Is There a Connection Between the Amorites and the Arameans?
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Abstract: A steady flow of new documents and scholarly publications dealing with the history of ancient Syria, the Amorites and the Arameans makes it possible to attempt a new synthesis of the data, revise previous views and propose some new ones. This article suggests several new arguments for the possibility of seeing some continuity between the 18th century BCE Amorites and the 12th century BCE Arameans. First, the geographical habitat of the various Amorite Bensimʾalite and Benjaminite tribes and the Aramean tribal conglomerates is compared. Second, the pattern of migration of the Amorite and Aramean tribes is analyzed. Third, some common linguistic elements are enumerated, like the term Aḫlamu found among the Amorites and the Arameans. Fourth, the attempt of some scholars to place the Hebrew ancestors among the Aramean tribes in Northern Syria is discussed. And fifth, some matrimonial institutions, customs, social and linguistic phenomena common to the Amorites and the Hebrews are pointed out attesting to a cultural continuity of certain practices spanning several centuries.

Introduction

The issue of the connection or its absence between the Amorites and the Arameans is an old one. The discussion is about to reach a century of scholarly publications and debates. It began with the discussion of the "Amorite question" dealing with the time span and geographical area to which Amorite tribes can be assigned, the linguistic analysis of the geographical and personal names associated with them, and the very name by which they should be designated. In 1924 the Assyriologists, B. Landsberger,[1] and his student, T. Bauer in 1926, proposed to dissociate the Amorites, MAR.TU/DÚ *amurrū*, of the First Dynasty of Babylon, supposed to have originated in the Northeast-Tigris mountain regions from the bearers of West Semitic names whom they called "East-Canaanites." Their proposal was not adopted having largely been invalidated by the historical insights provided by the Mari documentation about the Amorites that began being steadily published since 1935 onwards.[2] In 1953, the biblical scholar M. Noth, suggested to see

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[1] B. Landsberger, "Über die Völker Vorderasiens im dritten Jahrtausen," *ZA* 35 (1924), pp. 213-38, esp. pp. 236-38: "4. Amurru." Some abbreviations used in this study: ACF = Annuaire du Collège de France; AFLNW = Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen; BhT = Beiträge zur historischen Theologie; BWANT = Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament; CDOG = Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft; CM = Cuneiform Monographs; DOGAUW = Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka; ERC = Edition Recherche sur les Civilisations; FM = Florilegium Marianum; HBM = Hebrew Bible Monographs; HSM = Harvard Semitic Studies; LAPO = Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient; PUF = Presses Universitaires de France; *SAAB* = State Archives of Assyria Bulletin; SAOC = Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations; SEPOA = Société pour l'Étude du Proche-Orient Ancien.

[2] T. Bauer, *Die Ostkanaanäer. Eine philologish-historishe Untersuchung über die Wanderschicht der sogenannten "Amoriter" in Babylonien* (Leipzig: Verlag der Asia Major, 1926). Bauer collected a great number of personal and geographical names scattered through the OB documents that had previously been recognized to reflect West Semitic origin. Idem, "Neues Material zur 'Amoriter'-Frage," *MAOG* 4 (1928-29), pp. 1-6. Idem, "Eine Überprüfung der 'Amoriter'-Frage," *ZA* 38 (1929), pp. 145-70, where he responds to his critics. E. Dhorme, "Les Amorrhéens: à propos d'un livre récent," *Recueil E. Dhorme* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1951), pp. 81–165, originally published in *RB* 1928-31. G. Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period* (Naples: Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1966), p. 360. Comparing West Semitic names attested in the Ur III texts with West Semitic names attested in OB texts, Buccellati showed that the

the Amorites as "Proto-Arameans."[3] His proposal was declined by the Assyriologist D. O. Edzard.[4] A student of Edzard, M. Streck, in his work published in 2000,[5] has offered a critical evaluation of the Amorite personal, geographic names and other terms with detailed grammatical analysis in light of the extensive reinterpretation of data and philological analysis of the Mari texts done by J.-M. Durand and D. Charpin for the last thirty years. Any further discussion of Amorites should refer to this work while constantly keeping abreast of the new publications of the Paris Mari team. The issue of the probable relationship between the Amorites and the Arameans was set by J.-R. Kupper in his study of the nomads in Mesopotamia dealing with the Amorite Benjaminite and Simʾalite tribes with a chapter on the Suteans, the Aḫlamu, and the Arameans.[6] In 1957 Kupper complained that the problem was being regularly repeated without furnishing more than a general view of the situation. More than fifty years later the accumulated research allows one to be more positive.

1. *The Geographical Habitat of the Semi-Nomadic Amorite Tribes*

Depending on the context, the Old Babylonian term *amurrū*, Amorite(s),[7] can refer to a geographic region, to a Northwest Semitic language,[8] to a divinity,[9] to an ethnically related conglomerate of tribes and to a kingdom implying that these various designations should be duly recognized and differentiated.[10] In discussing the Amorites, P. Michalowski's warning should be heeded: "Most current discussions of the 'Amorite problem' distorts the issue by creating a unitary semantic concept that combines notions

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two categories of names belong to the same linguistic group, thus definitely putting to rest the Landsberger-Bauer hypothesis.

[3] M. Noth, "Mari und Israel: Eine Personennamen Studie," *Geschichte und Altes Testament: A. Alt zum 70. Geburstag dargebracht* (G. Ebeling ed., BhT 16; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, P. Siebeck, 1953), pp. 127-52. Idem, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BWANT 46; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1928; Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1966). Idem, *Die Ursprünge des alten Israels im Lichte neuer Quellen* (AFLNW 94; Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1961).

[4] D. O. Edzard, "Mari und Aramäer?" *ZA* 56 (1964), pp. 141-49. According to Edzard, the Amorites should not be called "Proto-Arameans" (149). C. Wilcke, "Zur Geschichte der Amurriter in der Ur III," *WO* 5 (1969), pp. 1-33. D. O. Edzard and G. Farber, *Die Orts und Gewässername der Zeit der 3. Dynastie von Ur* (RGTC 2; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1974), and the review of this work by D. I. Owen, *JCS* 33 (1981), pp. 244-69.

[5] M. P. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonischen Zeit, 1: Die Amurriter. Die onomastische Forschung, Orthographie und Phonologie, Nominalmorphologie* (AOAT 271/1; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000).

[6] J.-R. Kupper, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie au temps des rois de Mari* (Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, Fascicule 142; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1957), pp. 83-145.

[7] It should be more accurately spelled with double "rr," derived from Akkadian *amurrū*, in contrast to the biblical Amorites with a single "r," from Hebrew ʾamōrî. However, in the English-speaking world the single spelling "Amorites" predominates.

[8] S. Izreʾel, *Amurru Akkadian. A Linguistic Study.* With an Appendix on the History of Amurru by I. Singer (HSM 40 and 41; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991, 2 vols.).

[9] J.-R. Kupper, *L'iconographie du dieu Amurru dans la glyptique de la 1re dynastie babylonienne* (Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres, t. 1, fasc. 1; Bruxelles: Palais des académies, 1961). G. Dossin, "Amurru, dieu cananéen," *Symbolae biblicae et mesopotamicae F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl dedicatae* (M. A. Beek ed., Leiden: Brill, 1973), pp. 95-98.

[10] N. Ziegler, "Amorrite," *Dictionnaire de la civilisation mésopotamienne* (F. Joannès, ed., Paris: R. Laffont, 2001), pp. 40-42 (40).

of common origin, ethnic and linguistic identity, tribalism, and nomadism as a way of life. As I see it, this way of essentialist thinking about terms such as MAR.TU leads to convenient historical fictions. We take all of the references to the word from all periods and throw them all in the same basket, implying that they all denote the same loosely defined notion of an Amorite people."[11]

Although pertaining to issues of redactional history, the same stricture could also apply to the biblical term "Amorites" mentioned about 110 times in the Hebrew Bible. To assimilate the late, exilic, formulaic enumeration of the "seven nations," the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine with the more precise designations of Amorite territory, coastal region and hill country, in the land of Canaan under the same designation of a late Deuteronomistic formula is too simplistic.[12]

In Sumero-Akkadian texts from the period from 2400 to 1600 BCE, Sumerian MAR.TU, Akkadian *amurru* occur as a geographical term, a compass direction designating the west, from the point of view of someone looking from the Mesopotamian valley in the east. The texts from Ebla (modern Tell Mardikh) in Syria, 30km SW from Aleppo, mention a geographical entity written Mar-tu[ki] or Mar-tim[ki], indicating that there was a place named Martum to the west of Sumer (but not to the west of Ebla, the latter already being located in the NW of Mesopotamia) from which the Sumerian term for "west" was derived.[13] In fact, at certain moments of its history Ebla was part of Amorite territory. A torso inscription found at Tell Mardikh-Ebla, dated to ca. 2000 BCE, contains two Amorite personal names: Ibbiṭ-Līm and Igriš-Ḫeba.[14] The first is the name of a king at Ebla and the second is a theophoric one with the name of a West Semitic deity Ḫeba. A recent study established that [d]Ḫebat was an originally North Syrian

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[11] P. Michalowski, *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur. An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom* (MC 15; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), p. 85. Ch. 5: "The Amorites in Ur III Times" is essential to this discussion (pp. 82-121).

[12] *Pace* J. van Seters, "The Terms 'Amorite" and 'Hittite" in the Old Testament," *VT* 22 (1972), pp. 64-81. Cf. the formula in Deut. 7:1 "the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites." It is a stereotypical list of seven disposed peoples: Exod. 13:5; 23:23; Deut. 20:17; Josh. 24:11; Judg. 3:5. The association of the Amorites with the hill country of Canaan (Num. 13:29; Josh. 11:3; Jdg. 1:34; Deut. 1:7, also Ezek. 16:3,45) seems to preserve accurate memory. The definition of the border of Canaan in Josh. 13:4-5 alludes to the region of Amurru in its strict sense. It is comparable to the inscriptions of Ramses III who places the Sea People in the Amurru territory, cf. already M. Liverani, "The Amorites," *Peoples of the Old Testament Times* (D. J. Wiseman ed., Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), pp. 100-133 (124, and n. 67). In Josh. 10:6, the Gibeonites ask Joshua to help them repel the biblical Amorites who lived in the hill country of Judah where Joshua fights a coalition of five Amorite kings (Josh. 10:1-14). In Jdg. 1:35 the Danites were unable to drive away the Amorites from Mount Heres (Har-Ḥeres) in the vicinity of Ayyalon and Šaʿalbîm, in the foothills between Judah and Ephraim. Note the use of inclusion in Josh. 10:15//43 indicating an insertion taken from a poetic, pre-Dtr source from the *seper hayyašar* akin to the *seper milḥamôt yhwh* (Num. 21:14). K. L. Spawn, *"As It Is Written" and Other Citation Formulae in the Old Testament, Their Use, Development, Syntax and Significance* (BZAW 311; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 52-58.

[13] R. M. Whiting, "Amorite Tribes and Nations of Second-Millennium Western Asia," *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (J. Sasson et alii ed., New York: Scribner's, 1995), vol. 2, pp. 1231-42 (1232).

[14] P. Fronzarolli, "West Semitic Toponymy in Northern Syria in the Third Millennium BC," *JSS* 22 (1977), pp. 145-66 (145). The settlement at Tell Mardikh-Ebla began at the end of the 4th millennium BCE during an already advanced urbanization in EB III, and the language of its inhabitants was West Semitic and not Amorite. A. Archi, "Die ersten zehn Konige von Ebla," *ZA* 76 (1986), pp. 213-17.

goddess that the Hittites subsequently adopted as theirs.[15] The Ebla texts place Mar.tu[ki] around Emar on the Euphrates and Tuttul where Baliḫ river joins the Euphrates.[16]

The term *amurru* served to designate the area extended westward from the Euphrates River as far as the Mediterranean Sea. The cradle of the conglomerate of Amorite tribes, Bensimʾalites or northerners, and Benjaminites or southerners, seems to have been in the Syrian territory comprising desert, steppe and some higlands. *Amurrum* referred to the mountainous region east of and above Ugarit (Djebel Ansariyeh) and as far as Djebel Bišri.[17] In fact, the term the Sumerians used, KUR MAR.TU refers to Djebel Bišri and can be understood as "the highland of the Amorites." Later in the time of the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243-1207 BCE), he will refer to the habitat of the Arameans in a similar way, *šá-da-an Aḫ-la-mi-i* "mountains of the *Aḫlamu.*"[18] In both cases, the highlands were designated by the name of the people living there. One of the peaks of Djebel Bišri was called Djebel Diddi < *didni* which may probably refer to one of the Amorite tribes *Didānum.*[19]

In OB times, the *Amurru* region embraced the great Syrian desert, the Orontes River valley, and the Amanus Mountains. In later Assyrian texts, *Amurru* was an established name for Syria-Palestine. References to "the people of *Amurru,*" in contrast with the more common geographical allusions, are largely from the period prior to 2000 BCE and come from the Akkadian and Ur III periods. A date formula of the Old Akkadian king Šar-kali-šarri (ca. 2200 BCE), a descendent of Sargon I, refers to the defeat of the MART.TU in Basar, identified with Djebel Bišri, a mountain range in central Syria west of the Euphrates which corresponds to the territory where some Amorite tribes were located.

While in the 24th century BCE, Eblaite sources refer to a "king (LUGAL) of Mar-tu[ki]," the specific reason why the Amorites began migrating to the south-east of Mesopotamia in the course of the 21st century BCE still eludes us. Climatic changes provoking periods of famine for these nomadic transhumant tribes and their flocks seem a plausible explanation.[20] The Neo-Sumerian scribes of the kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur perceived the life-style of the Amorites as uncouth. They judged them from the point of view of the sedentary population saying that the Amorites grew no cereals, ate raw meat and didn't bury their dead. The Sumerians buried their dead underneath their clay-built habitations, while the Amorites, tent-dwellers buried their dead in the steppe. In an attempt to stave off Amorite penetration, the Sumerian king Šulgi (2094-2047) built a

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[15] M.-C. Trémouille, ᵈ*Ḫebat. Une divinité syro-anatolienne* (Eothen 7; Florence: LoGisma, 1997).

[16] Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon*, p. 31.

[17] Minna Lönnqvist et alii, (ed.), *Jebel Bishri in Focus* (Remote Sensing, Archaeological Surveying, Mapping and GIS Studies of Jebel Bishri in Central Syria by the Finnish Project SYGIS; British Archaeological Reports International Series, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011).

[18] Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period*, p. 242.

[19] G. Marchesi, *LUMMA in the Onomasticon and Literature of Ancient Mesopotamian History of the Ancient Near East Studies* (Padua: Sargon, 2006), offers a treatment of the root DDN.

[20] C. Kuzucuoglu (ed.), *Sociétés humaines et changement climatique à la fin du troisième millénaire: une crise a-t-elle eu lieu en haute Mésopotamie?* (Paris: De Boccard, 2007). In this collection of articles see the one by W. Sallaberger, "From Urban Culture to Nomadism: A History of Upper Mesopotamia in the Late Third Millennium," pp. 417-56. J. G. Jenzen, "The 'Wandering Aramean' Reconsidered," *VT* 44 (1994), pp. 359-75, points out that drought, famine, infertility and starvation are prominent motives in the Hebrew patriarchal narratives as a major cause of migration. He argues, therefore, to understanding the term ʾōbēd in the sense of "perishing" and translates Deut. 26:5 with, "A starving Syrian was my sire."

wall or fortress between Tigris and Euphrates rivers, called *Muriq-Tidnim*, "Nomad-repeller."[21] The term Tidnu, written GÌR.GÌR, perhaps derived from *ditānu/didānu*,[22] is another designation for the Amorite semi-nomads. While avoiding direct military confrontation with the last king of Ur, Ibbī-Sîn (2028-2004),[23] the Amorites severed the communications between the cities, provoking the disorganization of the realm and eventually succeeded in taking over one city after another. These *homines novi* ended up being incorporated to the ruling Sumerian families by marriage ties. At the beginning of the 20th century BCE several Amorite dynasties start the process of acculturation as rulers of some major Mesopotamian and Syrian cities: Larsa, Kiš, Isin, Uruk, Ur, Babylon, Umma, Ešnunna, Ekallātum, Ḫalab(=Aleppo), Mari, Qaṭnā.[24] The Amorrite language is mainly reconstructed from the study of onomastics with an inventory of more than 6000 place and personal names.[25]

The city of Ešnunna (modern Tell Asmar) is located on the lower region of the Diyāla, not far from the present-day Baghdad. After the fall of the last ruler of the Third Dynasty of Ur, at Ešnunna the local remaining dynasty coexisted with a group of Amorites who settled in the environs. As the excavated texts reveal between the semi-nomadic Amorites and the city population developed both a peaceful and occasionally a conflict-ridden coexistence. A marriage was concluded between Bilalama, the son of the king of Ešnunna and a daughter of an Amorite chieftain (*rabiān amurrim*) named Abda-El. When the latter died, a major burial ceremony was organized, and the new Amorite chieftain Ušašum, the son of Abda-El, married a cousin of Bilalama, and wrote to his

[21] *CAD*, R, p. 268 *Mu-ri-iq-Ti-id-ni-im* "Which Keeps Away the Tidnum (People)," name of a fortification (MAD 3 231f.), from the root *rêqu, ruāqu* which in the D-stem means "to keep something away."

[22] *CAD,* D, p. 165. The word *di-ta-nu* explained as "Sutean" in *Malku* I 235, where it is preceded by *dašnu*, explained as "Amorite," probably refers to the gentilic Tidanum and Tidnum, see J.-R. Kupper, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie,* p. 156, which occurs in WS personal names as Samsu-ditāna. B. Landsberger, *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamie nach der 14. Tafel des Serie Ḫar-ra=Ḫubullu* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934), p. 94 *ditānu* "aurochs," and compares it to Hebrew *dîšôn*. Didnum in *Su-mu-di-id-nu-um*, Chiera PBS ii/2 p. 119, no 36. Gudea, the ensi of Lagaš, speaks of bringing alabaster from Tidanum (*ANET*, p. 269).

[23] A. Falkenstein, "Ibbīsîn – Išbi'erra," *ZA* 49 (1949), pp. 59-79. T. Jacobsen, "The Reign of Ibbī-Suen," *JCS* 7 (1953), pp. 36-47. Ishbī-Erra wrote the following to his overlord Ibbī-Suen: "Reports that hostile Amorites (Mar-tu) had entered the plains were heard, and all the grain, 144,000 kor (that has been bought) was brought into Isin. Now the Amorites (Mar-tu) in their entirety have entered the heart of the country and have taken the great fortresses one by one" (p. 40). A. Goetze, "Amurrite names in Ur III and Early Isin Texts," *JSS* 4 (1959), pp. 193-203. P. Steinkeller, "The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: the Core and the Periphery," *The Organization of Power. Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East* (McGuire Gibson and R. D. Biggs eds., SAOC 46; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1987), pp. 19-41.

[24] H. B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts. A Structural and Lexical Study* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1965) and Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period*, pp. 302-21 (mention of Amorite names in these various cities). Buccellati identifies KUR MART.TU with Djebel Bišri (p. 241). I. J. Gelb, "An Old Babylonian List of Amorites," *JAOS* 88 (1968), pp. 39-46; Idem, "The Early History of the West Semitic Peoples," *JCS* 15 (1961), pp. 27-47. J. M. Sasson, "Notes on some Personal Names from Mari," *RA* 66 (1972), pp. 179-180. I. J. Gelb, *Computer Aided Analysis of Amorite (*AS 21; Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1980).

[25] S. Moscati, "La questione degli Amorrei," *Rendiconti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Linzei*, Series 8, vol. 13, fasc. 7-12 (1958), pp. 356-65. M. Noth, "Num. 21 als Glied des 'Hexateuch'-Erzählung," *ZAW* 58 (1940–41), pp. 161-89 (182–9); J. Lewy, "Zur Amoriterfrage," *ZA* 38 (1929), pp. 243-72; J. Lewy, "Amurritica," *HUCA* 32 (1961), pp. 31–74. B. Landsberger, "Amorites," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* I (1965), pp. 809-10.

brother-in-law, who in the meanwhile became king of Ešnunna, to send funerary presents worthy of his former father-in-law and to mark the occasion in front of all the Amorites present for the ceremony.[26]

Šamši-Addu, a powerful tribal warlord belonging to the Benjaminite Amorite tribes, established a vast "Realm of Upper Mesopotamia" starting from Ekallātum on the Tigris river, including Aššur and Šubat-Enlil. The realm being probably too vast to manage for an aging warlord, he appointed his younger son, Yasmaḫ-Addu, at Mari on the banks of the Euphrates and the older son Išme-Dagan on the throne in Ekallātum. Šamši-Addu himself remained in Šubat Enlil. The descendent of an opposing Līm clan, Zimrī-Līm a Simʾalite warlord and tribal leader recovered Mari, and reigned for about thirteen years. Zimrī-Līm belonged to the northern, Sim'alite Amorite tribes.[27] He lost the city of Mari under the assaults of his former ally king Ḫamm-urabi of Babylon in 1762 BCE.[28]

An 18th century BCE Mari letter uses the term *amurrū* both as a geographical term for the west and as a precise location. It enumerates the lands or principalities of Yamḫad (Aleppo), Qaṭnā and Amurru. The last region was the southern neighbor of Qaṭnā. It probably referred to a federation of several cities among which the most important might have been Haṣor. N. Ziegler suggests that the region of Damascus (the land of Apum) might equally have belonged to this federation.[29] The contemporary Alalaḫ texts mention the land of MAR.TU[ki].[30]

The Mari tablets were written during a relatively short period of roughly 50 years, from 1810 to 1761 BCE. They are nevertheless of an exceptional importance since they cover a great variety of subjects like economic texts, feminine correspondence, 50 prophetic letters, political contracts and alliances, reports of military campaigns, all containing a wealth of geographical and onomastic data. Moreover, they stem from practically the entire ancient Near East, in spite of the fact that before burning the city, Ḫammu-rabi's scribes literally "skimmed" the Mari archives carrying away whatever they considered of political importance. The Mari archives contain texts stemming from Haṣor in the land of Canaan in the west, to Anšan in the Iranian plateau in the east, from Tilmun in the Persian gulf in the south to Hattuša in Anatolia in the north. The image one acquires from the Mari Royal Archives is that the Amorite warlords were in the hub of international politics and alliances. This should relativize the pessimism of some scholars who complain about the paucity of data on the Amorites since they were implicated in a vast international correspondence. It also makes obsolete the traditional differentiation between peripheral and central Mesopotamian Akkadian. At the time of Yaḫdun-Lim (*ca.* 1810-1794), there occurred a "reform of writing" where Mari scribes adopted the

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[26] R. Whiting, *Old Babylonian Letters from Tell Asmar* (AS, 22; Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1987), pp. 48-49. A. Goetze, "Amurrite Names in Ur III and Early Isin Texts," *JSS* 4 (1959), pp. 193-203 (mentions 63 Amorite names of West Semitic type).

[27] D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand, "La prise du pouvoir par Zimri-Lim," *MARI* 4 (1985), pp. 293-343. D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand, "'Fils de Sim'al': les origins tribales des rois de Mari," *RA* 80 (1986), pp. 141-83.

[28] J.-M. Durand, "Espionage et guerre froide: la fin de Mari," *Recueil d'études en l'honneur de Michel Fleury* (J.-M. Durand ed., FM; Memoires de NABU 1; Paris: SEPOA, 1992), pp. 39-52.

[29] Ziegler, "Amorrite," p. 40. J.-M. Durand, *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari* (LAPO, 16; Paris: Cerf, 1997), p. 574, no 375.

[30] D. J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets* (London: The British Institute at Ankara, 1953), p. 8 and index, p. 158.

Akkadian system of writing from Ešnunna. The latter, at that time, exercised a political predominance in the ancient Near East and occupied the valley of the Eupharates almost to the very gates of Mari. Yaḫdun-Lim's scribes relinquished the local dialectal idiosyncrasies and embraced the "Akkadian *koine*" from Ešnunna allowing for a more efficient international correspondence. According to J.-M. Durand, the relationship of Akkadian to Amorite could be compared to that of French and Creole, the former is written and official, the latter is spoken with occasionally some words popping up in the written documents.[31] After Pascal Butterlin resumed the French archaeological mission at Mari in 2004, an entire street was excavated paved with several thousand tablets dating from the Sumerian times, the so-called period of the *šakkanakku*.[32] They are characterized by the use of Sumerian and Akkadian occasionally reflecting idiosyncrasies and particularities of the local Amorite dialect spoken at Mari. These tablets still await publication. The Amorite studies and the new documents, therefore, have not yet revealed all their treasures.

The period stretching from 2000 to 1595 BCE is sometimes called "The Amorite era," with reference to the political influence assumed by the Amorites and their epigones. During the 17th century BCE the Amorite power began to decline with the final demise experienced under the attacks of the Hittite king Mursili I, around 1595. There is no surviving Babylonian account of the conquest of Babylon by the Hittites. After this date the Amorite kingdoms are replaced by the establishment of new entities directed by new ethnic groups like the Hittites, the Kassites and the Hurrites.[33]

2. *The Kingdom of Amurru in Amarna Times*

In Late Bronze Age, the kingdom of Mittani (EA 17-30), also known as Ḫanigalbat and as Naḫrīn "Rivers" occupied northern Syria, between the Tigris and the Euphrates. The exact location of its capital Wašukanni is still undiscovered. It was often referred to as the land of the Hurrians, after its main ethnic component. In the EA letters, king Tušratta of Mittani appears as an ally of Egypt. The massive influx of Hurrians into northern Syria must have affected the previous populations living there forcing them to migrate.

In the Amarna times, Amurru (EA 60-67, 156-171) is located south of the city of Ugarit and north of Byblos. The principality of Amurru founded by ʿAbdi-Aširta and his son Aziru, centering around Djebel Ansariya along the Lebanese-Syrian coast, produced a dynasty that reigned for 150 years. The history of Amurru kingdom can be reconstructed from the Amarna letters and the texts from Ugarit.[34] It first flourished

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[31] J.-M. Durand, "Unité et diversité au Proche-Orient à l'époque amorrite," *La circulation des biens, des personnes et des idées dans le Proche-Orient ancien* (D. Charpin and F. Joannès eds., 38th RAI; Paris: ERC, 1992), pp. 97-129 (121-23). Idem, "Réflexion sur un fantôme linguistique," *Altorientalische Studien zu Ehren von Pascal Attinger* (C. Mittermayer and S. Ecklin eds., OBO 256; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2012), pp. 165-91. N. Ziegler and D. Charpin, "Amurritisch lernen," *WZKM* 97 (2007), pp. 55-69.

[32] J.-M. Durand, "La situation historique des *šakkanakku*: nouvelle approche," *MARI* 4 (1985), pp. 147-72.

[33] D. Charpin, "Histoire politique du Proche-Orient amorrite (2002-1595),"*Mesopotamien: die altbabylonische Zeit* (D. Charpin, D. O. Edzard, M. Stol eds., OBO, 160-4; Fribourg: Academic Press and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), pp. 293-304. P. Villard, "Nomination d'un scheich," *Mémorial Maurice Birot* (D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand eds., FM 2; Mémoires de NABU, 3; Paris: SEPOA, 1994), pp. 291-97.

[34] I. Singer, "A Concise History of Amurru," (Appendix III) in S. Izreʾel, *Amurru Akkadian. A Linguistic Study* (HSS 41; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991, 2 vols), vol. 2, pp. 135-95 (with bibliography).

under the leadership of the Amorite warlord ʿAbdi-Aširta who expanded its territory at the expense of his neighbors. ʿAbdi-Aširta claimed to be a loyal vassal of the Pharaoh (EA 60-65) who initially tolerated his warring activities in spite of the constant warnings of Rib-Hadda, the mayor of Byblos. Probably after occupying the Egyptian garrison of Ṣumur on the coast, claiming to have rescued it from another set of raiders, the Pharaoh sent a punitive expedition. ʿAbdi-Aširta was captured and taken to Egypt (EA 108, 117), where he was probably executed (EA 101). ʿAbdi-Aširta was succeeded by his numerous sons, headed by Aziru who restored the fortunes of the Amurru kingdom. The latter sought to placate the Egyptians as a loyal vassal (EA 156-171). Aziru was summoned to Egypt where he managed to assure the Pharaoh of his good conduct. He was permitted to return home where he faced the Hittite menace on his northern border. A skillful diplomat, Aziru played a double game: while pretending to protect Egyptian interests, he was negotiating with the Hittites. The Egyptians, however, discovered that Aziru was in connivance with Aitkama of Qadeš, at that point an ally of the Hittites (EA 162, cf. EA 59 from the citizens of Tunip). Aziru eventually became a Hittite vassal and remained so for the rest of his reign. The Amarna archives end around 1330 BCE. By the end of the 14th and in the 13th century BCE, Amurru is a vassal state of the Hittites. Aziru's treaty with Šupiluliuma established the former as vassal of the Hittite king. Aziru's successors, however, shifted allegiance since Benteŝina betrayed his Hittite overlord by joining the Egyptian camp of Ramses II (1279-1213 BCE) in the battle of Qadeš (1275 BCE) against Muwatalli. Hattušili III reappointed Benteŝina on the throne of Amurru establishing with him a new treaty.

Benteŝina, the Amorite king, gave one of his daughters to the king of Ugarit Ammištamru II. A series of Akkadian tablets from Ugarit relate the ill-starred marriage of king Ammištamru II to his Rabītu "Great Lady". The story might display some similarities to the David and Bathsheba affair in terms of the death of a child as punishment for adultery, depending on the way the texts are read and understood. The woman in question was the consort in the harem of the king who was entitled to bear the crown prince who would succeed to the throne. She was a foreign princess, named Piddu, and was the sister of king Šaušgamuwa, son of Benteŝina, of Amurru whose diplomatic marriage to Ammištamru II of Ugarit was approved and formalized by the Hittite overlord, king Tudḫaliya IV. Among other things, the correct identification of the main female protagonist of this marital imbroglio hangs on the reading of her name either as a PN Piddu, or as a common West-Semitic *bittu* "daughter." If one chooses the former one assumes that Piddu is the "Great Lady" who committed adultery. If one opts for the latter, than throughout the tablets constituting this dossier, the sin was committed by the daughter of the "Great Lady" and Ammištamru's wife.

3. *The Literary Topos about the Amorite Nomadic Life-Style*

The nomadic life-style of the Amorites before settling down is attested, in a highly stereotyped manner in a Sumerian hymn, entitled "The Marriage of Martu." The god of the Amorites, Mardu/tu, asks to marry Adg̃ar-kidug the daughter of Nimušda, the tutelary deity of Kazallu, representing the Sumerian city-dwellers. The young girl's companions try to dissuade Adg̃ar-kidug from marrying this wild semi-nomadic warrior. It expresses the urbanite Sumerian disgust at uncivilized, nomadic Amurru life which the girl Adg̃ar-kidug willfully ignores, responding to all the objections of her friends with a short and

categorical: "I will indeed marry Martu!" Why would a civilized, urban, responsible Sumerian girl marry such a "barbarian"? Presumably her response reflects a "dimorphic society" where cohabitation and mutual dependence of the sedentary and nomadic populations prevailed.

Their hands are destructive and their features are those of monkeys…They never stop roaming about…Their ideas are confused. …(The Amorite is) "clothed in sack-leather….lives in a tent, exposed to wind and rain, and cannot properly recite prayers. He…eats raw flesh. He has no house during his life, and when he dies he will not be carried to a burial place."[35] (…) My friend – how is it you would marry Martu!" Adĝar-kidug answers her friend: "I will indeed marry Martu""[36]

Mardu/tu is a "novice" god for the Sumerians. His most common epithet, used 15 times with reference to him, is lú/mu-lu ḫur-saĝ-ĝá "the man/one of the hills/mountains," translated in bilingual sources as *bēl šadê* "lord of the mountains." The god Anu gave him as a gift, Mount Amurru.[37] That the description of "barbarian" Amorites reflects a poetic hyperbole is confirmed first, by the fact that the city girl Adĝar-kidug is not repelled by this description meant to scare her and joyfully accepts to marry Martu. It reflects the rather peaceful cohabitation and complementary character of the sedentary and semi-nomadic populations.[38] Second, the paradigmatic feature of eating raw meat is repeated in the *Epic of Zimrī-Līm*, praising the warlike existence of this Amorite sheikh and warlord.

The Epic of Zimrī-Līm ll. 112-123:[39]
112 *a-di ša ik-šu-du ḫa-da-an-šu šarri*(lugal)
113 *ù i-da-ma-ra-aṣ ú-ka-an-ni-iš aš-še-pi-šu*
114 *me-e na-da-tim iš-ta-na-at-ti*
115 *e-si-ik it-ti re-di-i ka-lum-ma iš-šu-uš*
116 *ra-ab-bu ba*!(MA)-*ia-ru wa-ṣú-šu-<nu>*
117 *ki-ma sí-ir-ra-m[i]-im pé-e ṣe-ru-um*
118 *ši-ra-am i-ku-lu mu-tu-šu*

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[35] Quoted in A. H. Podany, *Brotherhood of Kings. How International Relations Shaped the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: University Press, 2010), p. 68, and The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.1.7#

[36] S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians. Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 164, and 253. In Jdg. 7:5, before the battle against the Midianites, Gideon chose 300 men who lapped off the water like dogs and discarded the men who bowed down on their knees to drink (*yālaq balšonô min-hammayîm ka ᵃšer yālaq hakkeleb…kol ᵃšer yikraʿ ʿal-birkayw*). According to A. Finet, "La lute entre Gilgamesh et Enkidu," *Tablettes et images aux pays de Sumer et d'Akkad. Mélanges offerts à M. H. Limet* (Ö. Tunca and D. Deheselle eds., Liège: Université de Liège, 1996), pp. 45-50 (50) in their wrestling, Enkidu the wild man from the steppe has his knee bent while Gilgameš has his foot on the ground, the expression meaning that he was still standing upright, unvanquished. The posture of a bent knee would stand for defeat.

[37] J. Klein, "The God Martu in Sumerian Literature," *Sumerian Gods and their Representations* (I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller eds., CM 7; Groningen: Styx, 1997), pp. 99-116 (102). In 1 Kgs 20:23,28 the officers of the King Benhadad of Aram describe the Israelite god as, "their god is a god of the hills."

[38] G. M. Schwartz, "Pastoral Nomadism in Ancient Western Asia," *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (J. M. Sasson ed., New York: Scribner's, 1995), vol. 1, pp. 249-58. J.-M. Durand, "Assyriologie: L'idéal de vie bédouin à l'époque amorrite," *ACF* 106 (2005-06), pp. 603-22 (605-08). Durand offers a somewhat different interpretation of this myth.

[39] Transliterated Akkadian text in P. Marello, "Vie nomade," *Recueil d'études en l'honneur de Michel Fleury* (J.-M. Durand ed., FM; Mémoires de Nabu, 1; Paris: SEPOA, 1992), pp. 115-25, esp. p. 122 n. 9. M. Guichard, *L'épopée de Zimrī-Lîm* (FM, 14; Mémoires de NABU, 16; Paris: SEPOA, 2014).

119 *li-ib-ba-am ir-šu-ú da-na-na-am uṣ-bu*
120 *zi-im-ri-lim ki-ma šu-ri-nim ip-pa-na i-la-ak*
121 *is-ḫu-ur a-na la li-bi-im i-na-ad-di-in li-ib-ba-am*
122 *di-in-na-am i-te-ru-ba*
123 *iš-de-ku-nu i-im-ma-ar na-ak-rum*

112 Until the king's appointed time arrived[40]
113 and he subdued Ida-Maraṣ at his feet,
114 he drank water from water-skins;
115 ranked with the privates, he knows all the hardships,
116 his/their sallying forth is like great hunters'.
117 Like a wild ass (eating) straw in the steppe,
118 his men ate raw meat;
119 They took heart, trusting in strength.
120 Zimrī-Līm goes before like a banner;
121 turning around, he gives courage to the one lacking courage.
122 Be strong! Penetrate (the enemy country)!
123 The adversary will see your discipline.

One finds the motif of drinking water from water-skins as found later in the so-called "warrior's manifesto" in the *Erra Epic,* I, 58 *mê nādi* opposed to fine beer of the city-dwellers, as a metaphor of the rough life of the warriors. This passage praises Zimrī-Līm as a true tribal chieftain, giving example to his troops, sharing the difficult life of his soldiers (l. 115), leading them in their battles and marching ahead of them like a trailblazing banner (l. 120). Elsewhere, it is stated that Zimrī-Līm is continually exposing himself in the first ranks, climbing up the battering rams, and attacking the cities (*ARMT* XXVI, 238).[41] Among the semi-nomadic Amorites there exists an ideology of warlike existence expressed in a literary *topos* of the intrepid tribal chieftain who always leads his troops in battle. The clans trust him because he constantly risks his life for them. I have argued elsewhere that this text with its literary *topos* provides the ideological background against which David's shameful behavior described in 2 Sam. 11 should be read. By remaining seated (*yôšēb*) in Jerusalem, dallying with the wife of one of his elite officers, Uriah the Hittite, instead of leading his army against the Ammonite capital, Rabbat-Ammon, he did not behave as a worthy tribal leader and warlord.[42] He forfeited the trust of his people which explains Absalom's attempt to replace him as a ruler over the Hebrew tribes.

4. *The Conglomerate of the Amorite Tribes*

The particular value of the Mari texts is that they provide extensive documentation for the nomadic populations and show that they occupied a large territory in Northern Syria

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[40] For the analysis of this line, see D. Bodi, "Akkadian and Aramaic Terms for a 'Favorable Time' *(ḫidānu, adānu,* and *ʿiddān):* Semitic Precursors of Greek *kairos*?" *Time and History in the Ancient Near East* (56th RAI; Barcelona 26–30 July 2010, L. Feliu, J. Llop, A. Millet Albà, and J. Sanmartín eds., Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), pp. 47-56. Ida-Maraṣ means "the difficult side" and refers to a chain of mountains that bar access to the plain and are difficult to penetrate, located in the North-West Djezireh, between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers.

[41] M. Guichard, "Les aspects religieux de la guerre à Mari," *RA* 93 (1999), pp. 27-48 (29 n. 27).

[42] D. Bodi, *The Demise of the Warlord: A New Look at the David Story* (HBM 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010).

and Mesopotamia between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers. These nomads are called by the name of Ḥanū "the tent-dwellers" or Ḥana "the land of the tent-dwellers."[43] The term is derived from the Semitic root *ḫnʾ/y* "to camp/dwell under a tent" and corresponds to the Hebrew *ḥnh* "encamp" and *mḥnh* "encampment."[44] According to J.-M. Durand, the term *ḫanûm* is not an ethnic term designating a particular tribe as was thought so far, but stands for a certain mode of living meaning "those who dwell under tents."[45] Originally, they came from the west, along the coastal region bordering the Mediterranean sea, called "the bitter land" meaning "the land of the sea." In later times, the Babylonian texts use the term *marratum* in order to designate the Mediterranean as "the Bitter (one)," a term derived from the root *mrr* "to be bitter." Durand suggested a link with the biblical reference to bitter waters *mārâ* found in Num. 33:8, meaning brackish water inappropriate for drinking: *wᵉlōʾ yākᵉlû lištōt mayim mimmārâ kî mārîm hēm* "they were unable to drink the waters from Marâ for they were bitter" (Exod. 15:23). Geographically, the homeland of the Amurrū stretched along the Mediterranean coast and included the area south of Ugarit and as far south as Byblos. South of Amurrum, the texts mention the city of Yariḫ, close to the ruins of Rāḫiṣum (Ruḫizzi of El-Amarna texts) in the "Land of Canaan" from which the Benjaminite Yariḫū tribe came.[46]

The major division among the Ḥanū semi-nomads is based on the geography of their habitat, those living in the north or *binū simʾal* or "sons of (the land on) the left" or Bensimʾalites and those living in the south or *binū yamina* "sons of (the land on) the right" or Benjaminites. The name of the Aramaic kingdom of Samʾal, known both in the cuneiform texts and in Aramaic inscriptions from Zindjirli, means the kingdom of the "north" and corresponds to the Hebrew word *śᵉmʾōl* "north." In this geographic division of the Amorite habitat, the sun is in the east (*aqdamātum*) "before" while the west is "behind" (*āḫarātum*), the north is on the left hand (*simʾal*) and the south on the right hand (*yamina*), (cf. the name of modern Yemen).

The Bensimʾalites or northerners who came from the region of the upper Baliḫ river and from the NW of the upper Djezireh region, from which they might have been expelled, settled in the Syrian desert, creating a political entity around three main centers: Mari (=Tell Ḥarīrī), Ṣuprum (=Tell Abu Hassan) and Terqa (=Tell ʿAšara). Along the Euphrates, they found small Benjaminite settlements ruled by local chieftains. At least three of them, located upstream from Mari, are well known from the excavated texts:

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[43] Already W. F. Albright in his book, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957), pointed out why they should not be compared to Arab Bedouins. "Arab nomadism is conditioned by the domestication of the camel, which makes it possible for Bedu to live entirely on their herds of camels, drinking their milk, eating camel curds and camel flesh, wandering through regions where only the camel can subsist and making rapid journeys of several days, if need be, through waterless deserts" (p. 164).

[44] Durand, "Unité et diversité," p. 113; Idem, "Assyriologie," *ACF* 102 (2001-2002), pp. 741-61 (742).

[45] "I have chosen the term 'Bedouin' as a translation in order to keep in mind that we are dealing with a man from the country, not from the cities, who has an ideal of outdoor life and a pronounced taste for war, a worshiper of Baetyls or upward-standing stones and who had a dislike for anthropomorphic representations of the divinity…" J.-M. Durand, "Assyriologie: L'étude de la société …," *ACF* 104 (2003-04), pp. 817-59 (844). Prior to Durand, B. Landsberger also used the term Bedouins to designate the Amorites, in "Assyrische Königliste und 'Dunkeles Zeitalter,'" *JCS* 8 (1954), pp. 47-73, esp. p. 56 n. 103.

[46] J.-M. Durand, "Le mythologème du combat entre le Dieu de l'orage et la Mer en Mésopotamie," *MARI* 7 (1993), pp. 41-61 (46).

Samānum, Tuttul and Abattum.[47] The Bensim'alites gained the upper hand and strove to extend their domination as far as their old habitat in the upper Djazireh.

The jewel of the Mari documentation is the spectrum of West-Semitic semi-nomadic tribes it presents, ranging from the fully nomadic to those in the process of becoming sedentary. For example, one Mari letter (*ARMT* VIII,11) mentions the division of the Benê Awin clan into two groups, the already sedentary ones, who settled in the city of Appan *wašbût Appan* (l. 5), and the nomads *ḫibrum ša nawêm* "those transhumant in the steppe" (l. 21). Moreover, the writers of the Mari documents frequently used societal concepts foreign to contemporary Mesopotamian society. Having no linguistic equivalents for these in standard Akkadian, they were occasionally obliged to use West-Semitic loanwords which are often familiar to us from the Hebrew.

The Benjaminite and Bensim'alite tribes were structured in very different ways. The Benjaminites were comprised by a conglomerate of five tribes (in Akkadian *līmum* or *liʾmum*): the Yaḫrurū, the Yariḫū, the Amnān, the Rabbiyūm and the Uprapū tribes, which are somewhat better known.[48] They were under the command of a tribal chief called *šarrum* "king" in Old Babylonian, but better designated by the West Semitic *mulkum* or *milkum*. His role was to lead the tribes to another part of their lands annually. He was accompanied by a person designated by the term *merʾūm*, a causative participle form derived from the root *rʾî* "to pasture." This title designates the one who leads to the pasture. Political decisions, like making wars and alliances, were the responsibility of the *šarrum,* and it would appear that the *merʾūm* supervised the herds and was responsible for finding the best route for transhumance. Each clan (in Akkadian *gāyum*) was led and commanded by a *sugāgum* (from the root *sgg* "to be great") who had the prerogatives of a village chief or administrator. A convenient translation for *sugāgum* would be "mayor," the latter is etymologically derived from Latin *maior* "the great one" or "the major." The specific Mari term *sugāgum* may be considered an equivalent of *rabiānum* in the Akkadian used in Central and Southern Mesopotamia.[49]

The Ben'simalite tribes *līmum* were composed of the Yabasa clan or *gāyum* "those dwelling on dry land" and of the Ašarugāyu clan, presumably meaning, "those dwelling in watery regions." However, that this semi-nomadic cultural level was abandoned once the newcomers gained a foothold in settled lands is well attested by the hostile policies of Amorite dynasts at Mari toward troublesome nomads in their own kingdom.

Geographically, the Amorites and the Aramean clans originally occupied the same region.

5. *From the Amorites to the Arameans*

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[47] The first site has not yet been identified, the second one corresponds to modern Tell Bi'a and the third one to Tell Thadayin.

[48] The various Benjaminite tribes were first discussed in detail by J.-R. Kupper, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie*, ch. II: Les Benjaminites, pp. 47-81; On the Rabbiyūm see M. C. Astour, *The Rabbeans: A Tribal Society on the Euphrates from Yahdun-Lim to Julius Caesar* (Syro-Mesopotamian Studies II/1; Malibu: Undena, 1978), pp. 1-12.

[49] For these terms see the dossier entitled "Les Bédouins," in J.-M. Durand, *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari* (LAPO, 17; Paris: Cerf, 1998), pp. 417-511. L. Marti, *Nomades et sédentaires à Mari : la perception de la taxe-sugâgûtum* (FM 10 ; Mémoires de NABU 11; Paris: SEPOA, 2008), p. 1, translates the Akkadian term *sugāgum* with "chef coutumier.S"

For the study of the probable continuity between Amorites and Arameans one has to focus on the documents stemming from around the Euphrates. This river represented the demarcation line and the crossing area between the Syrian region and the central Mesopotamia. Our presentation will focus on this area around the Euphrates closely related to the life and history of the semi nomadic tribes in the course of sedentarization.

After culling the rich Mari documentation on the Amorite tribes the next chronological stage and a possible connecting link is provided by the Ḫana texts. The archaeological excavations at Terqa (Tell ʿAšara) since 1975 gave valuable information concerning the survival of the Amorite culture in the 17th century BCE.[50] The work of Amanda Podany, showed that some of the "Kings of Ḫana" should not be placed in the OB period but rather in MB times, which provides further element of continuity.[51] Tell ʿAšara (Terqa) provided several names of the kings of Ḫana. After 1050 BCE, Ḫana is no longer mentioned. It is replaced by a new Aramaic entity called Laqû which comprises Terqa, now called Sirqu. Laqû included the territory around the lower Ḫabur, the region of its confluence into the Euphrates and across both banks of the latter.

Another valuable corpus of texts useful in the reconstruction of the geographic and linguistic continuity between the Amorites and the Arameans is provided by the so-called Sūḫu texts, from the MB period. The salvage excavations prompted by the construction of a damn at al-Qadisiyah, in Iraq which created the "Al-Qadisiyah Lake," located upstream of Hadītha area, uncovered a number of Akkadian inscriptions. These furnish additional historical insights on the 8th century BCE Arameans before the stabilization of the region under the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (729-727 BCE), who extended Assyrian control in the west and south.[52] About twenty cuneiform tablets were discovered by the Iraqi archaeologists at Sūr Jarʿā in 1978-79. The land of Sūḫu was situated on the Middle Euphrates, from the northwestern border of Babylonia (around modern Ramādī) as far as the small principality of Ḫindānu (around modern Abū Kemal). Ḫindānu was a buffer state between Laqû and Sūḫu, and both Ḫindānu and Sūḫu are mentioned in Mari texts.[53] In fact, Suḫu appears in a fragmentary tablet representing Zimrī-Līm's project for a victory stela[54] which speaks of the defeat of Yasmaḫ-Addu (l. 11), an event that occurred around the time Zimrī-Līm returned to the throne of his ancestors. In l. 8 there is a mention of the land of Suḫu, [lú ᵐ]ᵉˢsu-ḫu-úᵏⁱ

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[50] G. Buccellati, "The Kingdom and Period of Khana," *BASOR* 270 (1988), pp. 43-61. G. Buccellati, "From Khana to Laqê: The End of Syro-Mesopotamia," *De la Babylonie à la Syrie, en passant par Mari: Mélanges offerts à Monsieur J.-R. Kupper* (Ö. Tunca ed., Liège: Université de Liège, 1990), pp. 229-53. D. Charpin, "A propos des rois de Hana," *NABU* 1 (1995), pp. 19-20. D. Charpin, "Le 'royaume de Hana': textes et histoire," *RA* 96 (2002), pp. 61-92

[51] A. H. Podany, *The Land of Hana. Kings, Chronology, and Scribal Tradition* (Bethesda: CDL, 2002).

[52] A. Cavigneaux and B. Kh. Ismail, "Die Statthalter von Suhu und Mari im 8. Jh. V. Chr. Anhand neuer Texte aus der irakischen Grabungen im Staugebiet des Qadisija-Damms (Taf. 35-38)," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 21 (1990), pp. 321-456. For an English translation see G. Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia from the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157-612 BC)* (RIMB 2; Toronto: University of Toronto Pres, 1995), pp. 275-331. Qadisiyah was formed by the damming of the Euphrates River above Hadītha, Iraq. It has 100 km of shoreline and provides irrigation water for the agriculture in the nearby fields.

[53] ARM VIII 96:9 ḫi-(id)-da-anᵏⁱ in close association with Dēr, J. N. Postgate, "Ḫindānu," *RlA* 4 (1972-75), pp. 415-16. N. Náklár, "Die Stellung Suhis in der Geschichte, eine Zwischenbilanz," *AO* 22 (1983), pp. 25-36.

[54] G. Dossin, "Documents de Mari," *Syria* 48 (1971), pp. 1-19, esp. pp. 2-6: "Un projet de stèle de victoire de Zimri-Lim," and J. Sasson, "Zimri-Lim's March to Victory," *RA* 66 (1972), pp. 177-78.

south of Mari where Zimrī-Līm continued his victorious campaign. In trying to capture Yasmaḫ-Addu, Zimri-Lim might have reasonably expected his enemy to have headed toward Babylon. There, Yasmaḫ-Addu could have sought shelter with Hammu-rabi, a warlord who belonged to the Benjaminite Amorite tribes just as the Addu clan, and who had benefitted from being a junior ally (if not vassal) of his father.

Sūḫu included such cities as Anat, Suru, and Raʾil. The tablets mention two governors *šaknu* of "the land of Sūḫu and the land of Mari" (KUR *Su-ḫi u* KUR *Ma-ri*): Šamaš-rēša-uṣur and his son and successor Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur (RIMB 2, S.0.1001 and 1002) The ancient city of Mari was situated in the part of the Middle Euphrates which was called the land of Laqû, an area controlled by the Assyrians at this time. This means that the two governors did not control the "land of Mari" but used it in the title for historical reasons. The reference represents a case of historical reminiscence of the former glory, however, not devoid of some historical grounding. The governor Šamaš-rēša-uṣur has long been known from a stela found at Babylon (S.0.1001.1). In one tablet Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur describes an Aramean incursion and mentions the governor Sîn-šallimanni, the governor of Ruṣapu (S.0.1002:27 and S.0.1002.2 i:33). Sîn-šallimanni is mentioned in the Assyrian eponym list as governor of Raṣappa in 747 BCE and is known to have been appointed to that post after 775, having relinquished it before 737 BCE. The tablets can therefore be dated to the governorships of Šamaš-rēša-uṣur and his successor Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur in the first two-thirds of the 8th century BCE.

The inscriptions give genealogies of these two governors who really act as independent dynasts, Šamaš-rēša-uṣur is sixth in line. The five ancestors mentioned bring the line back to the 10th-9th centuries BCE. Kudurru, one of the ancestors, is mentioned as governor of the land of Sūḫu in Assyrian inscriptions from the time of Ašurnaṣirpal II (883-859 BCE). The Assyrian sources confirm dealings probably with some of the rulers of Sūḫu as far back as 1133 BCE. The situation changes, however, for the earlier part of the 2nd millennium, since the genealogical line is suddenly traced back to Ḫamm-urabi king of Babylon, through a descendent by the name Tunamissaḫ. The latter name is of Kassite origin. With this tailored part of the genealogy for the 2nd millennium BCE, the seven or eight centuries have been covered going back to the Kassites who brought the Amorite rule to an end. This genealogy shows how a millennium was covered from Ḫammu-rabi 1750 to Šamaš-rēša-uṣur ca. 750 BCE with less than ten names. For the earlier period, the governor simply repeats the statement, "My ancestors are numerous[….] I have not written down [their names…]" (S.0.1001.2:3-4).

The most prominent event mentioned in the inscriptions of the second governor Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur is his victory over bands of Aramean tribesmen related in several versions. Two thousand Aramean Ḫatallu tribesmen, from the Sarugu and Luḫuāyya (var. Minuʾû) tribes, under their chieftains Šammaʾgamni of the Sarugu clan, and Iâʾe son of Balaam from *a-mat-a-a* (Hamath), were plundering the land of Laqû, located upstream of Sūḫu.[55] The toponym Sarug 40km NW of Karkemiš survives in the name Sürüc, in Turkey. It was part of Bīt-Adini, which Šalmanezzer III annexed a century earlier. Adad-dayyānu, the governor of Laqû implored Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur for help. The latter with

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[55] The chieftain Šammaʾgamni of Sarugu is called NAMGIR *nāgiru* "herald." The third stele from Sfire mentions a *nāgiru* just after the members of the royal family of the kingdom of Arpad, between Hamath and Bīt-Adini, A. Lemaire and J.-M. Durand, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré et l'Assyrie de Shamshi-ilu* (Geneva: Droz, 1984), p. 145.

his army of 105 chariots, 220 mounted soldiers and 3000 foot soldiers defeated the Arameans. There is a short and a longer account of his victory (S.0.1002.1 and S.0.1002.2.2-8), and several additional divergent versions.[56] The tablets mention a Ḥatallu confederacy of Aramean tribes: Sarugu, Luḫuāyya, Amatu. The Tiglath-pileser III inscription mentions the following sequence of Aramean tribes: Ituʾ, Rubuʾ, Hamaranu, Luḫuatu, Ḥatallu (ARAB I, 788). One text mentions Šamaʾgammni, as the warlord from the Sarugu clan and another warlord named Iâʾe, the son of Balammu, from the Amatu tribe (S.0.1002. I 16b). This Aramaic raid resembles those practiced by the Suteans in the Mari times. Yasmaḫ-Addu writes to his father in ARM I 100:6-7, reporting that a band of 1000 Suteans are about to raid Yabliya, on the Euphrates, between Ḥanat (modern ʿAna) and Ḥarbê, while elsewhere a band of 2000 Suteans are mentioned. The mode of operation is similar.

Dion points out a series of Aramaic terms that occur in these inscriptions: *gepen "fruit tree;" kirû "orchard," being both Akkadian and Aramaic; the names of the wells *makir (rare in Akkadian) and *surib ("to supply"?); the rare usage of the verb naṭalu; the name of the city ^{uru}gab-ba-ri-KAK; ni-iq-bu-ú-nu "the waters we gathered" related to Syriac qbo; *kneśśet designates the assembled men in charge of erecting a military post in the steppe corresponding to kinaltu in the Babylonian version; gedûd, gudūdu (cf. the Aramean bands gedûdîm in Elisha cycle in 2 Kgs 5:2; 6:23, and of Moabites 13:23); adiru a hapax in Akkadian, cognate of Hebrew ʾēzôr.[57] When the Aramaic marauders threaten to rise against the É (bīt) Sūḫi "House of Suḫu," it refers to the same social structure as Bīt-Šabi, who are part of the Sūḫu.

6. *The Aḫlamū and the Sutū Aramean Tribes*

Just as with the term Amorite, the term Aram can stand for a toponym, a geographic region in Syria, a conglomerate of tribes, and a language.

The earliest attestation of the term *Aramu* appears as a toponym. The Ebla texts dating from the end of the 3rd millennium BCE mention a toponym a-ra-mu^{ki}. The same toponym occurs in a list of geographical names from Tell Abū Ṣalābīḫ.[58] In a date formula from the reign of Narām-Sîn (2254-2218 BCE), found on two tablets from Tell Ḫafâĝe, one reads, "In the day Narām-Sîn caputed Baba, the ruler of Simurrum, and Dubul, the ruler of a-ra-[me^{ki}] (l. 22) and [a-r]a-me^{ki} (l. 25) (Kh. 1934, ll. 22 and 25).[59] Whether this toponym has any connections with the Arameans is a moot question.

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[56] M. Liverani, "Raṣappu and Hatallu," *SAAB* 6/2 (1992), pp. 35-40.

[57] P.-E. Dion, "Les Araméens du Moyen-Euphrate au VIIIe siècle à la lumière des inscriptions des maîtres des Suhu et Mari," *VTSup* 61 (1992), pp. 53-73 (63).

[58] G. Pettinato, "L'attlante geografico del Vicino Oriente antico attestato ad Ebla e ad Abū Ṣalābīḫ," *Or* 47 (1978), pp. 50-73 and Pl. VII-XII (p. 70, no 233).

[59] E. Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (OLA 100; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), p. 27. J. C. L. Gibson, "Observations on some Important Ethnic Terms in the Pentateuch," *JNES* 20 (1961), 217-38 (Amorites, pp. 220-24; Arameans, pp. 229-34). A wealth of information on history, society, economy, law, language, script, literature, religion, art and architecture of the Arameans kingdoms from the 12th century BCE onwards can be found in the collection of studies edited by H. Niehr (ed.) *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1, Ancient Near East; Leiden: Brill, 2014). P. E. Dion, "Aramaean Tribes and Nations of First Millennium Western Asia," *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (J. M. Sasson et alii ed., New York: Scribner's, 1995), vol. 2, pp. 1281-94.

The Aramean invasions of Mesopotamia from the west began at the latest during the late 2nd millennium BCE and are attested from the time of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE) of Assyria and Marduk-nādin-aḫḫe (1099-1082 BCE) of Babylonia.[60] The Aḫlamū, forerunners of the Arameans, had been present in Mesopotamia in the Kassite period (TuM NF 5 11:3, 12:3). There are abundant attestations of the Aḫlamū in the MB economic texts from Nippur.[61]

6.1. The *Aḫlamū* Arameans[62]

According to I. J. Gelb, from a strictly historical point of view, the first reference to the Arameans is to be found in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I who pursued Aramean tribes *aḫlamû aramāyya* as far as Carchemish and the borders of Lebanon. He crossed the Euphrates 28 times in his battles against them:[63]

28-*šu arki* ᵏᵘʳ*Aḫlamê* ᵏᵘʳ*Ar-ma-a-ia*ᵐᵉˢ ⁱᵈ*Puratta* MU 1ᵏᵃᵐ *šinīšu lū ētebir ištu* ᵘʳᵘ*Tadmar ša* ᵏᵘʳ*Amurri* ᵘʳᵘ*Anat ša* ᵏᵘʳ*Suḫi u adi* ᵘʳᵘ*Rapiqi ša* ᵏᵘʳ*Karduniaš dabdâšunu lū aškun šallassunu maršīssunu ana ālī-ya Aššur ubla* "I have crossed the Euphrates 28 times, twice in one year, in pursuit of the Aḫlamû-Arameans. I brought about their defeat from the city of Tadmar of the land of Amurru, Anat of the land of Suḫu, as far as the city Rapiqu of Karduniaš. I bought their booty (and) possessions to my city Aššur" (A.0.87.4, RIMA 2, 43:35-36).

The text mentions Tadmor in the Syrian steppe, the Amurru land, and places the Arameans in Suḫu and Babylonia under its Kassite name Karduniaš.

E. Lipiński derives the term Aḫlamū from West-Semitic *ġlm*, Ug. *ġlm,* Heb. *ʿelem* "young man", Arabic *ġulām*, South-Arabic *ġlm* and suggests that the appellation refers to bands of young men roaming the steppe.[64] Gibson's objection to those who took Aḫlamū in the sense "confederates" applies here too: "it is scarcely conceivable that a personal name would be derived from a plural form meaning 'confederates.'"[65] Therefore, I. Gelb's suggestion that Aḫlamū comes from a proper name seems more probable.

In the 18th century BCE Mari oil receipts (28 references in *ARMT* IX, XI and XII) for Zimrī-Līm's table, are established in the name of a palace officer named Aḫlamu.[66]

[60] J. A. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia 1158-722 B.C.,* (AnOr 43; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968), pp. 277-79.

[61] J. A. Brinkman, "Notes on Arameans and Chaldeans in Southern Babylonia in the Early Seventh Century B.C.," *Or* 46 (1977), pp. 304-25. According to Brinkman, there is no evidence that the Chaldeans were a subdivision of the Arameans. Idem, *A Political History*, pp. 260-85. While there are 5 Chaldean tribes there are more than 35 Aramean ones. These tribes were generally smaller groups than their Chaldean counterparts.

[62] M. Herles, "Zur geographischen Einordnung der *aḫlamû*—Eine Bestandsaufnahme," AfO 34 (2007), pp. 319-41.

[63] I. J. Gelb, "The Early History of West Semitic Peoples," *JCS* 15 (1961), pp. 27-47, esp. p. 28, n. 5. RIMA 2, text A.0.87.1, p. 23, ll 46-47; A.0.87.2, p. 23, l. [28]; A.0.87.3, pp. 37-38, ll. 29-35; A.0.87.4, p. 43, ll. 34-36 in A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium B.C. I (1114-859 B.C.)* (RIMA 2; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

[64] Lipiński, *The Aramaeans*, pp. 37-38.

[65] Gibson, "Observations on some Important Ethnic Terms in the Pentateuch," p. 231.

[66] On the *Aḫlamu*, see M. Birot, J.-R. Kupper, O. Rouault, *Répertoire analytique* (ARM XVI/1; Paris: Geuthner, 1979), p. 54, *Aḫlāmu* (listing all 28 Mari references). M. Birot, *Textes administratifs de la salle 5 du Palais* (ARM IX; Paris: Geuthner, 1960), ARMT IX, 54:2; 58:2 and texts nᵒˢ 75, 78, 144. Ch.-F. Jean, "Les noms propres de personnes dans les lettres de Mari," *Studia Mariana* (Leiden: Brill, 1950), pp. 63-98. S. Moscati, "The Aramaean Ahlamû," *JSS* 4 (1959), pp. 303–7.

The opposite is found in the use of the term Sutū, which appears later as a personal name, though it usually stands for nomadic clans of the Suteans. The term Aḫlamu was later used in order to designate some Aramaic tribes. In the Mari Amorite texts Aḫlamu is a personal name.

In OB times, the term Aḫlamū appears also as a designation for the Amorite tribes. In a passage that M. Steck surmises as stemming from the time of Hammu-rabi one finds the following statement:

(30) ^mZi-im-ri-ḫa-am-mu ù Ia-si-im-ad-da-šu-nu (31) pa-ni DUMU^{meš} Zi-im-ri-e-ed-da DUMU^{meš} ni-iš DINGIR-šu-nu ù ERIM Aḫ-la-mi-i iṣ-ba-tu-nim-ma matam uš-ta-ad-du-ú (AbB 13, 60:30-32)

"Zimrī-ḫammu and Yasim-addašunu took command of the sons of Zimrī-yidda, those bound to them by oath as well as the Aḫlamite troops, and they laid waste the land."[67]

In a 14th century BCE Amarna letter addressed to the Pharaoh (EA 200), the latter is being informed that the Babylonian caravans from Karanduniyaš were attacked by the Aḫlamū Aramean clans.[68] A robbery of Babylonian caravans by groups of pastoral nomads called Aḫlamū is probably described in this fragmentary letter while in *EA* 16:37-42, the Assyrian king Aššur-uballiṭ writes to the Pharaoh telling him that the Suteans, another Aramean nomadic tribe, have pursued and kidnapped his messengers.[69]

In the 13th century BCE, a letter from Emar (Tell Meskéné) quotes the report of two Aḫlamū Arameans who came from Sūḫu (region where Arameans settled in Babylonia).[70]

The Aḫlamū Aramean clans were mentioned since the Assyrian king Adad-nirari I (1307-1275 BCE) who states that his father Arik-den-ilu (1318-1307), was victorious in his military campaigns against various Aramaic nomadic tribes such as Aḫlamu, Sutû and Yauru.[71] According to J.-R. Kupper, the collocation Aḫlamū Arameans indicates a close relationship between the two groups.[72]

In the description of his military campaigns in the west, Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE) mentions the Great Sea of the Amurru, referring to the Mediteranean, and includes Tadmor which means Palmyra in Transeuphrates area as part of the Amurru land.

In Middle Assyrian texts and documents (1400 to 1000 BCE), the references to nomads employ one of the three terms Suteans, Aḫlamū and Arameans.[73] They are occupying the steppe between Tadmor (Palmyra) and the borders of Babylonia. In Assyria the Aḫlamū are first mentioned by Adad-nirari I (1305-1274 BCE) as opponents of his father Arik-den-ili (1317-1306 BCE) along with Suteans and Yauru. Šalmaneser I

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[67] W. H. van Soldt, *Altbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Uebersetzung, Letters in the British Museum* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 54-55.

[68] W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 277.

[69] N. Naʾaman, "Bityawaza of Damascus and the Date of the Kāmid el-Lōz ʾApiru Letters," *UF* 20 (1988), pp. 179-93 esp. p. 181, n.14.

[70] D. Arnaud, *Recherches au pays d'Aštata, Emar 4.3* (Paris: ERC, 1986), p. 260, no 263, ll. 18-19.

[71] Kupper, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie*, p. 104.

[72] Kupper, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie*, p. 135.

[73] J. N. Postgate, "Nomads and Sedentaries in the Middle Assyrian Sources," in J. S. Castillo (ed.), *Nomads and Sedentary Peoples* (30th International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa; Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico, pp. 47-56 (49).

(1273-1244 BCE) encountered the Aḫlamū in alliance with the Hittites and the Hurrians in a desert area south of the major cities of Ḫanigalbat, perhaps near lower Baliḫ river. Like the term Sutean, the name Aḫlamū survived into the 1st millennium BCE as an archaic designation for nomad populations in both historical and omen texts. In the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser 1 (1114-1076 BCE), however, the term Aḫlamū is always qualified by Aramean.

In the annals of the king Adad-nirari II (909-889 BCE), the Aḫlamū Aramean are designated as the clans from the steppe ṣābē[meš] ṣēri and are associated with the land of Suḫu.[74]

In Neo-Assyrian times, the mother of king Esarhaddon, Zakūtu-Naqiʾya "The Pure," was herself of Aramaic origin.[75] Therefore, finding an Aramean vizier named Aḥiqar as a royal counselor is not necessarily surprising. Aḥiqar is referred to as belonging to the Aḫlamū Arameans in a tablet found at Uruk and dating from 165 BCE. Though part of an attempt at providing the Aramaic "Homer" with an illustrious ancestry, such a late reference to Aḥiqar the Aḫlamū in this context might be significant. It might reflect a historical reminiscence concerning the identity and origin of the Arameans bringing them as far back into the past as the time of the Amorite warlord Zimrī-Līm (1775-1762 BCE) and the king Ḫammu-rabi of Babylon (1792-1750 BCE) who was himself of Benjaminite Amorite stock.[76] An inscribed brick from Ḫammu-rabi of Babylon attests to the way he wanted to be perceived, proclaiming himself "King of the totality of the land of Amurru (lugal.da.ga.na kur mar.tu), king of Sumer and Akkad." Such an inscription calls attention to the presence of Amorites among the population of the city of Babylon.[77]

The Aḫlamū seem to have come under Hittite influence at the time when the Hittite empire became one of the principal political powers in the ancient Near East. Under the Hittite king Suppiluliumas I (1380-1336 BCE), Northern Syria came under Hittite control while the Eastern part of Mesopotamia was progressively brought under the domination of the Assyrians. By the twelfth century BCE, the first mention of the Arameans as an ethnic entity appears. It is found in the royal inscriptions dating from the fourth year of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076 BCE).

6.2. The *Sutū* Arameans

The Suteans do not seem to have formed a homogenous political structure. Being intimately acquainted with the desert caravan routes (ARM VI 51), they stand for armed gangs of robbers that have not yet become completely sedentary. Little else is known

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[74] Kupper, *Les Nomades*, p. 111.

[75] F. Joannès, *La Mésopotamie du Ier millénaire avant J.-C.* (Paris: A. Colin, 2000), p. 67. H. Lewy, "Nitokris-Naqiʾia", *JNES* 11 (1952), pp. 264-86.

[76] D. Charpin, *Hammu-rabi de Babylone* (Paris: PUF, 2003), p. 43. D. Bodi, "Traditional Claims of an Illustrious Ancestor in Craftsmanship and in Wisdom," (57th RAI, University of Rome - La Sapienza, July 4-8, 2011; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014) (in print). J. van Dijk, "Die Tontafel aus dem Reš-Heiligtum," in *Die Inschriftenfunde in XVIII vorläufuger Bericht über die von dem Deutschen Archäologischen Institut und der DOGAUW* (H. J. Lenzen ed., Berlin: Mann, 1962), pp. 39-62 (44), (l. 19). Idem, "Die Tontafelfunde der Kampagne 1959/60", *AfO* 20 (1963), pp. 217-18.

[77] Kupper, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie*, p. 178.

about them. They roamed across the desert areas west and east of the Euphrates river, in the area of Palmyra and the Northern Arabian desert.[78]

In a Mari letter edited by N. Ziegler,[79] Šamši-Addu writes to his son Yasmaḫ-Addu who ruled in Mari, telling him to bribe two Sutean warlords named Gāʾidānum and Ilī-epuḫ, and make them loot a caravan that the king of Babylon sent to Yamḫad (Aleppo) and to Karkemiš. The caravan was to be attacked in the spring time while on its way back to Babylon. The warlords are promised to be given a hefty reward of 5000 sheep each and would definitively be attributed their inheritance, *niḫlatum* (ll. 31-33).[80]

In the OB period, Sūtû was the name of an Amorite tribe. Later in the second half of the first and in the first millennium BCE, the name was used as an archaizing term for different nomads.[81]

The Suteans are mentioned in an Amarna letter as having detained messengers passing between the Egyptian and Babylonian courts. It can be deduced that in mid 14th century BCE they were occupying the region spreading from Tadmor (Palmyra), past the Djebel Bišri to the Babylonian border at Rapiqu, near modern Ramadi. This was formerly the habitat of independent semi-nomadic tribes, such as the Amorites, or, later, the Arameans, and that they controlled the desert route from Babylon to Syria, that passed through Tadmor.

Another Amarna letter mentions the Suteans as mercenaries of Biryawaza from Dimašqu (Damascus): "I am indeed, together with my troops and chariots, together with my brothers, my ʿApiru and my Suteans, at the disposition of the archers, wheresoever the king, my lord, shall order (me to go)" (EA 195:24-32).[82]

In EA 122 and 123 Rib-Hadda of Byblos mentions the Suteans who were hired as henchmen to raid, kill and plunder. In EA 246:9-10, Biridiya the mayor of Megiddo accuses Lab'ayu of heaving hired Suteans in order to attack him. In EA 297:16, Yapaḫu, mayor of Gazru (Gezer) complains to the Pharaoh about the Suteans. EA 169 Aziru mentions the Sutean forces about to desert. In EA 318 Dagan-takala complains of the raiding Suteans.

One legal text from Assur (KAJ 39:7) refers to a trading journey as a KASKAL É [lú]*Su-ti-e* "journey (to) the House of the Suteans." Here the term (É) "house" might be a 14th century BCE precursor of what will later become common among the Aramean tribal states like Bīt Adini.[83]

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[78] On the Suteans, see Kupper, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie*, pp. 83-145. M. Heltzer, *The Suteans* (Istituto Universitario Orientali Series Minor 13, Naples, 1981). F. Joannès, "Palmyre et les routes du désert au début du deuxième millénaire av. J.-C.", *MARI* 8 (1997), pp. 393-416 (408-11). J.-M. Durand, "Nomadentum," *2000 v. Chr. – Politische, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Etnwicklung im Zeichen einer Jahrtausendwende* (W. Sommerfeld and J.-W. Meyer eds., CDOG 3; Sarrbrück: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 2004), pp. 383-92.

[79] N. Ziegler, "Samsi-Addu et la combine sutéenne," *Nomades et sédentaires dans le Proche-Orient ancien* (46th RAI; C. Nicolle ed., Amurru 3 Paris: ERC, 2004), pp. 95-109.

[80] Durand LAPO 16, p. 505; LAPO 17, p. 452; LAPO 18, p. 181.

[81] B. Kärger and S. Minx, Art. "Sutäer," *RlA* 13 (2012), pp. 365-69.

[82] Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, p. 273.

[83] Cf. the way the 9th century BCE Aramaic Tel Dan stele mentions the Davidic dynasty (*bytdwd*) ruling over the tribe of Judah.

The Amorite troops called *nʿrn* (note the ending) from the kingdom of Siyannu fought at the side of Ramses II at the battle of Qadesh.[84] J. C. de Moor suggests that the ending –*n* in Yaudic, Moabite, and the dialect of the Balaam texts should be attributed to the influence of Aramaic-speaking Amorites.[85]

7. *The Pattern of Semi-Nomadic Migrations*

In the 14th century CE, the Arab historiographer Ibn Khaldūn[86] stated a valuable sociological observation about the way semi-nomadic Arabic tribes became sedentary: "If we inquire about the origin of the inhabitants of a particular city, we have the proof that the Bedouins preceded those who became sedentary."[87] Although Ibn Khaldoun spoke of Medieval Arabic tribes and their pattern of sedentarization, his observation could also apply to the way ancient Amorites and Arameans became sedentary. Both groups were originally semi-nomadic.

P. Amiet pointed out an historical pattern in the way nomadic tribes coming from the northwest settle and adopt the urban culture of their new land.[88] This pattern applies to the settlement of both the Amorites and the Aramean tribes. The MAR.TU nomads, stemming from the coastal regions in the northwest, left the distant Levant and took over the Ur empire after its downfall. King Sîn-Kašid (1865 BCE), who belonged to the Amnānum Amorite semi-nomadic tribes, settled in Uruk where he had a palace built in the purest Mesopotamian tradition.[89] He proclaimed himself king of this prestigious city and of its urban population, not omitting to call himself king of the Amnānum in order to affirm his tribal legitimacy as well.[90] Amorite tribal rulers, firmly entrenched in the outlying reaches of ancient western Asia from Aleppo in the northwest, were also dividing the thrones of Babylonia proper by the late nineteenth century BCE. Another famous Amorite king, Ḥammu-rabi of Babylon, was the sixth in a line of long-lived kings whose reigns had passed from father to son since 1894 BCE. His dynasty claimed common ancestry with the Amorite kings of Assyria of the Benjaminite tribe.[91] In Northern Mesopotamia, Mari, Šubat-Enlil and Ekallātum were settled by Amorite rulers from the Addu and Līm clans. Zimrī-Līm settled in Mari, proclaimed himself king of that city and of the Akkadians, but did not forget his Amorite tribal origins.[92] It is in this light that we understand the words a Mari official addressed to his lord Zimrī-Līm: "You are the king of the Ḫanean-nomads, but moreover you are, in the second place, also the king

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[84] A. Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), p. 37. Siyannu is a kingdom at the southern border of Ugarit. M. C. Astour, "The Kingdom of Siyannu-Ušnatu," *UF* 11 (1979), pp. 13-28.

[85] J. C. de Moor, "Ugarit and Israelite Origins," *Congress Volume Paris, 1992* (J.A. Emerton ed., VTSup. 61, Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 205-38 (p. 235 n. 131).

[86] Ibn Khaldūn was born in Tunis in 1332 and died in Cairo in 1406. His *Muqaqddima* represents the Prolegomena to his work on the General History.

[87] Ibn Khaldoun, *Muqaddima* (Fr. tr. by V. Monteil, Paris: Sinbad, 1967-68), ch. 2, pp. 188-90.

[88] P. Amiet, "Effigie royale aux origines de la civilisation mésopotamienne", *RB* 112 (2005), pp. 5-19 (18-19).

[89] Kupper, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie*, p. 31 and 49.

[90] P. Michalowski, "History as Charter. Some Observations on the Sumerian King Lists", *JAOS* 103 (1983), pp. 237-48 (246)

[91] J. J. Finkelstein, "The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty," *JCS* 20 (1966), pp. 95-118.

[92] D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand, "Fils de Sim'al: Les origines tribales des rois de Mari," *RA* 80 (1986), pp. 141-83 (157).

of the Akkadians; my lord ought not to ride a horse; it is on a *nūbalum* and on mules that my lord should ride in order to honor his capital city' (*ARMT* VI 76:20-24).[93] After the Amorites, the Aramean tribes who lived in roughly the same geographical area continued the same pattern. Upon becoming partially sedentarized, the Aramean princes built palaces in Guzana (Tell Halaf), Samʾal (Zinjirli) and Tell Tainat. In the same vein, a few centuries later, the Hebrew tribal chieftain David conquered a Jebusite citadel, and his son Solomon appealed for technical assistance from Phoenician builders and adopted the cultural heritage of Canaanite urban civilization.

A. Finet connected the successive waves of migrating Amorite tribes, with the their flow and ebb of moving into south-east Mesopotamia, then coming out of it and settling in the north-west of Mesopotamia with the migrations of the clan of Terah and Abraham. "Such would be the case of Abraham judging from the biblical narrative."[94] In fact, in Gen 15:16 Abram is depicted as roaming in the territory occupied by some Amorite tribes, when he receives the promise that his descendents will one day inherit the same territory as their inheritance *naḥᵃlâ*.

An indication of Amorite migration can be deduced from the way they integrated and associated the names of their gods with those from the land of Canaan like Adad, Dagān, El and Eraḫ. The following personal names would tend to confirm it: Iaḫwi-kî-Adad "Yahwe is like Adad" (ARM VII 194:2); Iaḫwi-kî-El "Yahwe is like El" (ARM XXIV 234, I,10'), or proper names that express the equation like Iawi-Adad "Yahwe (is) Adad" (ARM IX 291, II 12, IV 28'; XXII/1 170:10), Iawi-El "Yahwe (is) El" (ARM XXII/2 262; VI 9; 264:22'), Iawi-Eraḫ "Yahwe is Eraḫ" (ARM XXIV 39:9; 258:3'), Iawi-Dagān "Yahwe (is) Dagān" (ARM XXIV 247; II' 17'). Moreover, there is a place in the western part of the Mari realm with the geographic name Ya-El that Finet compares to the personal Hebrew name Yoʾel. The hypocoristic *ia = ya/yo* used in Mari would correspond to a similar hypocoristic in Hebrew names.[95]

The migratory movement of semi-nomadic populations is not only in the direction of north-west to south-east but also from north-east to the west as proposed by G. Buccellati.[96] His theoretical reconstruction of the migrations of semi-nomadic populations in mid 2nd millennium BCE starts from the collapse of the Syro-Mesopotamian world and the Middle-Euphrates urban centers around Terqa and Ḫana in the 16th century BCE. This upheaval is reflected in the mention of the displaced, fleeing persons called ʿapirū and *munnabtūtu* in the texts.[97] The development of the MB kingdom of Amurru in the West is seen as related to the waning of Ḫana as a "macro-

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[93] [*šum-ma*] lugal ḫa-na^meš *at-ta* [*ù š*]*a-ni-iš* lugal *ak-ka-di-im at-ta* [*be-lí*] *i-na* anše-kur-ra-ḫá *la i-ra-ka-ab* [*i-na*] ^giš*nu-ba-lim ù* anše-ḫá *ku-da-ni-ma* [*be-l*]*í li-ir-ka-am-ma qa-qa-ad šar-ru-ti-šu*. B. Groneberg, 'Der *Nûbalum* und seine Objekte', *MARI* 6 (1990), pp. 161-80. The term *nūbalum* is a deverbal noun derived from *wabālum* "to carry" and stands for a chair carried by porters or a litter, see Durand, *Documents épistolaires de Mari I*, 1997, p. 236.

[94] A. Finet, "Les dieux de l'ombre. Integrés, intrus et médiateurs," *Official Cult and Popular Religion in the Ancient Near East* (E. Matsishima ed., Heildeberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1993), pp. 126-134 (127).

[95] Finet, "Les dieux de l'ombre," p. 128.

[96] G. Buccellati, "From Khana to Laqê: The End of Syro-Mesopotamia," *De la Babylonie à la Syrie en passant par Mari. Mélanges J.-R. Kupper* (Ö. Tunca ed., Liège: University of Liège, 1990), pp. 229-53.

[97] G. Buccellati, "ʿApiru and *munnabtūtu* – the Stateless of the First Cosmopolitan Age," *JNES* 36 (1977), pp. 145-47. M. Rowton, "Dimorphic Structures and the Problem of ʿApirû-Ibrîm," *JNES* 35 (1976), pp. 13-20.

regional state." The dialectic relationship between the semi-nomads and city dwellers favored the development of the kingdom of Amurru. The latter began in the steppeland of the low mountain range between Palmyra and Qaṭnā/Qadesh, and then expanded to the Mediterranean in the area between Lebanon and Djebel Ansariya. Buccellati is inclined to view the patriarchal migrations of Jacob in light of these mid 2nd millennium migrant movements. Jacob's travels to Paddan-Aram in Gen. 28 in the land of the "sons of the East" (29:1), where he meets Laban's shepherds who are said to have come from Harran (29:4), would reflect similar dialectic semi-nomadic patterns of behavior and travels.

Building on Buccellati's study of the ʿapiru "social outcasts" and munnabtūtu "persons seeking political asylum," A. Millard connects the latter term with Hebrew ʾōbēd in Deut. 26:5 "a wandering Aramean was my father" (ʾarammî ʾōbēd ʾābî).[98] The Akkadian term munnabtu is derived from abātu B, in the N-stem, meaning "to flee." Sennacherib's annals (704-703 BCE) mention the arame ḫalqu munnabtu "the fugitive Arameans, the run-away," while Sargon II (709-705 BCE) calls them mār ḫabbāti from another Akkadian term, ḫabātu A "to rob, plunder," in the statement [lú]arame mār ḫabbāti "the Arameans, a plundering race." Both descriptions and terms suit Jacob's career who robbed his brother Esau of primogeniture which led him to flee from the land of Canaan, and then plundered his father-in-law, Laban, and had to flee again from Paddan-Aram. The way an Israelite could hear the statement in Deut. 26:5 would be, while his ancestor was a fleeing run-away, a political refugee and a social misfit, he, the descendent, was a settled individual, cultivating his own land as a citizen of an established nation.[99]

8. *Some Common Amorite, Aramaic and Hebrew Features: Linguistic Aspects, Matrimonial Customs, Mirror Toponymy and Social Phenomena*

8.1. *Some Common Linguistic Aspects*

The Amorites spoke a language belonging to the Northwest Semitic ones to which Phoenician, Aramaic and Hebrew represent some chronologically more recent offshoots.[100]

There seems to exist a linguistic continuity between the Amorite and the Aramaic languages. R. Zadok has suggested that certain eastern members of the Amorite dialect cluster, which were spoken in the Djezireh and on the fringe of the Syrian desert, were the ancestors of the Aramaic language.[101]

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[98] A. R. Millard, "A Wandering Aramean," *JNES* 39 (1980), pp. 153-55.

[99] Both Abraham's servant and Jacob travel to Aram-naharaim (Gn 24:10), the name for Syria during the later Iron Age. Aram naharayim (ʾᵃram nahᵃrayîm, Gen. 24:10, cf. Judg. 3:8; Deut. 23:4; 1 Cron. 19:6; Ps. 60:2). The second part of the name recalls *Nhryn* of 16th century BCE Egyptian texts and the *Na-aḫ-ri-ma*[ki] of 14th century BCE Amarna texts. Paddan Aram (*paddan ʾᵃram,* Gen. 25:20; 28:2, 5, 6, 7; 31:18; 33:18; 35:9, 26; *paddan* alone in Gen. 46:15; The first part is usually taken as an equivalent of Akkadian *paddānu*, *padānu*, a synonym of *ḫarrānu* "way, road"); Hos. 12:13 *śᵉdê ʾᵃram* suggests a connection with Arabbic *saddānu* and a meaning "field of Aram." Rebekah and her brother Laban are said to be Arameans (Gen. 25:20; 28:5; 31:20, 24), as well as Rachel and Leah, Laban's daughters.

[100] W. L. Moran, "The Hebrew Language in its Northwest Semitic Background," *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of W. F. Albright* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 54-72.

[101] R. Zadok, "On the Amorite Material from Mesopotamia," *The Tablet and the Scroll. Near Eastern Studies in Honor of W. W. Hallo* (M. E. Cohen, D. C. Snell & D. W. Weisberg eds., Bethseda, MD: CDL Press, 1993), pp. 315-33, "A comparison of the Mari corpus with the material from from MB Emar reveals a remarkable linguistic and cultural continuity. My working hypothesis is that certain eastern members of

Right from the beginning of the decipherment of the Mari tablets G. Dossin began establishing a series of Amorite-Hebrew parallels.[102] Dossin was particularly sensitive to Mari Akkadian terms used in a way that corresponds more to the West Semitic usage as reflected in Hebrew. He pointed out that Mari Akkadian *almānum* "widow" corresponds to Hebrew *ʾalmān* adj. "widowed,"[103] Mesopotamian Akkadian knows only the feminine form *almattum* derived from *almantum*. Forms of settlement designed with the term *nawûm* although found in Akkadian is used in Mari in a specific West Semitic connotation, similar to Hebrew *nāweh* "pasture" as a place where nomads pitch tents, cf. Hebrew *nᵉwê rō'îm* "shepherds' abode," *nᵉwê ṣō'n* "sheep pasturage," *nᵉwê gᵉmallîm* "camel pasturage." Mari Akkadian *ḫibrum ša nawīm* "transhumant people of the steppe" corresponds to Hebrew *ḥeber* "nomadic families roaming together."[104] Mari Akkadian *ummātum* "ethnic group" recalls Hebrew *ʾummâ* in Gen. 25:16; 36:40; Num. 25:5.[105]

The Akkadian word *līmum* which stands for the figure of "1000," or "multitude" also serves to designate the "clan." It is a cognate of Ugaritic *l'im* and of Hebrew *le'ōm* "clan, tribe, people."[106] Since in Mari texts *lim* is never written with a Sumerogram and never carries a determinative (dingir) for the divine being, the older proposal to see here a reference to a supposed "god Lim" is less probable.[107]

A convenient presentation of all the suggested Amorite loanwords supposedly reflected in Hebrew has been provided by M. P. Streck who analyzed about 190 such terms, considerably reducing their numbers. Below is a list of those listed by Streck as assured Amorite loanwords enumerated by categories.[108] Their Hebrew counterparts are easy to recognize.

Tribal units: *gayyu* "clan,"[109] *gayyišam* "clan for clan," *ḫibru* "transhumant clan," *līmu* "tribe, clan," *ra'su* "section, detachment."

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the Amorite dialect cluster, which were spoken in the Jezireh and on the fringe of the Syrian desert, were the ancestors of Aramaic" (316).

[102] G. Dossin, "Les archives épistolaires du palais de Mari," *Syria* 19 (1938), pp. 105-26 (108).

[103] Jer. 51:5 Israel is "widowed"; Isa. 47:9 *'almōn* "widowhood" said figuratively of Babylon.

[104] A. Malamat, "Mari and the Bible: Some Patterns of Tribal Organization and Institution," *JAOS* 82 (1962), pp. 143-50 (145); O. Loretz, "Der juridische Begriff *niḫlatum/nḥlt/naḥᵉlāh* 'Erbbesitz' als amurritisch-kanaanäische Hintergrund von Psalm 58," *UF* 34 (2002), pp. 453-79.

[105] A. Malamat, "*Ummātum* in Old Babylonian Texts and Its Ugaritic and Biblical Counterparts," *JAOS* 11 (1979), pp. 527-536 (533); Idem, *Mari and the Early Israelite Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 33 with a list of forty Amorite words corresponding to Hebrew.

[106] A. Malamat, "A Recently Discovered Word for 'Clan' in Mari and Its Hebrew Cognate," *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenflied* (Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin, and Michael Sokoloff, eds., Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), pp. 177-79.

[107] Just to cite a few articles which still hold to the existence of the supposed god Lim: M. Krebernik, "Lim," *RlA* 7 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1987-90), pp. 25-27. E. Lipiński, "Le dieu Lim," *La civilisation de Mari* (15th RAI; J.-R. Kupper ed., Liège: Université de Liège, 1967), pp. 151-60. G. Dossin, "A propos du dieu Lim," *Syria* 55 (1978), pp. 327-32.

[108] Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon*, pp. 82-123, § 1.95, and § 1.86 (p. 123).

[109] *gā'um gāyum* (Heb. *gōy),* was originally a tribal unit before evolving to mean "nation" in Hebrew, cf. E. A. Speiser, "'People'" and 'Nation' of Israel," *JBL* 79 (1960), pp. 157-63. D. E. Fleming, "The Sim'alite Gayum and the Yaminite Li'mum in the Mari Archives," *Nomades et sédentaires dans le Proche-Orient ancien* (Chr. Nicolle ed., Amurru 3; RAI 46, Paris, July 10-13 2000, Paris: ERC, 2004), pp. 199-212.

Tribal leadership: *sugāgu* "the great one, chief, sheikh,"[110] *sugāgūtu* "office of the chief, sheikh," *zubūltu* "princess," *ʾabu kahli* "father of power," *taʾtāmu* "gathering."

Relations: *ḫammu* "people, older male relation," *yabamu* "brother-in-law," *iššu* "wife, spouse," *dāru* "generation."

Cattle husbandry: *ḫayyatu* "animals," *ṣamru, ṣa/ummuratu* "a kind of sheep," *tišānu* "a kind of sheep," *ḫazzu* "goat," *ḫazzatu* "she goat," *ḫâlu* "goats giving milk," *yabisu* ("dry goats" not giving milk); *buqāru* "horned cattle, oxen," *ḫâru, ḫayaru* "donkey," *ḫaṣāru* "fold, pen,"[111] *merḫû* "supervisor of royal herds," *merḫûtu* "the office of the supervisor."

Nomadic camps: *maskanu* "settlement," *maskanû* "settler," *sakānu* "to settle," *maškabu* "camp."

Topography: *āḫarātu* "west, rear bank," *aqdamātu* "east, front bank," *bataru* "gorge, gully," *gabʾu* "top," *ḫadqu* "steppe," *ḫamqu* "valley," *kaṣû* "steppe," *madbaru* "desert, steppe," *sawû* "surrounding, desert," *ṣūru* "rock."

Farming: *ḫiršu* "ploughed field," *maḫappu* "part of a dam," *yābiltu* "afferent canal."

Hunting: *ḫalû* "sick (of lion)," *nissatu* "weakness (of a lion)," *saḫātu* "trap, pit."

Textile industry: *nasāku* "weaving."

Communication: *mālaku* "messenger."

War: *sadādu* "make a raid," *saddu* "a raid," *marādu* "to rebel," *qatālu* "to kill," *ṭaḫānu* "to wound."

Legal transactions: *ḫayaram/ḫazzam qatālu* "kill a donkey/a goat" (when concluding an alliance), *yālūtu* "treaty," *madīnatu* "legal district," *naḫālu* "to inherit," *niḫlatu* "inheritance," *niqmu* "retaliation, revenge," *šapāṭu* "to judge, govern," *šāpiṭu* "judge, governor," *šāpiṭūtu* "office of a judge, governor," *šipṭu* "judgment."

Religion: *ḫulīlu* "jubilation(?)," *qilāsātu* "a feast."

Artifacts, products: *ḫabalu* "strap, harness" *ḫimru* "a fermented drink," *ḫūgu* "flat cake," *kinnāru* "lyre," *marbiqatu* "gem."

Additional terms: *abiyānu* "poor," *aqdamu* "former times," *biqlu* "shoot, sprig," *ḫakû* "to await," *ḫarāšu* "to be silent," *ḫašû* "to pass over in silence," *ḫāziru* "helper," *ḫikītu* "expectation," *ḫinnu* "mercy," *ḫippu* "hurdle," *māpalû* "speaker," *−na* (emphatic particle), *naḫāmu* "be abundant," *naḫmu* "abundance," *paḫāttu* "fear," *qaḫālu* "to gather," *rabbatu* "10,000," *šaḫādu* "to lend," *tarṣiātu* "to satisfy," *yagâtu* "to burden."

This entire dossier, however, requires additional study, with detailed contextual analysis of the way these terms are used in specific Mari and Hebrew texts.

8.2. *Similar Marital Practices*

In the Hebrew Bible there are two examples where two daughters are offered to the same man. First among the patriarchal stories, Laban offered Jacob two daughters for wives, Leah

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[110] Marti, *Nomades et sédentaires à Mari: la perception de la taxe-sugâgûtum*, p. 1, *sugāgum* "chef 'coutumier' (…) était le chef administratif local de petits centres, assisté par une lieutenant, le *lappûtum*, chargé d'organiser le travail humain, à ses côtés, il se présentait comme le guide de toutes les expéditions du groupe (souvent militaires)." J.-M. Durand, *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari 1* (LAPO, 16; Paris: Cerf, 1997), p. 206 states that the translation with sheikh is purely conventional.

[111] A. Malamat, "Aspects of Tribal Societies in Mari and Israel," *La civilisation de Mari* (RAI 15, Liège, 4-8 juillet 1966, J.-R. Kupper ed., Liège: Université de Liège, 1967), pp. 129-138 (133). Mari documents contain a series of WS terms denoting tribal units, such as *gāʾum*, *ummatum*, and *ḫibrum*, and forms of settlement, such as *nawûm*, and *haṣārum*. According to Malamat the latter does not connote an enclosure for sheep and cattle, but like the Hebrew cognate *haṣērîm*, a type of settlement of semi-nomadic tribes.

and Rachel, and later Saul offered David likewise his two daughters, first Merab then Michal.

a) The coarse Jacob-Laban story in Gen. 29:26-28, narrates how the former obtained the two sisters Leah and Rachel for wives seems to serve the purpose of showing how the nemesis or divine retribution is at work. Jacob cheated his older brother Esau, now he gets cheated in turn by waking up in the morning finding himself in bed with the older daughter Leah while he desired Rachel, the younger one. This patriarchal tradition of incestuous marriages chronologically precedes the strict prohibition of a marriage to two sisters at the same time found in Lev. 18:18. The law in Leviticus was formulated probably in the Persian times as a reaction to the incestuous marriages of the Persian Achaemenid royalty, where princes married their sisters.[112] The ancestors of the Hebrew tribes issued from Laban's sister Rebekah (with Isaac) and his two daughters Leah and Rachel (with Jacob, Rebekah's son) lived in *paddan-ʾarām*, an expression to be connected with Akkadian *paddānu, padānu* "the way, the path," meaning in this case "the way of the Arameans" (Gen. 25:20 "Rebekah [Isaac's wife], was the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean"; After marrying Rachel and Leah the daughters of Laban the Aramean, Jacob returned to Canaan: Gen. 48:7 [Jacob says] "for when I came from Paddan, Rachel to my sorrow died in the land of Canaan"). The incestuous practice of giving two daughters to the same man is attested among the Amorites as the Mari documents show. As R. Zadok suggests, the nucleus of some of the chronologically later Aramean tribes seems to have evolved from the previous conglomerate of the Amorite ones.[113] They both occupied Northern Mesopotamia and thrived in the same geographical area. Moreover, scholars are becoming increasingly aware of the similarities in the marriage transactions between the Amorite semi-nomads and the ancient Hebrews. J. Sasson compares the way Isaac obtained Rebekah, Laban's sister from the "city of Nahor" in Haran, as a spouse as described in Gen. 24:1-27, with the way the Sim'alite Amorite warlord Zimri-Lim negotiated his marriage with Šibtum, the daughter of Yarim-Lim from Ḫalab (Aleppo), by a proxy as described in several cuneiform letters from Mari *ARMT* XXVI 10; 11; 13.[114] Both marriage transactions share numerous specific details which are best explained as being due to the conservatism of marriage customs in Northern Syria. They tend to confirm the continuity between the Amorite tribes and the Aramean ones among which are found the ancestors of the Hebrews. Rebekah's and Šibtu's betrothals share the following elements: long-distance negotiations by wise servants or ambassadors, rich gifts to the bride and the family of the bride, the veiling of the bride, her own acceptance of her new status, the attachment of maids to her person, the merging of two families, the anxiety of the bride's family, the long trek back, and the preparation of a chamber for the new mistress of the house.

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[112] On the practice of incestuous marriages by Persian nobility who tended to marry their sisters, see C. Herrenschmidt, "Le *xwêtôdâ* ou mariage incestueux en Iran mazdéen," *Epouser au plus proche*: *Inceste, prohibitions sociales et stratégies matrimoniales autour de la Méditerranée* (P. Bonet ed., Paris: Ecoles des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1994), pp. 113-25; *Idem*, "Entre Perses et Grecs, I. Démocratie et le mazdéisme. Religion, philosophie, science," *Transeuphratène* 11 (1996), pp. 115-43, esp. p. 125. M. Macuch, "Inzest in vorislamischen Iran," *AMI* 24 (1991), pp. 141-54.

[113] Zadok, "On the Amorite Material from Mesopotamia," pp. 315-33.

[114] J. M. Sasson, "The Servant's Tale: How Rebekah Found a Spouse," *JNES* 65 (2006), pp. 241-65 (247). The etymology of this famous queen's name is still in dispute, possibly *šibtu* "The Old Lady," (to be understood as sobriquet for authority), *šipṭu* "judgment, verdict," or, less likely, *šiptu* "incantation, spell." I would compare *šibtu* to Russian "*staretsa*" in the sense of "mother superior."

In the case of Jacob being offered two sisters Leah and Rachel as wives, it reflects Laban the Aramean's indelicate attempt to manipulate and control him.

b) There is another example in the Hebrew Bible of a father offering his two daughters to the same man found in the story of Saul and David. Elsewhere I have compared Saul's offer of his two daughters, Merab and Michal to David with the particular story of two daughters of Zimrī-Līm. This 18th century BCE tribal chieftain at Mari offered his two daughters Kirûm and Šimātum to the same vassal, Ḫāya-Sūmû, in order to spy on him and better control his political alliances.[115] The Amorite princess, Kirûm, eventually managed to extirpate herself from this unfortunate political transaction of her father by a divorce. By contrast, Michal, the Hebrew princess, first given to David then to Palti, due to the political dealings of her father Saul, is brought back to David and remained in his custody and probably sequestered until the end of her life.

In the time of early Hebrew tribal chiefdom, the two sisters Merab and Michal, the daughters of Saul, were offered to David as wives. Many scholars consider that Merab is a calque of the Michal story, a ghost character in an offer that never took place. Seen in the comparative light, however, the existence of Merab and the initial transaction between Saul and David on her account gains some probability. Saul offered his older daughter Merab as a price for David winning over Goliath, but at the moment when she was supposed to become his wife she was given to someone else (1 Sam. 1:17-19). Then Saul used his younger daughter Michal hoping to get rid of David as he imposed to him to bring the proof of having killed 100 Philistines, which David did (1 Sam 18:20-28).[116] In v. 21 one reads about Saul's second offer to David: "Therefore Saul said to David, "A second time (*bštym*) you shall now be my son-in-law."

The comparisons made about the way ancient Hebrew chieftains like Saul and David obtained, exchanged or dealt with their wives, daughters and the matrimonial transactions of the Amorite warlord, Zimrī-Līm, show that marriage transactions among semi-nomadic populations share numerous details which are best explained as being due to the conservatism of marriage customs in Northern Syria and in ancient Israel.

c) The Practice of Appropriating the Predecessor's Women[117]
In 2 Sam. 16:20-22, Absalom, David's son wants to replace his father as the tribal chieftain and usurps the power over Jerusalem by publicly appropriating for himself his father's concubines with whom he sleeps. The practice of capturing one's predecessor's "harem" is a standard procedure among North West Semitic semi-nomadic tribal chieftains and warlords. Mari texts provide a series of examples. 1) The princesses in the city of Mari from the time of Yaḫdun-Līm (ARM 1 64).[118] 2) Yasmaḫ-Addu's "harem"

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[115] J.-M. Durand, "Trois études sur Mari," *MARI* 3 (1984), pp. 127-80, esp. pp. 162-80 III. "Les femmes de Ḫāya-Sūmû," Annexes I et II. L. M. Muntingh, "Amorite Married and Family Life According to the Mari Texts," *JNWSL* 3 (1973), pp. 50-70.

[116] For detailed parallels with the biblical narratives about Merab and Michal, see D. Bodi, *The Michal Affair. From Zimrī-Līm to the Rabbis* (HBM 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005).

[117] J.-M. Durand, "Unité et diversité au Proche-Orient à l'époque amorrite," *La circulation des biens, des personnes et des idées au Proche-Orient ancien* (38th RAI, D. Charpin and F. Joannès eds., Paris: ERC, 1992), pp. 97-128 (109).

[118] J.-M. Durand, "Les dames du palais de Mari à l'époque du Royaume de Haute-Mésopotamie," *MARI* 4 (1985), pp. 385-435 (431-32).

was incorporated into that of Zimrī-Līm after the latter conquered the city of Mari.[119] 3) The women captured in the city of Kaḫat were incorporated into Zimrī-Līm's "harem."[120] 4) The "harem" from the ruler Ibbāl-Addu of Ašlakkā captured and brought to Mari in order to incorporate Zimrī-Līm's "harem." Previously, Ibbāl-Addu from Ašlakkā had himself captured another harem from Ašnakkum, which means that in this particular case, Zimrī-Līm accumulated two successive "harems," thus strengthening his already large feminine work force in his "royal economics of women."[121] This would produce a multilingual and multicultural milieu in the midst of which the local warlord lived and where his sons would be reared to become future kings.

8.3. *The Amorite, Aramean, and Hebrew Onomastics*
One of the main sources for the study of the Amorites is found in the richly attested onomastic data. This allow for a fruitful comparison with Aramaic and Hebrew names.

A name corresponding to the original one of the patriarch Abram is attested in Mari documents. A list of slaves on a tablet dating from the time of Sūmū-Yamam mentions a certian Abī-rām: (A.3562 iv:12 *a-bi-ra-am*).[122] The OB titles *a-bi A-mu-ur-ri-im* (UET V 62), also found as a princely title *Ibiq-Ištar* ad.da mar.tu (PBS VIII r, no 79:3-4) from Nippur, dating from the 24th year of reign of Rīm-Sîn (1822-1763 BCE) of the Larsa dynasty, may also have some bearing on the meaning of "father" as "sheikh, leader." The interchange of titles such as, *a-bu E-mu-ut-ba-la* and ad.da *E-mu-ut-ba-la*, clinches the issue showing the correspondence of *abum* and ad.da. *ʾabi-yamūti* "sheikh of Yamūtum."[123]

OA Amorite name *E-na-Ba-ša-ta* "Fruit of the (goddess) Bāšata" has been compared to Hebrew names *ʾîš-bōšet* and *mepîbōšet*.[124] J. Lewy sees in the final *–ā* the grammatical *status emphaticus*, a feature also found later in Aramaic. He compares it to the divine name ^{d}Ḫa-na-at, to the place name ^{d}Ḫa-na-at^{ki} and to the personal name *Zi-im-ri-Ḫa-na-ta*. In Mari one finds the personal name *Mu-ti-a-n[a-t]a* "Man of ʿAnat".[125]

Some scholars have attempted to place the Hebrew ancestors among the Aramean tribes in Northern Syria. The city of Harran was located on the Baliḫ river, while Serug, Nahor and Terah, Abraham's ancestors in Gen. 11.20-26, correspond to place names in the valley of the Baliḫ river.[126] Durand points out the corresponding Amorite

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[119] Durand, "Les dames du palais de Mari," pp. 385-421.

[120] Durand, "Unité et diversité," p. 109.

[121] Since we are dealing with transactions of sheikhs and kings concerning their women folk, I have suggested that for the NW Semitic world the expression "royal economics of women" would be more appropriate than the anachronistic term "harem" which refers to Ottoman practices of Medieval Turks. In the NW Semitic domain the term "harem" is not used but simply "(women's) quarters," see D. Bodi, (ed.), *Abigail, Wife of David, and Other Ancient Oriental Women* (HBM 60; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013). This issue will be dealt with in my final monograph on David's wives: Abishag (in preparation).

[122] J.-M. Durand, "Études sur les noms propres d'époque amorrite, 1: les listes publiées par G. Dossin," *MARI* 8 (1997), pp. 597-673 (632). D. Charpin, "'Ein umherziehender Aramäer war mein Vater.' Abraham im Lichte der Quellen aus Mari," in R. G. Kratz and T. Nigel (eds.), "Abraham unser Vater." Die gemeinsamen Wurzel von Judentum, Christentum und Islam (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003), pp. 39-52 (p. 43).

[123] Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period,* p. 335, quoting Kupper, *Les nomades*, pp. 174, 175, 178.

[124] J. Lewy, "Amurritica," *HUCA* 32 (1961), pp. 36-37.

[125] On *status emphaticus*, see Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon*, p. 253 (§ 2.178).

[126] Dion, "Les Araméens du Moyen-Euphrate au VIIIe siècle," p. 67. In Gen. 12.1, Abram leaves his extended family *bêt ʾāb* or "father's house," which is also a basic family unit of Amorite nomads, in

phenomenon where cities or villages that carry names of ancestors: Abi-nakar, Abi-ilī, Ibal-aḫ, Mutiʾabal/Mutêbal, Yamut-Baʾal, Yapṭurum.[127]

In the desert area south of Sindjar, where, at the time of the Amorite Bensimʾalite tribes, their mobile camps called *maḫanum* were located, one finds later an Aramaic tribe that bears the name of Sarugū, which corresponds to the name of one of the Hebrew ancestors.[128] The tablets from Sur Jarʿa attest to the Aramean connection of the region of Sarug before the 7th century BCE. The same tablets from Sur Jarʿa from the Middle Euphrates region provide the first mention of the name of the Aramean seer Bileam in cuneiform [m]*Ba-la-am-mu* 2 i 17, [m]*Ba-li-am-mu* 21 i 8.[129] The warlord of a group of warriors from Hamath was Iae, son of Balaam. According to Num. 22:5; Deut. 23:5, Bileam came from Pethor (Akkadian Pitru) on the Euphrates on the right bank of the Euphrates at the confluent of the river Saghur.[130] These new documents from the Middle Euphrates region dating from the 8th century BCE, contemporaneous with time when the writing of first chronicles in Israel probably began, show that the Hebrew scribes were cognizant of the Aramaic reality of the neighboring kingdoms.[131]

8.4. *The Issue of the Amorite Binū-yamīnā and the Hebrew Benjaminites*

G. Dossin was the first to make a rapprochement between the Amorite Benjaminites TUR[meš]-*ia-mi-na* (the initial logogram is also read DUMU) which he transcribed as *Binū-ia-mi-na*, with the name of the Hebrew tribe of Benjamin.[132] Dossin's linguistic argument was based on the fact that he found numerous Amorite personal names with initial NW Semitic *Bin* for "son" like: *Bi-nu-um, Bi-in-ma-a-ḫi-im, Bi-na-aḫ-um, Bi-na-Ištar, Bi-na-Ḫa-an-di-en, Bi-ni-ma-ra-aṣ, Bi-ni-ia.* Moreover, *yamina* is equally a NW Semitic word for the south and not an Akkadian word. Dossin refused to mix Akkadian word *māru* "son" with NW Semitic *yamina*, a stricture his detractors did not respect, however. From a strictly linguistic point of view, Dossin was correct. His initial suggestion was confirmed fifty years later with the discovery of an Amorite personal name *Za-ki-rum*

Akkadian called *bīt abi*, cf. J. Scharbert, "*Bēyt ʾāb* als Soziologische Grösse im Alten Testament," *Von Kanaan bis Kerala. Festschrift J.P.M. van der Ploeg* (W. C. Delsman et alii ed., AOAT 211; Kevelaer: Butzen & Bercker, Neukirche-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), pp. 213-37.

[127] Durand, "Unité et diversité," p. 111.

[128] J.-M. Durand, 'Assyriologie: l'étude de la société et du peuplement…, *ACF* 104 (2003-3004), pp. 817-59 (851). E. Lipiński, '"Mon père était un araméen errant". L'histoire, carrefour des sciences bibliques et orientales', *OLP* 20 (1989), pp. 23-47.

[129] Dion, "Les Araméens du Moyen-Euphrate au VIIIe siècle," p. 68 n. 106.

[130] H. Cazelles, "Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *La civilisation de Mari* (15th RAI, J.-R. Kupper, ed., Liège: Université de Liège, 1967), pp. 73-90 (74) argued that *benê Šet* mentioned in the oracles of the Aramaic seer Balaam in Num. 24:17 refer to the Suteans.

[131] Dion, "Les Araméens du Moyen-Euphrate au VIIIe siècle," bpp. 72-73.

[132] G. Dossin, "Benjaminites dans les texts de Mari," in *Mélanges syriens offerts à R. Dussaud* (Paris: Geuthner, 1939), vol. 2, pp. 981-96 (988). Idem. "A propos du nom des Benjaminites dans les 'Archives de Mari,'" *RA* 52 (1959), pp. 60-62. H. Klengel, "Benjaminiten und Hanäer," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität,* Gesellsch-Sprachwiss. Reihe 8 (1958-59), pp. 211-27. J.-R. Kupper, *Les nomades en Mésopotamie au temps des rois de Mari* (Paris: Société d'Edition Les Belles Lettres, 1957), ch. 2, "Les Benjaminites," pp. 47-81.

[T]UR *Bi-ni-ia-mi-na* "Zakirum, son of Bini-Yamīna" (ARM XXII, no 328 iii:16),[133] confirming that native West Semitic speakers would have used the expected noun *binu-*.

Dossin also pointed out the presence of the Benjaminites in northern Mesopotamia, their connection with Ḫarran and the cult of the moon god Sîn as well as their particular bellicose and warlike nature. This feature reminded him of the description of the Hebrew tribe of Benjamin in Gen. 49:27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the mourning devouring the pray, and at the evening dividing the spoil."

Nevertheless, H. Tadmor objected that the West Semitic loan words were not rendered with logograms in Mari Akkadian and that it should therefore be read *mārū-yamīnā*.[134] T. Thompson's followed this lead in reading cuneiform DUMU^meš *ia-mi-na* as *mārū-yamīna*, in an attempt to reduce the direct verbal correspondence with Hebrew.[135] Their objections, however, were weakened by the subsequent discoveries. While the linguistic connection between the Amorite Binū-yamina and the Hebrew Benjaminites is assured, the historical one still remains a moot question.

D. Chaprin and J.-M. Durand suggest that one could argue for a structural analogy between the Mari Benjaminites and the Hebrew ones without implying historical continuity between the two.[136] In the ancient Near East people oriented themselves by looking to the East, the Orient being designated by the term "before, in front." This geographic orientation makes the right hand *yamina* the south applied to the Benjaminites as the "sons of the right (hand)," while the left hand *sim'al* stands for the north and was applied to the Sim'alites as the "sons of the left."

J. J. Finkelstein mentions the construed genealogies of Arabic tribes after they embraced Islam which comprises some 6000 tribes divided into two groups: The Yemenites in the south (presumably descendents of Qaḥṭān, whom most genealogists identify to one of the descendents of Shem by the name of Yoqṭan in Gen 26) and the Ismaelites (presumably descendents of Adnān) in the north, "by conscious linkage with biblical genealogy."[137] For Finkelstein, priority should be given to the Benjaminite tribes both in Mari and in the Arabic genealogies, the Sim'alites might have been secondarily introduced by way of differentiation.

W. von Soden too argued that the similarity between the names of the Mari Benjaminites and the Hebrew ones was not entirely fortuitous. The biblical Benjaminites are not really a southern tribe, rather they are a buffer tribe between north and south, the truly southern tribe being Judah. Hence the Hebrew Benjaminites too acquired their name from before the time they settled in the land of Canaan. He would place the

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[133] J.-R. Kupper, *ARM XXII/II Documents administratifs de la sale 135 du Palais de Mari* (Paris: ERC, 1983), p. 522-23. See J.-M. Durand, "Les Bedouins," *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari.* (LAPO, 17; Paris: Cerf, 1998), p. 418.

[134] H. Tadmor, "Historical Implications of the Correct Reading of Akakdian *dâku*," *JNES* 17 (957), pp. 129-41, esp. 130 n. 12.

[135] T. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (BZAW Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1974), p. 66.

[136] D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand, "'Fils de Sim'al': Les origines tribales des rois de Mari," RA 80 (1986), pp. 141-83 (155).

[137] J. J. Finkelstein, "The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty," *JCS* 20 (1966), pp. 95-118 (117). For the Arab genealogies following the Hebrew one see R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. xviii.

immigration of some Amorite Benjaminites toward the south and eventually reaching the land of Canaan, following a similar route as the Hebrew patriarchs.[138]

The connection between the Amorite and the Hebrew Benjaminites has been defended anew by D. Fleming[139] with an argument similar to that of von Soden. Zimri-Lim's correspondence shows that the warlike Benjaminite tribes were active in the hill country between Tur-ʿabdīn = Idamaraṣ and Sindjar (Saggar) mountains between which the Ḫabur river flows and where the city of Ḫarrān is found, in the districts of Zalmaqum and Idamaraṣ. This northern part of Upper Mesopotamia corresponds to the Hebrew designation Aram-naharaim. The Amorite Benjaminites, however, stemmed from further south, from the Transeuphates area, having arrived from the Syrian desert. They crossed the Euphrates and settled in Upper Mesopotamia. Since the Benjaminites arrived at Mari from the north, while Zimri-Lim himself belongs to the northern tribes, the Binū-Simʾāl, it means that the Benjaminites have acquired their name as "southerners" before they settled in the north. A similar development applies to the Hebrew Benjaminites, not being exactly the southern tribe, a title which strictly applies to Judah, yet known among the Hebrew tribes as "the sons of the right (south)." By emphasizing the connection between these names, Fleming is not saying that Benjamin was the continuation of one of the Binū Yamina tribes in Israel. Rather, the name is a clue that there were ancient Binū Yamina somewhere in Israel's ancestry, and probably not limited to the tribe of Benjamin.

This dossier, however, is very complex. To clinch the issue one needs some more concrete linguistic, topographical and literary evidence. For the time being, it might be premature to go beyond the general way of a geographical tribal division designating northern and southern tribes as Simʾalites and Benjaminites, the way Amorites, Hebrews and Medieval Arabs did.

8.5. *The Phenomenon of "Mirror Toponymy" and the Name of Jericho*

The examples are numerous. Here only two will be mentioned showing the presence of the same phenomenon where the same name is applied to cities found in two different geographical regions.[140] The phenomenon is interpreted as a reflection of the Amorite migratory movements. The name Apûm is used in the west in order to designate the region of Damascus in the time of Mari and continues to be used in the Amarna times. However, there is another Apum more to the north-east in Šubat-Enlil (=Tel-Leillan). The city of Yariḫ from which originated the Benjaminite Amorite tribe of Yariḫāyu was found in the Beqaʿa valley as a ruin in the land of Canaan (A.3552:8), and as *ya-ri-iḫ*[ki] in a Mari census (M.7872.i). It has a further mirror toponymy in the biblical name of Jericho *Yeriḥô* of the Canaanites about 25 km south of Jerusalem across the Jordan river. Jericho being the "oldest city in the world" was in existence at the time of Mari. The Amarna tablets, however, do not mention Jericho and it seems that at best, this city was then an insignificant township, a village on a heap of ruins.[141] Moreover, the storming of

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[138] W. von Soden, "Das altbabylonische Briefarchiv von Mari," *WO* 1 (1948), pp. 189-204 (197-98).

[139] D. Fleming, "Genesis in History and Tradition: The Syrian Background of Israel's Ancestors, reprise," *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions* (J. K. Hoffmeier and A. Millard eds., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 193-232 (219).

[140] Durand, "Unité et diversité," pp. 109-110.

[141] J.A. Soggin, "Jéricho. Anatomie d'une conquête," *RHPR* 57 (1977), pp. 1-17.

Jericho in Josh. 6 is represented as a liturgical action where seven priests blow seven shofars and march seven times around the ramparts. Therefore, in the role of the prostitute Raḥab in Josh 2, one should recognize either a paradigmatic story using an ancient Near Eastern literary *topos* or some ancient local tradition related to the pre-Israelite inhabitants of the region.[142] M. Astour suggested to relate the name of the city of Jericho to one of the Amorite tribes of the Binū-Yamina.[143] The Benjaminite confederation was composed of the Urbabū, Yariḫū, Yaḫrurū and Amnanū tribes. According to the rules of Hebrew phonetics the name of Jericho was originally Yariḫû, which is identical to the Yariḫū Amorite tribe. Astour relates the name of the Yariḫū tribe to the moon god, also known as *Eraḫ*, derived from an original *yeraḫ*. In the Mari texts, the Benjaminite tribes would attend the sanctuary of the moon god in the city of Ḫarrān to conclude an alliance. The Hebrew patriarchs are also associated with the same city.[144] Josh. 6:17, 18, 21 lays stress on the *ḥerem*-ban and the curse, well-attested in Mari. The divine warfare with seven-day siege of Jericho reflects another similar Amorite and Ugaritic *topos*. The seven-day siege is attested in Mari, ARM I 131:14-16; XXVI 405:3 and once with a capture on the eighth day I 135:11-13, while the 13th century Ugaritic Kirtu Legend has two complementary seven-day siege (KTU 1.14 iii 2-20; iv 44 – v 15).[145]

The archaeologist K. Kenyon, reviewing Amorite archaeological data for the land of Canaan, mentions tombs and copper or bronze daggers found in Jericho.[146] Another archaeologists, A. Burke, described the shared material culture as the "Amorite *koiné*" when referring to warrior burials, family crypts, subfloor infant jars or pot burials found in the Levant.[147] The city of Jericho shares some elements of this material "Amorite *koiné*."

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[142] D. Bodi, "The Encounter with the Courtesan in the Gilgameš Epic and with Rahab in Joshua 2," *Interested Readers. Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David J. A. Clines* (in J. A. Aitken, J. M. S. Clines and C. M. Maier eds., Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), pp. 3-18. The article draws a comparison between the encounter of the wild man Enkidu with the courtesan Šamḫat from the city of Uruk as described in the OB *Gilgameš Epic* tablet II, and the encounter of the Hebrew spies with the prostitute Raḥab from Jericho in Josh. 2. Both Šamḫat and Raḥab are taken as symbols of acculturation. The first contact of the nomadic Hebrews with the sophisticated city life in the land of Canaan occurs through a courtesan. In both ancient Near Eastern literary traditions, the encounter with a sexually free woman symbolizes the transition from the wild and nomadic life-style to the civilized, urban type. This encounter could be taken as a literary *topos* indicating a status change how a nomad becomes an acculturated city dweller.

[143] M. Astour, "Benê-Iamina et Jéricho," *Semitica* 9, 1959, pp. 5-20 (8).

[144] D. Fleming, "Genesis in History and Tradition: The Syrian Background of Israel's Ancestors, reprise," in J. K. Hoffmeier et A. Millard (eds.), *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions* (Grand Rapids, MI., Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 193-232 (219). Fleming to relates some Hebrew tribes to the Amorite Benjaminites.

[145] D. E. Fleming, "The Seven-Day Siege of Jericho in Holy War," *Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of B. A. Levine* (R. Chazan, W. W. Hallo and L. H. Schiffman eds., Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), pp. 210-228 (221-23 Ugarit, and 223-28 Mari).

[146] K. Kenyon, *Amorites and Canaanites* (The Schweich Lectures, 1963; London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 14, fig. 5

[147] A. A. Burke, "Entanglement, the Amorite *koiné*, and Amorite Cultures in the Levant," *ARAM* 27 (2015) in print.

It is significant that the Hebrews too when forced to leave Judah, deported by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BCE, practiced the phenomenon of "mirror toponymy" by calling a city in Babylonia: āl-Yahudu "The City of Judah."[148]

Could the phenomenon of mirror toponymy explain the fact that in the Hebrew Bible, the Amorite habitat is applied to several different regions?[149]

8.6. *A Hebrew Midrash on an Ancient Amorite Tradition?*

As pointed out by C. Westermann,[150] the narrative in Gen. 14 is construed out of three originally independent parts:

A – a report of a military campaign in vv. 1-11 led by a coalition of four Mesopotamian kings against five Canaanite ones.
B – an account of Abram's surprise raid vv. 12-17, 21-24.
C – the Melchizedek episode vv. 18-20.

Westermann suggested the following form-critical analysis of Gen 14: Part B forms the basis of this chapter to which part C was subsequently added. B + C finally received part A which modified the whole, amplifying Abram's exploit. Part B does not directly and immediately presuppose part A since a) Abram and Lot are not mentioned at all in vv. 1-11; b) Part A assumes a much larger horizon of Mesopotamian and Northern Syrian history while part B deals with an event within the locality of Canaan; c) The enumeration of participants is found only in part A, vv. 1b, 2, 5, 8, 9. Except for the king of Sodom in v. 21, they do not reappear in part B. Part A, vv. 1-11 is in the form of a military campaign report "*Feldzugsbericht*" or "*Kriegsbericht.*"

In v. 1 one reads the names of the four invading Mesopotamian kings: ʾAmrapel king of Šinʿar, ʾAryok king of ʾEllasar, Kedorlaʿomer king of ʿElam, Tidʿal king of *goyîm*-nations. M. Astour pointed out that names of the Canaanite kings enumerated in v. 2 represent the so-called "*Redender Namen*" or "*noms programmes,*" signs of midrashic exegesis:[151] Beraʿ king of Sodom, where *be-raʿ* means "in evil," Biršaʿ king of Gomorrah, where *biršaʿ* means "in wickedness," Šinʾab king of ʾAdmah, where *šinʾab* read with alterations as *śōnēʾab* "who hates the father," Šemʾeber king of Zeboyim, following the Samaritan version and the Genesis Apocryphon read as *šemî-ʾabad* "my name is lost." While usually interpreted as signs of midrashic exegesis, which might be likely here, according to Astour, epithets like these occur in Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions as characteristics of rebel kings. In fact such scurrilous etymologies occur

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[148] F. Joannès and A. Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cunéiformes à onomastique ouest-sémitique (collection Sh. Moussaïeff)," *Transeuphratène* 17 (1999), pp. 17-34.

[149] Amorites are the inhabitants of certain states east of Jordan: Num. 21:13; Deut. 3:2,9; Josh. 2:10; 24:8; Judg. 10:8; Amorites as the inhabitants of the mountainous regions of Palestine: Num. 13:29; Deut. 1:7,19; Josh. 5:1; Judg. 1:34. Amorites as the inhabitants of Cisjordan in general: Gen. 15:16; 48:22; Josh. 7:7; 10:5,6; 24:15,18.

[150] C. Westermann, *Genesis12-36* (BK 11; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), pp. 223-26. For bibliography on Gen 14, see W. Schatz, *Genesis 14. Eine Untersuchung* (Bern: Herbert Lang; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1972) and B. Zimmer, *Abram-Abraham. Kompositionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Genesis 14, 15 und 17* (BZAW 350; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2005); P. Vaiss, *La figure de Melchisédek dans la Bible hébraïque,* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Paris 8, 2013.

[151] M. C. Astour, "Political and Cosmic Symbolism in Gn 14 and its Babylonian Sources," in A. Altman (ed.), *Biblical Motifs. Origins and Transformations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 65-112 (74-75).

already in Mari military accounts in order to disparage rebel tribal chieftains and warlords.[152]

The scholarly attempts to identify the Mesopotamian kings mentioned in Gen. 14 have not been conclusive so far due to the fact that it was difficult to fit all the four kings in the same epoch. Moreover, the problem was geographic since the Elamite kingdom was in the east. A new suggestion has been made by J.-M. Durand and D. Charpin[153] of viewing the kings in Gen 14:1 as a reflection of an Elamite campaign to the west mentioned in the Mari texts. Quite early in biblical research on Gen. 14 the first part of the name of Kedorlaʿomer king of ʾElam, was identified as the Elamite name component Kudur-. The Elamite kingdom was located around Anšan in the east (modern Tell i-Malyan in the Fars region) spreading west to Susa. The Mari letters, however, mention an Elamite campaign to the west in the second half of the Zimrī-Līm's reign. The invaders have conquered a vast territory from Assur to Šubat-enlil (modern Tell-Leilan) in Syria and northern Babylonia. The Elamite king Kudur-Šuluš sent messengers to Qaṭna (close to Qadeš and a in the vicinity of Homs in Syria). The biblical text makes Kedorlaʿomer king of ʾElam, the leader of the invaders and not ʾAmrapel which weakens the traditional identification of the latter with Ḫammu-rabi of Babylon.

Instead of identifying biblical ʾAmrapel king of Šinʿar, with Ḫammu-rabi of Babylon as was traditionally done, Durand suggested the presence of a frequent scribal confusion between the letters *resh* and *dalet* (cf. Edom frequently confused with Aram). This lead him to suggest the identification of ʾAmrapel king of Šinʿar, with Amud-pî-El from Qaṭna who accepted to submit to the Elamite invaders. The third king mentioned in Gen. 14:1 ʾAryok king of ʾEllasar, appears in Mari letters as another warlord named Arriyuk located north-east of Sindjar who took part in the Elamite military campaign.[154] Arriyk wrote letters to Zimrī-Līm which show that he was his former enemy and a warlord on the side of the Elamites. The Elamite invasion of northern Mesopotamia was experienced as a major political trauma by the Amorites and in particular by the Benjaminite tribes. Several hundred Benjaminite warriors took part in the battle against the Elamites (ARM XXIII 428-429 with lists of soldiers). Gen. 14:7 mentions that the Elamite coalition smote "the Amorites who dwell in Hazazon-Tamar." The cities mentioned in v. 5 Šawēh-qiryataîm could be brought in relationship with Qiryateyn mentioned as Našala in ARM V 23 (Suteans raid it). While Qadesh in v. 7 is a city in the vicinity of Qaṭnā on the other side of the Orontes river.[155] Qiryateyn, Qadesh and Qaṭnā are all cities in the valley (Heb. *šawēh*) between the mountains of Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon and Djebel Shaar, a route than an invading army would take along the valley of the Orontes river. Once passed Damascus, the army took the Kings' Highway (*derek*

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[152] J.-M. Durand, *Documents épistolaires du Palais de Mari II* (LAPO 17; Paris: Cerf, 1998), ch. 6 "Les opérations guerriers, pp. 1-282.

[153] J.-M. Durand, "Réalités amorrites et traditions bibliques," RA 92 (1998), pp. 3-39 (18-19). D. Charpin, "'Ein umherziehender Aramäer war mein Vater.' Abraham im Lichte der Quellen aus Mari," *"Abraham unser Vater." Die gemeinsamen Wurzel von Judentum, Christentum und Islam* (R. G. Kratz and T. Nigel eds., Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003), pp. 39-52 (48-52).

[154] J.-R. Kupper, *Lettres royales du temps de Zimri-Lim* (ARM XXVIII; Paris: Geuthner, 1998), nᵒˢ 152-156.

[155] From its source in Al-Biqāʿ (Beqaa) valley of central Lebanon, the river flows northward between the parallel ranges of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains into Syria, where it has been dammed to form Lake Qaṭṭīnah.

hammellek) along the Jordan valley leading to the Dead Sea region and beyond.[156] The Tidʿal king of *goyîm*-nations is not mentioned in Mari in this conjunction but was traditionally identified with Tudḫaliya I, who lived in mid 18th century BCE and would fit the chronological requirement.[157]

D. Charpin compares the birth of the legendary narrative of Abram's pursuit of the Elamite coalition of warlords in Gen 14 with the Legend of Narām-Sîn. There are three narratives concerning Narām-Sîn: the royal inscription dating from the 23rd century BCE, an 18th century BCE version and a third one from the 7th century BCE. These legends were popular in such distant lands as Anatolia no less than in Mesopotamia. One can follow the evolution of the names of the lands and of the kings that revolted against Narām-Sîn. Seen in this light, one would have two versions of the Elamite campaign to the west, an Amorite one attested in several Mari letters mentioning the names of local sheikhs and warlords who joined the invading army, dating from the 18th century BCE and a late Hebrew one. In the elaboration of a narrative extolling the power of Yahweh El Elyon to protect Abram and his clan, the Hebrew scribes responsible for the final redaction of Gen 14 seem to have midrashically reworked the historical reminiscence of an Elamite invasion of the western Amorite territories experienced as a major trauma by the populations affected by this campaign. The memory of devastations provoked by wars has this particularity of being orally transmitted for generations spanning several centuries.[158] The Hebrew narrative shows signs of successive redactions. It contains a *hapax legomenon*: ḥanîk (v. 14) meaning "armed retainer" that appears in Egyptian execration texts dating from 19th-18th centuries BCE and in a 15th century BCE cuneiform tablet from Taanach.[159] A *hapax* could point to a very ancient oral tradition preserving terms from the way the story was told and transmitted. The scene of the decisive battle, however, is described as "the Valley of Siddim, now the Dead Sea," in other words, the valley no longer existed at the time when the story reached its final redaction. Such features point to the interplay of oral and written traditions in the course of transmission prior to final redaction.

Conclusion

As a result of intensive scholarly research on ancient Amorite traditions, history and customs, it has become increasingly evident that there exists a connection and a geographical, historical and linguistic continuity between the OB Amorite nomadic tribes and the MB Aramean ones. The geographic area where the ancient Amorites settled corresponds to the area occupied by the Aramean tribes at the end of the second

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[156] Se the map in N. M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York: Schocken, 1970), p. 114.

[157] The expression בין נהרין [*byn nhryn*] "between the rivers," appears in the Qumran Genesis Apocryphon 21:24 dealing with Gen 14. This work written in Aramaic, dates slightly after the Biblical Aramaic of the book of Daniel in the 2nd century BCE. Owing to the Aramaic glossator of Gen. 14:1, "Tidʿal king of the nations," became a Mesopotamian king.

[158] The people in Alsace, France, in the rich fertile Rhineland region that suffered spoliation, impoverishment and devastation during the 30-year-long wars of religion in the 16th century by the invading mercenary armies, five centuries later still perpetuates orally transmitted short sayings in use in modern times. Some phrases pronounced in the local 16th century German dialect, "Achtung die Schweden kommen!" are used to scare little children who refuse to go to sleep, while "Schweden Trink" still refers to a particular torture technique used by Swedish mercenaries in order to force the local peasants to reveal where they hid their treasures. Such phrases are products of centuries-long oral transmission.

[159] T. O. Lamndin, "Egyptian Loan Words in the Old Testament," *JAOS* 73 (1953), pp. 145-55.

millennium BCE. Among the conglomerate of various Northern and Southern Amorite tribes, the Bensim'alites and Benjaminites, one should probably seek for the precursors of later Aramean ones who appear in the 14th and 13th centuries BCE in the Syro-Palestinian geographic area. They have received different names in Egyptian and Akkadian texts. The terms Aḫlamū and Sutū are applied interchangeably to them. The Aḫlamū-Aramayū and the Suteans mentioned both among Amorite and Aramaic tribes seem to be a connecting link between the two and this connection should be further investigated.

The biblical texts place the origin of the patriarchs in the geographic area where some Aramean tribes evolved out of a former conglomerate of Amorite ones. For the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE the Aramaic written documents are either non-existent or sparse. However, the Hebrew data although chronologically late can be used to fill that gap, since they show affinity and occasionally some continuity with the Amorite ones. However, the purpose of the linguistic, socio-historical and literary comparisons with data from Mari is not to confer historicity to the patriarchal narratives. The goal is much more modest and aims in showing that the Amorites, the Arameans and the ancient Hebrews stem from a common Northwest Semitic cultural, religious and linguistic substratum. The biblical narratives occasionally reflect elements of genuine historical reminiscences of the olden times, transmitted orally and in a written form. Through the interplay of both *Überlieferungs-* and *Traditionsgeschichte*, these stories have found their way to the final redaction of the Hebrew text which occurred centuries later. The present emphasis on the final redaction of the biblical texts, however, should not neglect the possibility of a finer historical perspective and insight into the growth of the biblical traditions.

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