like", and belongs to the local language of Emar.

[115] D. ARNAUD, *op. cit.* (n. 101), No. 42, 10-16.

[116] D. ARNAUD, *op. cit.* (n. 101), Nos. 111, 36; 121, 1; 139, 42; 149, 38; 158, 14; St. DALLEY - B. TEISSIER, *Tablets from the Vicinity of Emar and Elsewhere*, in *Iraq* 54 (1992), p. 83-111, see No. 2, 33, on p. 94-95.

[117] This siege is alluded to in D. ARNAUD, *op. cit.* (n. 102), No. 9 (ME 50), 21-22.

daughters as hostages to the Hurrian king[118]. It is not clear, at any rate, who this unnamed Hurrian king might have been around 1200 B.C.

3. ARAMAEAN TRIBES IN THE 13th CENTURY B.C.

Tribes of Aramaean stock are attested near the Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, ancient Mount Kašiyari, before "the land of Qīr" was mentioned in the text from Emar. Actual direct documentation dates from the 13th century B.C. Thus, a Middle Assyrian administrative record from Tell Billa, which can be dated sometime in the first third of the 13th century B.C., mentions *Bēt-Za-ma-ni*, rightly connected by J.J. Finkelstein with the later Aramaean state of Bēt-Zammāni[119], the capital of which was Amida, modern Diyarbakır, north of the Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. The text indicates that the tribe was settled in this region or at least occupied it already in the early 13th century, but it does not mention the chief town of the Assyrian province whose governor was Aššur-kāšid, [lú]*hassihlu ša halsi* [uru]*É-Za-ma-ni*. On the other hand, a letter sent in the 13th century from Assyria to Dūr-Kurigalzu (Aqarqūf), the Kassite capital of Babylonia, reports that an Assyrian army commander pursued a band (*hurādu*) of *Ḥi-ra-na* warriors that had joined forces with *Ḥa-as-mi* tribesmen[120]. Now, the first of these tribes is encountered in contemporary Babylonian texts from Nippur. In a ration text, two individuals are described as *mār* [m]*Ḥirāni*[121] and, in another document, six men on guard duty are labelled as [m]*Ḥi-ra-a-nu* after their personal name, probably in the sense of *mār* [m]*Ḥirāni*[122]. Interestingly enough, all the individuals in this text are qualified as *Aḫlamū*[123]. Now, a settlement of the *Ḥirānu* tribe is mentioned later by Ashurnasirpal II near the western area of the Ṭūr ʿAbdīn[124] and the tribe is encountered in the 8th century B.C. in southern

---

[118] M. SIGRIST, *art. cit.* (n. 101), No. 6, 9b-18a, on p. 176 and Pl. VII.

[119] J.J. FINKELSTEIN, *Cuneiform Texts from Tell Billa*, in *JCS* 7 (1953), p. 111-176, especially p. 116-117, 119, 124 (No. 6), and 127 (No. 17); cf. K. NASHEF, *op. cit.* (n. 90), p. 74 with literature. See also here below, p. 135-136.

[120] O. R. GURNEY, *Texts from Dur-Kurigalzu*, in *Iraq* 11 (1949), p. 131-149 (see text No. 10, p. 139-140 and 148). Cf. J.-R. KUPPER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 114-115; K. NASHEF, *op. cit.* (n. 90), p. 121-122 and 128.

[121] A.T. CLAY, *BE* XV, Philadelphia 1906, No. 198, lines 50 and 105.

[122] A.T. CLAY, *PBS* 2/II, Philadelphia 1912, No. 114. Cf. BRINKMAN, *PKB*, p. 271, n. 1733.

[123] Line 16 of the same tablet.

[124] *RIMA* II, text A.0.101.1, p. 219, lines 97-98. Probably Gülharin, in the area of [kur]*Amdāni*, where the settlement is located; see here below, p. 147.

Mesopotamia, where it is explicitly characterized as Aramaean[125] and where it later gave its name to the city of *Ḥirān*[126], close to Sippar on the Euphrates[127]. Another town called ᵘʳᵘ*Ḥi-ra-na* is attested east of the Tigris river, in an area situated south of the modern city of Kirkuk where apparently other clans of the same tribe were settled in the 7th century B.C. around the sanctuary of the god *Be'lān* (ᵈ*Be-la-nu*)[128], whose name means "Our Lord" in Aramaic.

The Aramaean origin of the tribe is confirmed by the etymology of its name. *Ḥīrān derives from a personal name with the suffix -*ān* added to the Aramaic noun *ḥīr > **ḥi'ar*, "noble", hence "free", still attested in Syriac by *bar-ḥi'rē*, "noble", and by the feminine *ḥi(')rtā*[129]. The city name must thus derive from the tribal name. The medial *'alaf* of Syriac does not appear in earlier texts, like the Story of Aḥiqar (*brḥrn*)[130] or the Targum to Job from Qumrān (*brḥryn*)[131]. The correct vocalization *ḥīr* is provided by the Galilean Aramaic spellings *br-ḥyryyh* and *br-ḥyryn*, "freeman", as well as by Christian Palestinian Aramaic *br-ḥryn* with a dot under the *ḥ*, which indicates an *i*-vowel[132], thus *bar-ḥirīn*.

In the 13th century, at the time when the letter found at Dūr-Kurigalzu was sent from Assyria, some of the Ḥirāna tribesmen were roaming in northern Mesopotamia (Subartu), while others were rambling along the Euphrates, between Mari and Sūḫu[133], before they shifted further to the south to reach finally the area of Sippar where the southern town of Ḥirān should be located.

[125] *Tigl. III*, p. 159, line 5; cf. p. 160, line 9. See also S. SCHIFFER, *Die Aramäer*, Leipzig 1911, p. 2-3, and here below p. 446. It is doubtful, instead, whether the restoration ˡᵘ*Ḥi-i-ra-[a-nu]* in *ABL* 1468, r. 7 (*RGTC* 8, p. 162), is correct, since Ḥirānu is never written with a long first vowel (BRINKMAN, *PKB*, p. 271, n. 1743), except in Aramaic *B'l Ḥyrn* (tablet published by T. KWASMAN, *BSOAS* 63 [2000], p. 274-280, line 9).

[126] J.N. STRASSMAIER, *Inschriften von Nabonidus*, Leipzig 1889, No. 505, 3; T.G. PINCHES, *CT* 56, London 1982, No. 239, line 3'. Cf. ZADOK, *WSB*, p. 284-285.

[127] *RGTC* 8, p. 162.

[128] *ADD* 210 = *ARU* 204, lines 21 and 30. The settlement was close to Diquqina which is identified with modern Ta'uq/Tawuq; cf. E. FORRER, *Die Provinzeinteilung des assyrischen Reiches*, Leipzig 1920, p. 43; PARPOLA, *Toponyms*, p. 164, cf. p. 105.

[129] Compare Assyro-Babylonian *ḫā'iru* and *ḫīrtu* (*AHw*, p. 338b, 348a; *CAD*, Ḫ, p. 31 and 200-201), Sabaic *ḫyr*, "noble" (*Sabaic Dictionary*, p. 64), and Arabic *ḫayr*, "good, excellent".

[130] *TAD* III, C1.1, 216.

[131] 11QTgJob 39, 5 (col. XXXII, 4).

[132] E.Y. KUTSCHER, *Studies in Galilean Aramaic*, Ramat-Gan 1976, p. 22. The faulty vocalization of the editors of 11QTgJob was corrected by M. SOKOLOFF, *The Targum to Job from Qumran Cave XI*, Ramat-Gan 1974, p. 152, but it is still followed by K. BEYER, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*, Göttingen 1984, p. 585.

[133] O. R. GURNEY, *art. cit.* (n. 120), p. 139 and 148, text No. 10, lines 21-27.

The Ḥasam tribe, associated to the Ḥirāna men, certainly originates from Upper Mesopotamia and it is named after tribal lands at Ḥasam, east of Ḥarrān. The Mari archives mention ^{kur}Ha-sa-am[134], which is the same mountainous area as the ^{kur}A-sa-am, which an Old Babylonian itinerary situates at a two days' march east of Ḥarrān, in the direction of the western Ḥābūr[135]. Shalmaneser III later crossed the Ḥasamu hills in his march from Assyria to Til-Barsip[136] and a town ^{uru}Ha-sa-me is named in the Ḥarrān Census[137]. The mountain was sacred and divinized, as shown by the Amorite theophorous name Zi-im-ri-Ha-sa-am from Chagar Bazar[138], dating back to the late 18th or the early 17th century B.C. The latest indirect attestation of the tribe can be found in the personal name Ha-sa-me-e, attested in 682 B.C. in a document from the Mamu temple at Balāwāt[139], ancient Imgur-Enlil.

An interesting case is presented in the mid-12th century by the Ruqāḫaeans, an Aramaean tribe which is usually associated with the area at the confluence of the Lesser Zab and of the Tigris, south of Ashur. Their known names are still Westsemitic in the 8th century and can be interpreted partly as Aramaic[140], despite the vicinity of their territory to the heartland of Assyria and the expected Assyrian cultural influence. They are attested in this region at the time of Ashur-dan II (934-912 B.C)[141] and this seems to have been their land at least as early as the 12th century B.C., at the time of Ninurta-tukulti-Ashur (ca. 1133 B.C.) or of one of his immediate successors. In fact, a Middle Assyrian administrative text found at Nineveh mentions a sheikh Ru-qa-ḫa-ia[142] among

[134] J.-R. KUPPER, in ARM XVI/1, Paris 1979, p. 14.

[135] W.W. HALLO, The Road to Emar, in JCS 18 (1964), p. 57-88 (see p. 75-76); cf. J. N. POSTGATE, Ḥasamu, in RLA IV, Berlin 1972-75, p. 128; R. ZADOK, On Some Upper Mesopotamian Toponyms, in NABU 1998, p. 69-71, No. 67 (see p. 70, No. 67:2). The mountain called Ašūma in Syriac and Mediaeval Arabic sources seems to correspond to the present-day Karaça Dağ, more to the northeast; cf. R. PAYNE SMITH, Thesaurus Syriacus I, Oxford 1879, col. 406; M. AMOUROUX-MOURAD, Le Comté d'Édesse 1098-1150 (BAH 128), Paris 1988, p. 39 and 77.

[136] RIMA III, text A.0.102.1, p. 10, line 83'; text A.0.102.2, p. 15, line 29.

[137] SAA XI, 201, II, 32.

[138] References in C.J. GADD, op. cit. (n. 99), p. 42; Ph. TALON, op. cit. (n. 99), p. 138.

[139] B. PARKER, Economic Texts from the Temple of Mamu at Balawat, in Iraq 25 (1963), p. 86-103 and Pl. XIX-XXVI (see No. 108, 9, p. 92 and Pl. XXI); cf. ZADOK, WSB, p. 69.

[140] The statement by J.N. POSTGATE, CTN II, p. 144, is too "optimistic"; cf. ZADOK, WSB, p. 184.

[141] RIMA II, text A.0.98.1, p. 133, line 22.

[142] BM. 122635 + 122642, line 22', published by A.R. MILLARD, Fragments of Historical Texts from Nineveh: Middle Assyrian and Later Kings, in Iraq 32 (1970), p. 167-176 and Pl. XXXIII-XXXVII (see Pl. XXXIII).

the various dignitaries bringing their *nāmurtu* or freely given gift which they were used to present to the king when the latter granted them an audience. This text is very similar to a document dating from the reign of Ninurta-tukulti-Ashur and should thus go back to the same period[143]. The mention of the Ruqāḫaean sheikh, whose name and title are lost, implies that the Aramaean tribe had a recognized territory on the Middle Tigris by the mid-12th century and that it maintained good relations with the Assyrians. There is little doubt that its presence in the area can easily go back to an earlier period.

The name of the tribe must derive from the root *rśḫ*, well known in Arabic (*raḍaḫa*) and in Hebrew (*rāṣaḫ*)[144]. The Aramaic phoneme, which had developed from the emphatic fricative lateral *ṣ̂* (*ḍ*), is transcribed in Assyrian by signs with *q* or *ḫ*, like in the name *Raqiānu / Raḫiānu* of a king of Damascus[145]. The transcription with *ḫ* or *q* also occurs in the Aramaic tribal name ^kur^*Ra-ḫi-ḫa*[146], ^lú^*Ra-ḫi-qu*[147] or ^lú^*Re-ḫi-ḫu*[148]. The nominal pattern *ruqqaḫ* or *ruqāḫ* is used in North-Arabian to form the "broken" plural of nouns of the types *fā'il* or *fa'īl* that designate persons[149]. The use of the same pattern may be assumed in Aramaic, since there seems to be little doubt that Early Aramaic made use of "broken" plurals like Arabic and other Semitic languages[150]. The verb *raḍaḫa* means in Arabic "to break, to smash", and Hebrew *rāṣaḫ* is often used with the sense "to kill". The Aramaic active participle *rāqiḫ* may thus mean "smasher" or the like, and its plural *ruqqaḫ* or *ruqāḫ* be used as a tribal name.

The names of seven Ruqāḫaeans mentioned in a Nimrud text from the 8th century B.C.[151] might raise doubts about the Aramaean origins of the tribe. In fact, the first man of the group, called ^m^*Sa-[a]b-ḫar-ru*, bears the North-Arabian name *šabb ḫārr,* "ardent young man"[152], while the fourth name, ^m^*Nab/p-'-d[u]-lu* or ^m^*Nab/p-'-i[l]-lu*, does not seem to be Semitic. However, these seven men did not form a normal tribal unit,

---

[143] A.R. MILLARD, *art. cit.* (n. 142), p. 172-173; J.N. POSTGATE, *Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Empire* (Studia Pohl: Series maior 3), Rome 1974, p. 161-162; R. ZADOK, *art. cit.* (n. 4), p. 117.

[144] The root might appear as *rḍḫ* in Sabaic: *Sabaic Dictionary*, p. 115.

[145] Cf. *Tigl. III*, p. 292 (index).

[146] *ABL* 830, r. 4.

[147] *Tigl. III*, p. 158, line 6; cf. p. 272, n. 10. See also here below, p. 450-451.

[148] *Sennacherib*, p. 25, line 44; p. 49, line 12; p. 54, line 55; p. 57, line 14.

[149] W. FISCHER, *op. cit.* (n. 79), p. 52-53, § 90.

[150] *SAIO* II, p. 54-56, 63, 68, 77-78, 98; cf. LIPIŃSKI, *Semitic*, § 31.23-34.

[151] *CTN* II, 119, 1-8.

[152] See here below, p. 456.

since they are said to be "in the charge" of a Naqīraean sheikh and to have acted with another group as a band of criminals, who have stolen seventy sheep.

The Ruqāḫaeans were maintaining good relations with the Assyrians in the 12th century B.C.[153] and this seems to have been the case also in later periods. Therefore, it is uncertain whether Ashur-dan II's campaign related somehow to the Ruqāḫaeans was directed against them[154]. The tribe continued to dwell in Ashur province during the 9th-8th centuries B.C., as indicated in two letters addressed to Sargon II by Ṭāb-ṣill-Ešarra, its governor[155], and as confirmed by the full title of Ilu-issīya, eponym in 804 B.C., and of Adad-bēlu-ka''in, eponym in 748, both governors of Ashur and also of ^{kur}Ru-qa-ḫa[156]. The territory of this tribe may correspond to the area north of Tikrīt, around Tell Qal'at Raqqa[157].

This scarse and dispersed informations seem nevertheless to indicate that Aramaean tribes were living in the 13th century B.C. in Upper Mesopotamia, where they had first occupied hill countries and semi-arid regions on the fringes of the Late Bronze states, but they subsequently took advantage of the collapse of Ḫanigalbat[158], annexed to Assyria in the 13th century. The Assyrian victory brought over three hundred years of Hurro-Mittannian rule in the region to an end, but it also opened the way for Aramaean tribesmen of mixed origin, who soon began occupying Al-Ǧazira[159] where archaeological evidence indicates a serious decline of urban settlements in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I periods[160]. Pushing further into the valleys of the Tigris, the Euphrates, and their tributaries, they became the new foes of the Assyrians.

We do not know how the original speakers of Aramaic came to be known as "Aramaeans". The association of the Ḫi-ra-na and Ḫa-as-mi tribesmen, mentioned in the 13th-century letter found at Dūr-Kurigalzu,

---

[153] See here above, p. 47-48.

[154] BRINKMAN, *PKB*, p. 176, n. 1086.

[155] *SAA* I, 91, r. 1; 92, 6.

[156] MILLARD, *Eponyms*, p. 79, sub 748, and p. 95, sub 804.

[157] E. FORRER, in *RLA* I, Berlin-Leipzig 1928, p. 291a, but he confounds Ruqāḫa with Raḫīḫa (cf. here below, p. 450-451).

[158] For the historical circumstances, see A. HARRAK, *Assyria and Ḫanigalbat. A Historical Reconstruction of Bilateral Relations from the Middle of the Fourteenth to the End of the Twelfth Century B.C.* (Texte und Studien zur Orientalistik 4), Hildesheim 1987; S. HEINHOLD-KRAMER, *Zur Salmanassars I. Eroberungen im Hurritergebiet*, in *AfO* 35 (1988), p. 79-104.

[159] R. ZADOK, *art. cit.* (n. 4), p. 110-113.

[160] J.-Y. MONCHAMBERT, *Le futur lac du Moyen Khabour: Rapport sur la prospection archéologique menée en 1983*, in *Syria* 61 (1984), p. 181-218; D.J.W. MEIJER, *A Survey in Northwestern Syria*, Leiden 1986, p. 49; K. KOHLMEYER, in *MDOG* 118 (1986), p. 54-55.

may suggest that a confederation of Aramaic-speaking tribes came into existence sometime in the 13th century B.C. and that their collective name entered in the official Assyrian terminology towards the end of the 12th century B.C., when we first meet with the name "Aramaeans" in Mesopotamian sources, at the time of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 B.C.).

The scattered evidence indicates at any rate that the Aramaeans were active players in the Near Eastern history for some two hundred years before they emerged as a threat against which Assyria and Babylonia had to defend themselves. This suggests that it was only as the consequence of a widespread ecological and demographic crisis, beginning in the late 13th century, that the Aramaeans appeared as a definable force threatening the political establishment of the Near East. The existence of this crisis is revealed by Egyptian texts from the time of Merneptah (1212-1202 B.C.) and by a few Ugaritian letters. In his second year, Merneptah sent a huge gift of corn to Anatolia to alleviate a severe famine[161] and the king of Ugarit was asked in the same period to send 2,000 measures of grain to Ura in Cilicia[162]. The invasion of the so-called "Sea Peoples", the end of the Hittite empire, and the Aramaean thrust into settled areas may all be consequences of the grim tribulation which had then afflicted Anatolia[163]. The abrupt end of historical records provided by the cuneiform archives deprives us of more concrete informations about the early Aramaean history. This relative obscurity comes to an end only in the late 10th century B.C., when Assyria begins to recover and Assyrian annals produce more detailed accounts of the military campaigns, while Hebrew historical literature begins to offer some information. The Aramaeans are then found settled and grouped in a number of federations or small states, centred on a capital city.

---

[161] J.H. BREASTED, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, Chicago 1906, vol. III, § 244. Cf. H. KLENGEL, *op. cit.* (n. 112), p. 298 and 310.

[162] J. NOUGAYROL, in *Ugaritica* V, Paris 1968, p. 105-108, Nos. 33-34, and p. 323-324, No. 171. For the location of Ura at the mouth of Göksu/Calycadnos and thus at the head of an important route from the Mediterranean to the plain of Konya, see *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*, Wiesbaden 1977-91, Map XVI; G.F. DEL MONTE - J. TISCHLER, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der hethitischen Texte* (RGTC 6), Wiesbaden 1978, p. 457-458; G.F. DEL MONTE, *Supplement* (RGTC 6/2), Wiesbaden 1992, p. 179; J.D. HAWKINS, *The Hieroglyphic Inscription of the Sacred Pool Complex at Hattusa (Südburg)* (Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten. Beiheft 3), Wiesbaden 1995, p. 56; H. KLENGEL, *op. cit.* (n. 112), p. 240, n. 451.

[163] R.D. BARNETT, in *CAH* II/2, 3rd ed., Cambridge 1975, p. 360-361, also considers the possibility that HERODOTUS, *History* I, 94, records a popular souvenir or legend based on this severe famine that would have lasted for eighteen years.

4. The Etymology of the Name "Aram"

The etymology of the name "Aram" referring to the Aramaeans has not been established until now. The suggestion, sometimes made in the past, that the East-Tigridic toponym *Aramu* of the third millennium B.C. passed to the Aramaeans who could have settled east of the Tigris during a certain time[164] is at least improbable, since we first meet with the so-called "Aramaeans" in the Ğazira and on the fringes of the Syrian Desert. It is also unlikely that a Hurrian onomastic element or proper name has become the tribal or collective name of Aramaic-speaking nomads or seminomads. We can even wonder whether the name was really at first geographical or personal, or even divine[165], since no indication favours such hypotheses. Moreover, we should question the assumption that the original name of the Aramaeans was *Aram* with two short *a* vowels[166]. In fact, J.-R. Kupper has rightly observed that the noun "Aramaean" is written *A-ra-mì* in the inscription of Ashur-bēl-kala, Tiglath-pileser I's son[167], and that this spelling contradicts the Assyrian dialectal vowel harmony which is generally respected by the scribes until the time of Sargon II and consists in assimilating a short *a*-vowel to the final vowel of the word, thus *A-ru-mu, A-ri-mì*[168]. The logical deduction would be that this

---

[164] R.T. O'CALLAGHAN, *Aram Naharaim* (AnOr 26), Rome 1948; N. SCHNEIDER, *art. cit.* (n. 16).

[165] A geographic origin of the name is assumed, for instance, by H. GRIMME, *Mohammed. Die weltgeschichtliche Bedeutung Arabiens*, München 1904, p. 15, who derives "Aram" from *rūm*, "to be high", and thinks of the highland Nağd in northern Saudi Arabia. R.T. O'CALLAGHAN, *op. cit.* (n. 164), p. 95-96, refers to a place name *Arma*, which does not occur in the text quoted (= *RIMA* I, text A.0.77.3, p. 190-191). There is also the quite original hypothesis of H. Barth, the distinguished German geographer, historian and linguist of the mid-19th century, and one of the greatest explorers of Africa. H. BARTH, *Voyages et découvertes dans l'Afrique septentrionale et centrale pendant les années 1849 à 1855*, Paris-Bruxelles 1860-61, vol. IV, p. 168 and n. 1, suggests that the name *T-aram-t*, given by the Tuareg to the whole country on the left bank of the Niger river, from Tombouctu (Timbuktu) to Gogo (Mali), derives from Aram, the supposed homeland of the Berbers in the Middle East. M. STRECK, *Über die älteste Geschichte der Aramäer*, in *Klio* 6 (1906), p. 185-235 (see p. 197), thought of a divine name.

[166] W.F. ALBRIGHT, in *CAH* II/2, 3rd ed., Cambridge 1975, p. 532. Cf. Th. NÖLDEKE, *Die Namen der aramäischen Sprache und Nation*, in *ZDMG* 25 (1871), p. 113-131; E. FORRER, in *RLA* I, Berlin-Leipzig 1928, p. 131.

[167] *RIMA* II, text A.0.89.6, p. 98, line 7'. This spelling corresponds to the Babylonian and Sūḫu spellings *A-ram* or *A-ra-mu/mì* attested in the 8th century B.C. *A-ram: Nippur* IV, Nos. 4, 23; 15, 8; 18, 8; 27, 16.20; 62, 8; 96, 25; 104, 5; 105, 6. *A-ra-mu/mì: Nippur* IV, No. 47, 5; *RIMB* II, text B.6.14.1, p. 121, line 42'; text S.0.1002.2, p. 295, lines 20, 21; p. 298, line 14'; text S.0.1002.3, p. 301, lines 11', 12'.

[168] J.-R. KUPPER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 116, n. 1.

vowel was originally long in *Arām* but it could alternate dialectally with a stressed *í* (*Arím*), since the Greek language borrowed the name of the Aramaeans in the 9th or 8th century B.C. under the form Ἄριμοι[169]. Thus, referring to Typhon who personified the Mount Saphon, the present Ğebel al-'Aqra', *Ilias* II, 783 celebrates the Storm-god Zeus who is thundering and striking the earth with ligtnings around Typhon's den εἰν Ἀρίμοις, i.e. "among the Aramaeans" or "in the land of the Aramaeans". Hesiod follows Homer in his *Theogony* 304, and also Virgil's *Aeneid* IX, 715-716 is inspired by the same Homeric passage. Despite the form Ἄριμοι, already Posidonius of Apamea (*ca.* 135-*ca.* 50 B.C.), quoted by Strabo, understood perfectly that *Ilias* II, 783 was referring to the Aramaeans populating the whole of Syria[170]. As for the initial *a* of *'Arām/'Arím,* which is never reduced in ancient transcriptions, not even when the name receives an ethnic or plural affix, it has to be long or semi-long, thus *'Ārām/'Ārím*. Both long vowels were preserved in Syriac *'Ārām*, with the eventual change *ā > ō* to *'Ōrōm* in western dialects.

Now, the word *'ārām* is identical with the Arabic "broken" plural *'ārām*, "white antelopes", in older languages "wild bulls" or "buffalos"[171]. Since the singular is *ri'm* in Classical Arabic, *rīm(um)* in Akkadian, and *raymā* or *rēmā* in Aramaic, a variant "broken" plural **'ar'im > *'ārīm*, eventually reflected in Greek Ἄριμοι, is also conceivable in the light of Ge'ez *'ansərt*, plural of *nəsr < *nisr*, "eagle"; *'abqəl*, plural of *baql*, "mule"; *'asḥəl*, plural of *ṣāḥl*, "cup", etc. The existence of similar formations of "broken" plurals can be inferred also for early stages of Aramaic, since we ought to admit the use of "broken" plurals in the Tell Faḥarīya inscription from the mid-9th century B.C.[172], unless we are ready to accept the presence of unexplainable mistakes in this text.
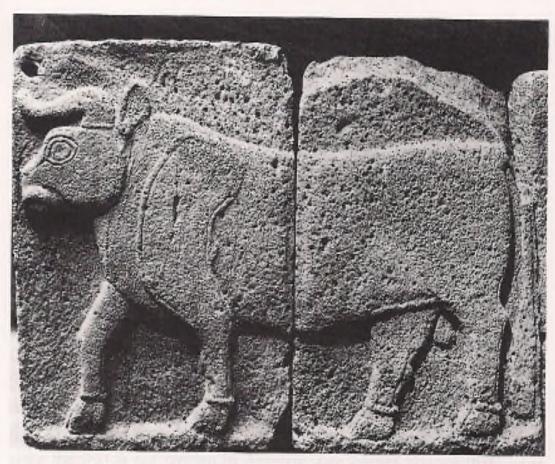
If the true etymology of *'ārām* is "wild bulls", such an appellation of a people or a tribe implies a totemic social and religious structure, an essential peculiarity of which is the association of groups of persons or clans with groups of animals belonging to the same species and constituting the totem species. This conception is usually connected with a belief in some sort of kinship between the clan and the totem. Although worship of the totem never occurs — animal worship has little in common with totemism — it is not unusual for the totemic group to believe that members of the totem species — the wild bulls in the case contemplated —

[169] E. LIPIŃSKI, *art. cit.* (n. 76), p. 40-41.
[170] STRABO, *Geography* XVI, 4, 27; cf. I, 2, 34; XII, 8, 19; XIII, 4, 6.
[171] For the phonetical development, see W. FISCHER, *op.cit.* (n. 79), p. 24, § 41b.
[172] *SAIO* II, p. 54-56, 63, 68, 77-78.

Bull represented on an orthostat from Zincirli, 8th century B.C.
(İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri, Inv. No. 7709).

assist the group in some ways. Our knowledge of the religion and the social organization of the early Aramaeans is very limited, but we know for sure that their main god was the Storm-god Hadad[173] and that this god is often represented in the Syro-Hittite art of the 10th-8th centuries B.C. standing on the back of a bull[174]. Although this iconographic pattern was inspired by the Hittite religious art, it expresses the belief that the wild bull, that became the visible support of the anthropomorphic Storm-god, assists the "Aramaean" totemic group. This connection between the etymology and the religious iconography can hardly be considered as accidental, but the lack of further information does not allow us to answer

[173] J.C. GREENFIELD, *Hadad*, in *DDD*, Leiden 1995, col. 716-726 with literature. See also here below, p. 626-636.

[174] See, for instance, *ANEP*, Nos. 501 (Arslan Taş) and 531 (Til-Barsip), reproduced also by A. PARROT, *Assur* (L'univers des formes), Paris 1969, p. 76, Fig. 84, and p. 79, Fig. 89; cf. here below, p. 191. One should also mention the stela of Kamanis, king of Carchemish (8th century), found at Cekke, northeast of Aleppo (*ANEP*, No 500), and the stela in the Bible Lands Museum, Jerusalem, first published in O.W. MUSCARELLA (ed.), *Ladders to Heaven*, Toronto 1981, and *Länder der Bibel*, Mainz a/R 1981, No. 227. For these monuments in general, see W. ORTHMANN, *Untersuchungen zur späthethitischen Kunst* (Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 8), Bonn 1971, Chapt. III.

various questions, for instance whether eating the bull was regarded as a sacrament, the bull being considered as of kin to the worshippers of the Storm-god.

The proposed etymology of *'Ārām* has a bearing on the origins of the Aramaeans, for oxen, bisons, buffalos, in a wild state, haunt either prairies and woodlands or swampy marches where they love to wallow. The valleys of the Middle Euphrates and of its tributaries, as well as the forests and the plain at the foot of the Ṭūr 'Abdīn, are therefore the regions where the "broken" plural *'Ārām*, at first designating herds of wild animals, is likely to have originated as a tribal name.