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CHAPTER NINE

OUTLOOK: ARAMEANS OUTSIDE OF SYRIA

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1. Assyria

Martti Nissinen

1. *Aramaeans and the Neo-Assyrian Empire (934–609 B.C.)*[1]

Encounters between the Aramaeans and the Assyrians are as old as is the occupation of these two ethnic entities in the area between the Tigris and the Khabur rivers and in northern Mesopotamia. The first occurrence of the word *ar(a)māyu* in the Assyrian records is to be found in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.), who gives an account of his confrontation with the "Aramaean Aḫlamaeans" (*aḫlamû armāya*) along the Middle Euphrates;[2] however, the presence of the Aramaean tribes in this area is considerably older.[3] The Assyrians had governed the Khabur Valley in the 13th century already, but the movement of the Aramaean tribes from the west presented a constant threat to the Assyrian supremacy in the area. Tiglath-Pileser I and his follower, Aššur-bēl-kala (1073–1056 B.C.), fought successfully against the Aramaeans, but in the long run, the Assyrians were not able to maintain control over the Lower Khabur–Middle Euphrates region. Assur-dān (934–912 B.C.) and Adad-nirari II (911–891 B.C.) managed to regain the area between the Tigris and the Khabur occupied by the Aramaeans, but the Khabur Valley was never under one ruler, and even the campaigns of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) did not consolidate the Assyrian dominion. Under Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) the area east of the Euphrates came under Assyrian control, but it was not until the

[1] I would like to thank the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, NJ, USA) for the opportunity of writing this article during a research visit in May–June, 2011. Thanks are also due to Marika Pulkkinen for her help in preparing the statistics, as well as to Francesca Rochberg, Mario Fales, and Simo Parpola for their helpful comments. Any errors, of course, remain my own.

[2] RIMA 2 23 (A.0.87.1): 46f; 34 (A.0.87.2): [28]; 37 (A.0.87.3): 29f; 43 (A.0.87.4): 34.

[3] See Lipiński 2000a: 45–50 for Aramaean tribes in the 13th century B.C.

reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) that the area was incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system.[4]

The Upper Khabur area around the city of Nisibis was conquered and annexed to Assyria by Adad-nirari II in 896 B.C.[5] The city of Guzana (Tell Halaf), according to E. Lipiński, "became *de facto* an Assyrian province under Assurnasirpal II, around 870 BCE,"[6] even though its governors maintained their traditional royal titles in relations with their local subjects. This becomes evident from the titles of the local ruler in the bilingual statue from Tell Fekheriyeh, which gives the title as *šakin māti Gūzāna* "governor of Guzana" in Akkadian, but *mlk gwzn* "the king of Guzana" in Aramaic.[7] Further north, in the Tur ʿAbdin area, there was a continuous Assyrian presence under Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 B.C.) and Assurnasirpal II, and toward the end of the 9th century, the area was probably integrated into the Assyrian Empire.[8]

As a result of the systematic expansion of the Assyrian Empire to the west during Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), Esarhaddon (681–669 B.C.), and Ashurbanipal (669–627 B.C.), the areas west and northwest of the Assyrian homeland, populated by Aramaeans, were to a large part gradually incorporated into the provincial system of the Assyrian Empire. Assyrian rule brought about significant demographic changes throughout the empire, not only because the Assyrians appointed their own people to govern the annexed provinces, but first and foremost because they moved massive amounts of people far away from their homes to other parts of the empire, replacing them with people likewise deported from long distances. Indeed, the policy of mass deportations was one of the basic strategies of the construction of the Assyrian Empire.

B. Oded has counted 157 cases of mass deportation, beginning with Assur-dān. The 9th-century and early 8th-century kings carried out mass deportations only occasionally, with the exception of Assurnasirpal II (13 deportations/12,900 people)[9] and Shalmaneser III (859–824 B.C.: 8/167,500). The deportations became a consistent imperial policy in the

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[4] Cf. Lipiński 2000a: 98–108.
[5] Lipiński 2000a: 116; RIMA 2 150–52 (A.0.99.2): 54–104.
[6] Lipiński 2000a: 129.
[7] RIMA 2 A.0.101.
[8] Lipiński 2000a: 161.
[9] All figures are taken from Oded 1979: 20, whose calculations are based on Assyrian sources in awareness of the fact that that we can "never be certain whether this picture reflects or distorts (to a certain degree) historical reality" (ibid.: 19).

reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (37/368,543), continuing in full force during Sargon II (38/217,635) and Sennacherib (20/408,150). Even Esarhaddon instigated a mass deportation 12 times and Ashurbanipal 16 times. B. Oded makes a statistical estimate of 4.5 million deportees altogether during the three centuries from Assur-dān to Ashurbanipal.[10]

Deportees were moved from all parts of the growing empire, including Babylonia, and they represented virtually all ethnic groups represented in the conquered areas. The people were relocated in different parts of the empire.[11] The main destination of the mass deportations, however, was the Assyrian heartland, specifically the big cities Ashur, Calah, Nineveh, and Dūr-Šarrukin, as if the upsurge of population of the principal cities was due to a consistent policy.[12] This had a deep impact on the demography of Assyria, significantly increasing its population and turning the once monolingual and ethnically relatively uniform land into a multiethnic and multilingual entity. According to the estimation of R. Zadok, the percentage of individuals with non-Assyrian (mostly West Semitic) names rose to 20% after 800 B.C. and remained on this level until the mid-7th century, becoming slightly lower toward the end of the Assyrian Empire.[13]

The deportations were presented as a punishment for rebellious peoples, including their kings, who refused to submit themselves to Assyrian rule.[14] The royal inscriptions present a murky picture of the deportees as a labor force used for brick making, building works, stone cutting, and so on. Assurnasirpal, for example, says he made deportees dig canals;[15] Sargon used them as laborers in the construction of Dūr-Šarrukin;[16] Sennacherib claims to have deported Chaldaeans, Aramaeans, Mannaeans, and people from Que and Hilakku to drag the reeds from Chaldaean marshes to

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[10] Oded 1979: 20f n. 5.

[11] Cf. 2 Kgs 17: 6: "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria; he carried the Israelites away to Assyria. He placed them in Halah, on the Khabur, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." This roughly corresponds to the contemporary onomastics of these areas, where Hebrew names appear frequently; see Zadok 1995a; id. 2002b.

[12] See Oded 1979: 27–32.

[13] Zadok 1997a: 215; see also Fales 1991.

[14] Cf. the curse against Ba'al, king of Tyre, if he should violate the treaty they had made with Esarhaddon: "May Melqarth and Eshmun deliver your land to destruction and your people to deportation; may they [uproot] you from your land and take away the food from your mouth, the clothes from your body, and the oil for your anointing" (SAA 2 5 iv 14–17). Cf. also 2 Kgs 18: 32; Isa 20: 4.

[15] Wiseman 1952: 30, 33: 33–37.

[16] Lie 1929: 74: 8–10.

Nineveh;[17] and Esarhaddon carried out restorations in Calah using peoples of the conquered territories.[18]

While there is enough evidence to demonstrate that the fate of some deportees indeed was to work under slave-like conditions,[19] B. Oded stresses that, to all appearances, "the captives usually were not reduced to slavery, but continued to be employed in their professions and trades according to the needs of the empire."[20] The empire needed much more than just slaves—the Assyrian military force in particular required a lot of manpower. Craftsmen of different kinds were constantly needed to serve the growing population and the construction works, and the savoir faire of skilled merchants was certainly appreciated, not to mention the need for scribes mastering the Aramaic language, which increasingly gained footage in the Assyrian Empire (see below, section 2).

In fact, as we shall see, people with foreign names are regularly found in high positions in the state bureaucracy, and even though it is impossible to know the background of each individual, it can be concluded that a significant number of the deportees or their descendants made a magnificent career in the service of the Assyrian king. This was possible because, even though the natives of the annexed lands usually maintained their ethnic identities, they were regarded as Assyrians and were not treated as a separate class of people.[21] At the same time, the deportees began to change the linguistic and cultural environment of their invaders.[22]

2. *Aramaic Texts and Language in Assyria*

Hard evidence of the penetration of the Aramaic language into Assyria is provided by a growing number of Aramaic texts from the 7th century B.C., unearthed not only in the ethnically Aramaean area that once constituted the western provinces of Assyria, but also in the Assyrian homeland. Excavations in present-day Syria have recently brought to light a considerable quantity of Aramaic clay tablets;[23] however, the number of

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17 Grayson – Novotny 2012: 97 (no. 1): 71f.

18 Leichty 2011: 156 (no. 77): 40–44.

19 Cf. Oded 1979: 96, 110f.

20 Oded 1979: 77. For the different positions of the deportees, see ibid.: 75–115.

21 Cf. Parpola 2004: 12–14.

22 Beaulieu 2006: 188: "Therefore Assyria was faced with the paradoxical fact that, as the empire expanded and more and more people were made Assyrian, the conquered people were making Assyria less and less Assyrian culturally and linguistically."

23 According to Fales 2010: 191, the total number of Aramaic clay tablets at our disposal is currently ca. 250, while an equal amount is still to be published. For modern editions

Aramaic texts from the original heartland of Assyria is not very impressive, mostly consisting of very short texts and amounting to little more than 100, which constitutes but a tiny percentage of the contemporary cuneiform texts. Nevertheless, even this small corpus presents a variety of different writing materials and text types, enabling a typological and linguistic comparison with cuneiform material and providing information on the Aramaean population and the use of the alphabetic script in Assyria.[24] This evidence is complemented by the abundance of West Semitic onomastics in sources throughout the Neo-Assyrian period (see below, section 3).

A considerable part of the extant Aramaic texts is written on clay tablets, 45 of which derive from the area of the Assyrian political and religious capitals around the Tigris.[25] About two-thirds (32) of these tablets are legal documents from Nineveh, written in cuneiform and bearing incised or painted Aramaic epigraphs (the so-called "endorsements") of the type "Deed of Il-malak of the land of Hamê"[26] in their margins.[27] The tablets are mostly sale or loan documents or conveyance texts written in Akkadian, and the Aramaic epigraphs have usually been understood as a summary of the contents of the tablet for those not able to read cuneiform and were written mainly for the purpose of distinguishing one document from another.[28] F. M. Fales, however, has suggested that the epigraphs have the same function as the seal, namely that of "a secondary notarization of the juridical document."[29]

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of the Aramaic clay tablets, see Fales 1986 (= AECT) and Lemaire 2001b. New material from excavations in Syria has been published by Bordreuil – Briquel-Chatonnet 1996–1997 (Tell Aḥmar, ancient Til Barsib); Röllig 2002a; id. 2002b (Tell Šeḫ Ḥamad, ancient Dūr-Katlimmu); Fales – Radner – Pappi – Attardo 2005 (Tell Shiukh Fawqani, ancient Burmarina); Lipiński 2010 (Ma'lana/Ma'allanate).

[24] For partial overviews of the Aramaic texts, see, e.g., Millard 1983; id. 2009; Röllig 2000a; Fales 2007: 100–105.

[25] For these texts, see Fales 2000: 92–102; for clay tablets found in Syria, see ibid.: 102–114. Cf. also the unprovenanced "Bordreuil tablet" (*AECT* 58).

[26] AECT 23 (SAA 6 217): *dnt.'lmlk.zy.'rq.ḥm'*. The terms *dnt* and *'grt* used for cuneiform tablets in Aramaic epigraphs correspond to the Akkadian *dannutu* and *egirtu*; see Radner 1997: 52–67; Fales – Radner – Pappi – Attardo 2005: 611f.

[27] AECT 1 (SAA 6 154); 2 (SAA 6 59); 4 (SAA 6 196); 5 (SAA 6 111); 10 (NALK 5); 14 (SAA 6 284); 15 (NALK 198); 16 (SAA 6 334); 17 (NALK 146); 18 (ADD 387); 19 (NALK 208); 20 (SAA 6 250); 21 (NALK 23a); 22 (NALK 24); 23 (SAA 6 217); 24 (NALK 215); 25 (NALK 222); 26 (ADD 562); 27 (NALK 136); 28 (NALK 81a); 29 (ADD 522); 30 (NALK 124); 31 (NALK 125); 32 (NALK 128); 33 (NALK 122); 34 (NALK 408); 35 (ADD 156); 37; 38; 60, F1, and F2.

[28] E.g., Röllig 2005a: 124: "Ordnungsmittel für nicht-Keilschriftkundige."

[29] Fales 2000: 118.

Another type of tablet on which Aramaic texts were written is the so-called "docket," a triangle-shaped tablet that usually has a hole on the top edge for a string and may bear stamp sealings. These tablets were probably not independent documents in their own right but were attached to another tablet or to a scroll.[30] While very common in western areas, only twelve "dockets" have an Assyrian provenance (4 from Nineveh[31] and 8 from Ashur).[32] These tablets are typically loan documents, and they may be bilingual (Akkadian-Aramaic) or monolingually Aramaic. To these can be added two legal texts written on rectangular tablets.[33]

While ostraca were certainly used for alphabetic writing even in Mesopotamia, only a few potsherds with an Aramaic text have been discovered in Assyria, that is, apart from two small inscribed sherds,[34] the Ashur ostracon bearing the text of a letter[35] (see below) and the Nimrud ostracon containing two lists of West Semitic names.[36]

Akkadian personal names can also be found engraved in Aramaic letters on a few cylinder and stamp seals.[37] Moreover, four seal impressions bear alphabetic script: three bilingual bullae from Calah (Nimrud) with administrative or magical-apotropaic content,[38] and a bulla of the seal of the eunuch Pan-Aššur-lamur from Dūr-Šarrukin (Khorsabad).[39]

Short Aramaic epigraphs were also frequently incised on hard surfaces. The 15 bronze statuettes in the form of lions from Calah bear bilingual Akkadian-Aramaic texts indicating the weights of the objects, hence they probably functioned as an official standard for ponderal measures.[40] Another 16 bronze objects (bowls and mace-heads), likewise from Calah, bear Akkadian names of high Assyrian officials written in alphabetic script, as do two mace-heads from Dūr-Šarrukin, both with the text *l'srsrṣr* "belonging to Aššur-šarru-uṣur."[41]

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30 Cf. Radner 1997: 27–31.

31 AECT 3 and 6 (Akkadian-Aramaic); AECT 13; Hug 1993: 19 (NinU 4) (Aramaic).

32 AECT 46; 47; 48; 49; 50; 51; IM 96737 (Hug 1993: 24f) and a text yet to be published (cf. Fales 2000: 99 n. 53); all monolingual.

33 AECT 11 (Nineveh) and 52 (Ashur); both monolingual.

34 CIS II/1 44–45.

35 Fales 2010: 195–197.

36 Segal 1957.

37 See Millard 1983: 103f.

38 AECT 43; 44; 45.

39 *PNA* sub Pān-Aššūr-lāmur (4.), reading [*l*] *pn'sr*[*l*]*mr srs z'srgn*. For an earlier reading *pn'sr mr srsy srgn* and alternative readings, see Tadmor 1982: 450 with n. 23. See also Millard 1983: 103f.

40 See Fales 1995a and Zaccagnini 1999.

41 Curtis – Grayson 1982: 88–90.

Finally, a very special use of the alphabet in Assyria should be mentioned. The famous Nimrud ivories from Calah from the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. sometimes consist of composite pieces marked by the craftsmen with signs, often letters of the West Semitic alphabet, helping to ensure the correct assemblage.[42] The same technique was used when constructing a glazed brick panel in Fort Shalmaneser by bricklayers who used the sequence of the West Semitic alphabet as an aid for assembling a sequence of bricks.[43] These scrapings represent the oldest alphabetical writing found in Assyria, and their existence is not surprising with regard to the tangible presence of the Aramaean population in the contemporary onomastics. The absence of actual Aramaic *texts* from the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. may indicate that, at that time, all official writing was still done in cuneiform, but it is also possible that, to date, such texts have simply not been discovered.

As we have seen, the Aramaic documents are relatively few in number, constituting only a minute portion of the texts unearthed in Assyria and mostly deriving from the 7th century B.C. This is partly due to the time-honored tradition and practice of using cuneiform in all writing regardless of the language of the scribes and their audiences. Apart from this, one can reasonably argue for an additional explanation: the Aramaic documents were mostly written on perishable materials, such as papyrus, parchment, or leather, which have fallen prey to the ravages of time, leading to the loss of a considerable number of documents.[44]

Despite the somewhat meager evidence, the abundant production of Aramaic documents in the Assyrian Empire is beyond any doubt. The famous images on Assyrian palace reliefs depicting two scribes registering the booty on a battleground, one engraving a clay tablet and the other writing on a pliable scroll,[45] give the impression that Assyrian and Aramaic documents were produced (literally) side by side. The prominent featuring of Aramaean scribes in textual sources points to the same direction.

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[42] See Millard 2009: 210.

[43] Millard 1993; cf. id. 2009: 210f.

[44] Cf. Fales 2010: 190 and Millard 2009: 208–210. Note, however, Fales's warnings against overestimating the significance of this documentary disappearance (Fales 2000: 123f; cf. id. 2007: 98).

[45] See, e.g., Barnett – Bleibtreu – Turner 1998 pls. 83, 132, 143, 173, 186, 363 (Sennacherib) and 193, 213, 222, 244, 255, 256 (Ashurbanipal); see also the picture attached to SAA 17 p. 5. A stylized version of this motif is used as the cover image of volumes 1 to 13 of the State Archives of Assyria Studies series. Note also the alternative (in my view less plausible) suggestion that the person handling the pliable object is not a scribe but an artist sketching the scene of battle (thus Seidl 2007: 119 and Reade 2012: 708–712).

The practice of writing on scrolls is also known from cuneiform texts. The oracle queries very often refer to a person whom the query concerns and "whose name is written on this *niāru*," that is, a slip of papyrus or another pliable material.[46] Moreover, there are references in cuneiform sources to letters written in Aramaic on a scroll, for instance, to a sealed letter in Aramaic,[47] and to a scribe conveying an Aramaic letter to the addressee.[48] Sin-iddina, a scribe from Ur, wanted to write to Sargon II in Aramaic but received the royal answer "why would you not write and send me messages in Akkadian?"[49]

While Sargon's reaction testifies to the socially superior position of Akkadian as the preferred language of royal correspondence, it is noteworthy that the conventions of Assyrian epistolography were adapted even to Aramaic letter-writing. The evidence of this is provided by the Ashur Ostracon, a private letter written in Aramaic by the Babylonian official Bel-eṭir to his brother.[50] This is the only specimen of an Aramaic letter from Assyria, probably a draft written on a potsherd in order to be subsequently copied on a scroll.[51]

The Ashur Ostracon is an illustrious example of how much our knowledge of the use and status of the Aramaic language in the Assyrian Empire owes to the fortunate phenomenon of writing the alphabetic script also on clay and not only on soft materials. The use of clay for writing Aramaic is an Assyrian innovation, and the Assyrian impact on Aramaic writing can be observed throughout the Neo-Assyrian period. The Aramaic scribal conventions were previously influenced by the Phoenician tradition, as can be seen in the earliest Aramaic texts. It is only from the reign of Shalmaneser III on that the Assyrian impact becomes increasingly visible in Aramaic documents.[52] A prime example of this is the

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[46] E.g., SAA 4 106 r. 9; 107 r. 3; 110: 5; 129 r. 6; 134 r. 6; 150 r. 2; 152: 3 and many other occurrences.

[47] ND 2686: 3–5 (Saggs 1952 = 2001: 154f): "I sent this Aramaic document (*kanīku annītu armītu*) by Nabu-šezib from inside Tyre."

[48] SAA 16 99: 8–13: "The scribe Kabtî, a servant of Aššur-da"in-aplu son of Shalmaneser (III), who gave me the Aramaic letter (*egirtu armētu*) which I gave to the king, my lord, is saying to me: '– – –.'"

[49] SAA 17 2: 13–21: "[As to what you wrote]: 'There are informers [... to the king] and coming to his presence; if it is acceptable to the king, let me write and send my messages to the king on Aram[aic] parchment sheets'—why would you not write and send me messages in Akkadian? Really, the message which you write in it must be drawn up in this very manner—this is a fixed regulation!" For discussion, see Fales 2007: 104f n. 47.

[50] See the new edition and discussion by Fales 2010: 193–199.

[51] Fales 2010: 198. Note that the letter was found at Ashur while its addressee lived in southern Mesopotamia.

[52] See Röllig 2000a: 178–181.

mid-9th-century B.C. bilingual Akkadian-Aramaic statue of Tell Fekheriye, in which the Assyrian style is noticeable enough for A. Millard to conclude that the scribe who composed the text was trained in Assyria.[53] We have just seen how Assyrian letter-writing conventions are discernible in the Ashur Ostracon. Even the legal documents, represented by the mono- or bilingual clay tablets both from the Assyrian heartland and the western provinces, show a clear influence of the Mesopotamian legal tradition, sometimes blended with West Semitic legal terminology.[54]

Despite the paucity of Aramaic texts and their haphazard distribution, it can be argued on the basis of the existing documentation that Aramaic was used in virtually all levels of communication alongside Assyrian. Aramaic tablets were of the same legal worth as the cuneiform tablets; in the words of F. M. Fales: "*Aramaic was used as a fully alternative linguistic medium to Assyrian for writing out legal (and perhaps also administrative) documents* in many parts of the empire, and specifically in the north-western sector of Mesopotamia, during the seventh century B.C."[55] Due to long-standing tradition, "the socially dominant linguistic variety—Assyrian—represented the reference point for the overall textual framework," while "the socially subordinate linguistic variety—Aramaic—fulfilled the essential role of vehiculating a viable and running translation of all stylistic, rhetorical and lexical items which filled such a framework, such as to make all possible written utterances available to the general population."[56]

The expansion of the Aramaic language was, somewhat paradoxically, one of the clearest repercussions of Assyrian rule in the west. The Assyrians did not impose their language and the cuneiform script on the annexed lands; rather, the policy of mass deportations caused the alphabetic script and the Aramaic language to proliferate throughout the empire.[57] The centuries-long symbiosis of the Akkadian and Aramaic languages left traces in the languages themselves: while the Aramaic language was for a long time exposed to Akkadian influences, the Neo-Assyrian language was also influenced by Aramaic, both lexically and grammatically.[58] What was more important, however, was Aramaic's phenomenal takeover as the

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[53] Millard 1983: 105; cf. Fales 1983; id. 2000: 90f; Röllig 2000a: 181f.
[54] See Fales 2000: 95–115.
[55] Fales 2000: 116 (italics original); cf. id. 2007: 102 and id. 2010: 191–193.
[56] Fales 2010: 200.
[57] Cf. Millard 2009: 212.
[58] See Kaufman 1974; von Soden 1977; id. 1966; id. 1968; Tadmor 1982: 454f; Luukko 2004; Lemaire 2008a; Cherry 2009; Abraham – Sokoloff 2011.

language of everyday life and bureaucracy in the Assyrian Empire. The cuneiform script remained in use as long as it was upheld by the bilingual learned class and sponsored by the state; for instance, "official" texts such as royal inscriptions were written solely in cuneiform.[59] Along with the increase of the West Semitic population in Assyria, however, the Aramaic language gradually developed into the lingua franca of the empire and eventually replaced Assyrian as the vernacular even in the Assyrian heartland, including among the fully bilingual ruling class.[60] Thus, "Aramaic had won the vernacular battle without a fight"[61]—in fact the triumph of Aramaic is difficult to perceive as anything but the result of a conscious imperial policy.[62]

3. *Aramaean Population in Assyria*

Aramaic names feature prominently already in 8th-century documents, such as the Nimrud Wine Lists (including Aramaean scribes with Assyrian names),[63] and permeate the records of later periods until the end of the Assyrian Empire. The size and distribution of the Aramaean population in Assyria is difficult to estimate in exact figures, though. First of all, it is often very difficult to determine the actual language of a West Semitic name and, consequently, the ethnic background of the person thus called. Moreover, many ethnic Aramaeans have Akkadian names, either due to renaming when becoming Assyrian citizens, or (which may be more often than not the case) because they were given Akkadian names at birth. The Neo-Assyrian documents reveal that, especially in the families of the ruling class, it was a widespread practice to give Akkadian names to children of parents of West Semitic origin. On the other hand, there are also persons with Aramaic names whose parents' names are Akkadian.[64]

That the Assyrians recognized the Aramaeans as an ethnic entity in their own right can be seen in texts where the Aramaeans are juxtaposed with "Assyrians, Akkadians, and Chaldeans"[65] or listed together with other

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[59] Cf. Röllig 2005a: 121.

[60] Cf. Röllig 2000a: 185f; Parpola 2004: 11f; id. 2007; Beaulieu 2006: 187–192; Fales 2010: 189f.

[61] Beaulieu 2006: 192.

[62] Thus Parpola 2007: 262.

[63] See Kinnier Wilson 1972.

[64] Parpola 2007: 268–274 has compiled a list of bilingual patronyms, including 66 cases of the son with an Aramaic/foreign name and the father with an Akkadian name, and 122 cases where the reverse is true. See also Zadok 1997a: 214.

[65] SAA 4 280 r. 12.

ethnic groups.[66] The exact demographic counterpart of the designation *ar(a)māyu/arumu* is difficult to discern, however, as it may cover the West Semitic population somewhat more broadly than the current scholarly definition of "Aramaean."

The main reason for the emergence of a West Semitic population from the 9th century B.C. onward, as well as for the multiethnicity of the Assyrian Empire in general, including the Assyrian heartland, is often seen in the Assyrian practice of mass deportations. It is virtually impossible to know whether or not the presence of non-Assyrian populations in Assyria proper is due to deportations unless this is explicitly stated.[67] However, the estimate based on Assyrian sources of 4.5 million people having been deported by the Assyrian kings within three centuries[68] makes this assumption quite plausible, even though one should not rule out voluntary movements of people prompted by the empire's growing multiethnicity and its assimilation and integration policy.

A thorough analysis of the Aramaean population in Assyria has not yet been written,[69] and cannot be accomplished within the confines of this article. The following sketch, based on the *Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (PNA)*[70] should be understood as a first attempt to outline the profile of the Aramaean population in the heartland of Assyria. My working principles have been the following:

(1) In addition to the names whose bearers are expressly said to be Aramaeans, I have, for the sake of consistency, singled out all personal names designated as "Aram." by the *PNA* editors. It is quite obvious that many—if not the majority—of the names designated as "WSem." actually belong to Aramaeans.[71] Nevertheless, I have left them out because the ethnicity of their bearers is not certain.
(2) As far as the people's place of origin can be determined, I have only included names of persons from the Assyrian heartland and ignored

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66 This is the case in many oracle queries, such as SAA 4 139: 11 listing Itu'eans, Elamites, Hittites, Gurraeans, Akkadians, Aramaeans, Cimmerians, Egyptians, Nubians, and the Qedarites; cf. SAA 4 142: 10; 144: [10]; 145: 6.

67 Cf. Oded 1979: 4f.

68 Oded 1979: 20; cf. above, note 9.

69 For an earlier attempt at a general picture of West Semitic names in Assyria, see Fales 1991.

70 Radner (ed.) 1998–1999; Baker (ed.) 2000–2001; ead. 2002–2011.

71 Cf. Zadok 1997a: 212: "WSem., in practice mostly Aramaic."

names coming from the ethnically Aramaean western provinces (for example, Harran, Dūr-Katlimmu, Guzana, and Ma'allanate).[72]

(3) I have counted individuals, not names, in cases where several individuals appear in the *PNA* under the same name.

It is clear that this database does not enable a full inventory of the Aramaean population in Assyria. First of all, not all Aramaeans have Aramaic names, the Aramaic names are not always distinguishable from other West Semitic names, and second, Aramaic names have been given to people of non-Aramaean origin.[73] The actual number of Aramaeans should probably be multiplied from what is presented here. Third, a person's place of origin is not always certain and not every place name appearing in the documents can be localized with certainty. Fourth, the haphazard survival and discovery of the documents does not yield an accurate demographic description; cities where large archives have been discovered inevitably dominate the statistics, while important cities like Dūr-Šarrukin and Arbela remain almost entirely in the dark. All things considered, it is my hope that my sample is representative enough to draw a preliminary profile of Aramaeans in Assyria, to be completed by further research based on a complete and thoroughly analyzed database.

The *PNA* volumes include a total of 3,117 individuals whose names are recognized as West Semitic or Aramaic. Of these, 1,040 individuals (ca. 33%) are designated as Aramaeans, of whom 599 individuals (ca. 58%) can be located in the Assyrian heartland with some certainty. Of these 599 Aramaeans, only 32 (ca. 5.3%) are women.[74]

The personal names in the *PNA* corpus date from the entire Neo-Assyrian period. While a fair number of Aramaic names appear in undatable documents,[75] it may be observed that three-fifths, that is, 365 of the 599 Aramaeans, lived during the reign of the Sargonid kings (Sargon II: 67, Sennacherib: 69, Esarhaddon: 67, Ashurbanipal: 162); in addition,

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[72] For the documents from Ma'allanate (Ma'lana), located somewhere in the Balih region, see now the full-scale study of Lipiński 2010.

[73] E.g., Ta'lâ, an Egyptian from Ashur, Zanbālâ, an Arab active in Ashur, Dala-ahî, military official from Samaria, and two members of a Samarian contingent in Calah, both called Ahi-idrī.

[74] Cf. the anonymous references to Aramaean women in SAA 7 24: 1 (36 Aram[aean women]), 21 (three Aramaean women), r. 2 (six female Ar[amaean] scribes; see below, n. 146).

[75] According to Zadok 1997a: 211, it is "logical to assume that most of the undatable documents from Kuyunjik and Calah belong to the well-documented periods, viz. 704–648 BC at Nineveh and 744–705 at Calah."

35 individuals are mentioned in tablets with an approximate dating in the 7th century. The documents dating to pre-Sargonid times include 54 Aramaean individuals, while the documents written after the reign of Assurbanipal report as many as 85 individuals with an Aramaic name.

As far as the place of domicile of the 599 Aramaeans can be known, three major Assyrian cities clearly dominate the scene: 189 individuals come from Nineveh, 119 from Calah, and 130 from Ashur. Otherwise, fifteen people are located in Kannu', five in Imgur-Illil, four in Maganuba, and two in Dūr-Šarrukin. All other locations in the Assyrian heartland are represented by one Aramaean individual, if any. In the pre-Sargonic texts, as well as in those from the time of Sargon II, Calah is by far the most common domicile of the people (40/54 individuals before Sargon, 35/67 during his reign), while in the time of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, a slight majority of the Aramaeans come from Nineveh (86/136). The picture changes again in the time from Assurbanipal to the end of the Assyrian empire: Of the total of 247 individuals, 94 come from Ashur, 59 from Nineveh, and 29 from Calah. One should note, however, that these figures are, evidently and expectedly, dependent on the availability of archival material. The lack of Aramaeans in major cities such as Dūr-Šarrukin (2)[76] and Arbela (1) cannot possibly mean that there were no Aramaeans in these cities; the reason is rather that archives from these cities have not been discovered. This can be also taken as a warning against relying too heavily on statistics, which are inevitably exposed to the accident of discovery.[77]

As was stated above, the growth of the empire and the mass deportation policy caused even the Assyrian heartland to develop into a multiethnic society in which people of non-Assyrian origin occupied different positions and professions. This, of course was true even for the Aramaeans, as I would like to demonstrate in the following brief inventory. The individuals are listed in the footnotes by referring to the respective entries in the *PNA* where the textual references and other information can be found.[78]

Slaves and workers (25 individuals). Even though slavery was not the most typical fate of the deportees and the purpose of the deportations was

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[76] Unless Maganuba may be taken as representing Dūr-Šarrukin.

[77] For the role of accident in our knowledge of the Ancient Near East in general, see Millard 2005.

[78] In order to save space, references are made directly to the entries, giving the names without page numbers, textual references, and the authors of the entries. Henceforth, the following abbreviations are used for the reigns of the Assyrian kings: Tig = Tiglath-Pileser III, Sar = Sargon II, Sen = Sennacherib, Esh = Esarhaddon, Asb = Assurbanipal.

not to acquire slaves in the first place, people with West Semitic names can regularly be found as slaves in purchase documents, including 21 Aramaean individuals, no fewer than eight of whom are women.[79] Furthermore, the sources mention three individuals belonging to 8th-century work forces in Calah, and one member of a work force at a temple in 7th-century Ashur.[80] That slavery was not a typical position for the Aramaeans either, can be seen in the fact that four slave owners appear among them.[81]

Agriculture (20 individuals). Farmers with Aramaic names are well-represented in Neo-Assyrian sources,[82] and even other agricultural workers such as gardeners,[83] gooseherds,[84] and fowlers,[85] are attested. As the ruling élite owned most of the land,[86] most farmers are not likely to have owned the land they cultivated and, hence, appear as dependent farmers. It was probably possible, however, for a family to eventually own the property that it had worked on for generations.[87] This becomes evident

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[79] Abi-iahia, slave woman from Nineveh (Esh); Addî (11.), slave from Nineveh (late Asb); Ah-abû (9.), slave from Nineveh (Sen); Aia-sūrī (2.), slave woman from Imgur-Illil (Sen); Aia-sūrī (5.), slave girl from Calah (Asb); Akbarâ, slave woman from Nineveh sold to the harem (Sen); Bahî (5.), son of Isî and Attar-[...] sold by a Kummuhaean merchant to a cohort commander (Asb); Bar-ahu, slave and father from Nineveh, sold to an official (Sen); Daiānu-idrī, slave boy, son of Isî and Attar-[...], brother of Banî and Ramâ (post-Asb); Ekur-rahama, slave woman from Ashur (post-Asb); Gad-iata', slave woman from Ashur (Asb); Il-idrī (5.), tanner and slave (Asb); Il-sūrī, slave, brother of Hamnunu and Addâ from Nineveh (Sen); Mār-lihia (2.), slave from Nineveh (7th century); Marqihitâ, slave woman from Nineveh (Esh); Mār-sūrī (2.), slave of the household of the crown prince from Nineveh (Esh); Mūmar-il, slave from Calah (Tig); Mūrâ, slave from Nineveh (Sen); Nikkal-šeiāgi, slave woman from Calah (Asb); Šamaš-immī (2.), slave from Ashur (Sar); Ūsēa' (3.), slave boy from Niniveh (Esh).

[80] Abdî (4.), Il-iāba (1.), and Ṣapūnu/Zabūnu (2.); Abi-dekīr (2.).

[81] Adda-dimri, individual from Ashur, buys a female slave (Asb); Adda-idrī (4.), owner of a slave, prob. from Nineveh (Esh); Bēssī-ṭallī, Woman from Calah, buys a slave (prob. Asb or later); Šakil-Aia/Šakilia (4.), slave owner from Calah (Asb).

[82] Adda-padâ (1.), dependent farmer (post-Asb); Ah-immê (3.), palace farmer from Šiddi-hiriti (Sen); Ah-immê (10.), dependent farmer from Mannu-lu-ahu'a (Asb); Ah-abū (23.), dependent farmer from Iseppe (Asb); Baiadi-il (3.), dependent farmer (Asb); Bīā (3.), dependent farmer from [...] rani; Kabar-il (5.), dependent farmer from Asihi (Asb); Kabar-il (6.), dependent farmer from Irinnih (Asb); Mārīddi (2.), dependent farmer (Asb); Milki-nūrī (2.), dependent farmer (Asb); Šamaš-qanâ, dependent farmer in the Town of the Crown Prince's Shepherds (Asb).

[83] Arnabâ (1.), gardener, son of Se'-aplu-iddina from Hananâ (Sar); Iāli, dependent gardener in Halahha (Asb); Idrī-ahā'u (3.), gardener in Barzanista (Asb); Zabīnu, dependent gardener from Nabur (Sen).

[84] Abi-rahî and Birānu, both gooseherds from Ashur (7th century).

[85] Il-iadīni (2.), and Mār-lihia (1.), both fowl-fatteners from Calah (Asb and later); Matī'-il-ilā'ī, fowler from Rapâ (Asb).

[86] Cf. Parpola 2007: 263.

[87] Thus Oded 1979: 98f.

from the fact that sixteen persons with Aramaic names appear in legal documents as land-owners[88] and another eleven persons (including one woman) as house-owners.[89]

Craftsmen (23 individuals). Skilled professionals deported from all parts of the empire were needed to construct and maintain the empire in the most concrete sense, since the local Assyrian craftsmen could not possibly provide for the ever-growing population. All kinds of craftsmen, artisans, and other professionals are represented in the *PNA* corpus, twenty of whom have Aramaic names. This group consists of individuals working on metals,[90] ceramics,[91] textiles,[92] and leather;[93] yet others are occupied in construction,[94] the oil industry,[95] and in food production.[96] The skills of bow-makers[97] were called for by the army, whereas those of

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[88] Addî (4.), landowner at Bet-Balati (Sen); Ah-abû (12.), owner of real estate probably in the area of Calah (Sen); Ah-abû (17.), owner of land prob. near Nineveh (late Esh); Ah-immê (2.), landowner (Sar); Bar-ahāti, landowner from Ti'i near Maganuba (Sen); Daniāti-il, owner of land in Maganuba; Idrāia (3.), landowner in Urulli (early Esh); Il-malak (2.), landowner in Hamê (Esh); Matī'-Adda (4.), landowner from Nineveh (not dated); Riṣīṣu, son of Qanuni, landowner in the Town of the Clergymen in Nineveh (Sar); Sē'-dāli, landowner from Nineveh (post-Asb); Šakil-Aia/Šakilia (2.), landowner from Nineveh (Asb); Šēr-idrī (1.), landowner in the vicinity of Calah (Sar); Tēr-dalâ, landowner in the town of Hulî (Sar); Zabīnu (1.), landowner in the vicinity of Calah (Sar); Zabīnu (15.), landowner from Dur-Šarruken (7th cent.).

[89] Addî (3.), in Calah (8th–early 7th century); Addî (8.), in Nineveh (late Asb); Ah-abû (22.), in Nineveh (Asb); Attār-sūrī (1.), in Nineveh (Sen); Ba'altī-iābatu, daughter of Belnadi, in Nineveh (post Asb); Bahiānu (10.), in Maganuba (not dated); Bir-Attār (2.), in Nineveh (Asb); Hazūgu (2.), in Nineveh (not dated); Il-manāni (1.), horse trainer and owner of a house in Nineveh (late Asb); Ṭābî (9.), house owner from Nemed-Issar (Asb); Zabdānu (4.), chariot driver and estate owner (Asb).

[90] Adda-idrī (9.), blacksmith from Nineveh (not dated); Birānu (1.), blacksmith of the royal court of Calah (Shalmaneser V); Adda-rahīmu (5.), individual from the circle of a goldsmith from Ashur (post-Asb); Ahūnu (16.), individual from Ashur associated with members of the goldsmith's guild (late Asb); Bassāl, goldsmith from Ashur (Asb); Mannu-ka-Sē' (1.), goldsmith from Nineveh (Asb); Kapara (4.), craftsman or official mentioned in an inventory of precious metals (probably Esh).

[91] Ah-immê (16.), probably a potter (7th century).

[92] Sagībī (5.), dependent weaver from Nineveh (Esh); Zabīnu (2.), tailor from Nineveh (Sen).

[93] Abdâ (1.), Aramaean tanner at Calah (not dated); Il-idrī (5.), tanner and slave (Asb).

[94] Il-malak (1.) dependent carpenter from the village of the god Te'er (Sar).

[95] Irmulu, master of the oil pressers' guild from Ashur (Asb or earlier); Kabar-[...], oil-presser from Calah (Adad-nirari III).

[96] Adda-sūrī (3.), Aramaean baker from Calah (Sen); Kabar-il (7.), baker from Calah (7th century); Ṭābî (4.), baker from Nineveh (Sen); Šakil-Aia/Šakilia (9.), brewer of the Ashur temple from Ashur (not dated).

[97] Makkamê (2.), bow-maker from Nineveh (Sen).

camel-drivers[98] had a logistic and commercial function. Musicians from different parts of the empire were present already in the 8th-century court at Calah, and there is a reference to anonymous Aramaean musicians in the Nimrud Wine Lists.[99]

Merchants (8 individuals). The services of professional merchants were essential for the immense trade of the empire, the economic interests of which constituted one of the basic reasons and motivations for empire-building.[100] Merchants were naturally recruited from among deportees and other foreigners who had established contacts with different parts of the empire. The eight merchants with Aramaic names, mostly acting as witnesses in legal documents, are connected with the palace, the military, and the slave trade.[101]

Military (58 individuals). A large representation of Aramaeans is to be found in the service of the military.[102] The expansion of the empire was not possible without significant investments in the armed forces, which the Assyrian population was far too small to provide. Therefore, deportees and soldiers of the defeated armies were recruited and incorporated into the Assyrian military,[103] the result being a multiethnic army, in which non-Assyrians could rise to high positions. This is also true for Aramaeans, who can be found as commanders-in-chief,[104] cohort commanders,[105]

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[98] Adda-idrī (6.), camel driver, dependent of the chief eunuch (Asb); Mannu-kī-ili (2.), individual responsible for camels (Sar); Matī'î (2.), dependent camel driver (Asb).

[99] See Kinnier Wilson 1972: 77 and pls. 28/9 and 30/29.

[100] Cf. Berlejung 2012.

[101] Addî (7.), merchant from Kišqa, is active in Nineveh and connected with Kakkullanu, a well-known cohort commander of the crown prince (Asb and later). Ba'alat-qāmu, merchant from Calah (Sen); Bir-Šamaš (1.), merchant from Nineveh (Sen); Il-immī (3.), merchant from Nineveh (Asb) all act as witnesses in slave sale tablets. Il-ma'ādī (3.), Assyrian official or merchant, is said to report to the king about his whereabouts in Ṣimira (Esh). Nabūzâ, merchant from Nineveh, acts as a witness for a "third man" who buys an estate (Sen). Sē'-gabbāri (1.), chief merchant from Calah, is named in a list of (military?) personnel (Tig or Sar); Ṭābî (1.), merchant (?) active in Calah (Tig/Sar).

[102] For an overview of West Semitic military personnel, see Fales 1991: 103–106.

[103] Cf. Oded 1979: 108f.

[104] Aia-halû (1.), chief treasurer and commander-in-chief, eponym of 833, 824, and 821 (Shalmaneser III and Shamshi-Adad V); Mār-lārim (3.), commander-in-chief of Kummuḫi, eponym of 668 (Asb).

[105] Aia-rapâ/Iarapâ (the name is either Aramaic or Arabic), cohort commander acting as go-between with the Arabs (Sar); Balasî (the name is either Akkadian or Aramaic) (6.), bodyguard and cohort commander of the crown prince (post-Asb); Ginnāia (the name is either Aramaic or Arabic) (1.), probably a cohort commander from Nineveh (Esh); Hašilāmu, cohort commander dealing with fugitives and camels of the Arabs (not dated); Il-ṣadîm (3.), cohort commander from Nineveh (post Asb); Kubābu-sūrī, cohort commander from

commanders-of-fifty,[106] team commanders,[107] recruitment officers,[108] and as "third men" (*tašlīšu*);[109] sometimes an officer appears in the texts without exact information about his position.[110] Apart from positions of command, soldiers of lower rank with Aramaic names can be found as chariot drivers,[111] chariot fighters,[112] staff bearers,[113] archers,[114] and ordinary members of contingents.[115] Non-military professionals who offered their services to the army include horse trainers,[116] a fodder master,[117] and a serf-master.[118]

Arzuhina (Sar); Luqû (4.), cohort commander of the crown prince from Nineveh (Asb); Sagīru, cohort commander from Nineveh (Asb).

[106] Ah-abu (27.), commander-of-fifty, prob. from Nineveh (not dated).

[107] Adda-immē (8.), team commander of Marduk-šarru-uṣur (Sar); Ahi-dekīr, Chaldaean team commander active in Calah (Sar); Bahî (1.), team commander of the Samarian contingent from Calah (Sar); Bahî (2.), team commander from Calah (Sar); Gūwāia, team commander active at Calah (not dated); Kapara (2.), team commander active at Calah (Sar); Sabbūru (1.), commander of troops from Calah (Adad-nirari III or Shalmaneser III).

[108] Adda-hāti (the name may be Canaanite), recruitment officer of the chariotry in Calah (Sar); Bir-ammâ (1.), recruitment officer at Calah (Sar).

[109] Adda-rahīmu (2.), "third man" from Nineveh (Esh); Adda-sannanī, "third man" from Nineveh (Sen); Bir-ammâ (3.), "third man" from Nineveh (probably Asb); Harrānāiu (West Semitic, but probably an Aramaic name) (11.), "third man" from Ashur (not dated); Mašqaru, "third man" from Nineveh (Asb).

[110] Abi-dekīr (1.), high-ranking military officer at Calah, is in charge of another officer and 50 horses (Sar); Dādi-sūrī (2.), military official concerned with horses from Calah (Sar); Dalâ-ahi, military official from Samaria active in Calah (Sar); Harrānāiu (a West Semitic, but probably an Aramaic name) (10.), military functionary active in Nineveh (7th century); Il-idrī (2.), military officer from Calah (Sar); Luqû (3.), military official from Nuniba (Sar or later); Mār-lārim (1.), military official from Nineveh (Sar); Mattî (1.), military official active in Calah (Sar).

[111] Addî (10.), chariot driver from Nineveh (late Asb); Hamnānu (3.), chariot driver (Esh); Hīri-ahhê (3.), chariot driver possibly from Nineveh (Asb); Zabdâ (2.), chariot driver from Nineveh (Esh); Zabdānu (4.), chariot driver and estate owner (Asb); Zabdî (4.), chariot driver from Nineveh (Asb).

[112] Iglâ, chariot fighter from Ashur (post-Asb).

[113] Adda-salamu (1.), staff bearer from Ashur (late Asb); Bir-il, staff bearer (Esh).

[114] Laqīsu, archer from Kapar (post Asb); Zabdî (7.), archer and landowner from Nabû-šimanni (late Asb).

[115] Adda-nūrī (3.), Gurraean under the command of the "third man" in Nineveh (not dated); Ahi-idrī (1. and 2.), both members of a Samarian contingent in Calah (Sar); Nūrī-iapa', Chaldaean serving in the Assyrian military in Calah (Sar), Ṭābî (6.), recruit from Nineveh (Sen).

[116] Adda-at'ī (1.) horse trainer from [Arra...] (probably Asb); Adda-raqî (1.), horse trainer from Ashur (Sar); Iahūṭu (1.), person responsible for horses, possibly from Calah (probably Sar); Il-manāni (1.), horse trainer and owner of a house in Nineveh (late Asb); Ilu-bi'dī, horse trainer in Inurta-ašared (Sar); Ukumu (2.), horse trainer active in Ashur (not dated); Zabīnu (6.), horse trainer from Nineveh (Asb); Zanbānu, horse trainer active in Ashur (Sar).

[117] Abi-qāmu (1.), fodder master at Calah (Tig or Sar).

[118] Sagibu (8.), serf-master of the commander-in-chief from Ashur (7th century).

Palace personnel and civil administration (64 individuals). The largest number of people listed in the *PNA* with Aramaic names belong to the realm of administration, many of them occupying important positions. The growth of the empire led to the creation of a new aristocracy dependent on the king alone, rather than belonging to the old Assyrian nobility. This new ruling class—including the royal élite—was multiethnic, and its emergence was not merely due to a natural development. The imperial policy was not to protect the Assyrian upper crust against foreign influences—on the contrary, it becomes evident that non-Assyrian elements were systematically incorporated into the aristocracy already in the 8th century B.C.[119]

The prominent presence of non-Assyrians can be seen in the list of Neo-Assyrian eponyms,[120] which includes a significant number of years within two centuries named after 20 non-Assyrian officials, five of them with Aramaic names:

833, 824, and 821 Aia-halu (Aram.), chief treasurer, commander-in-chief
764 Ṣidqi-ilu, governor of Tušhan
763 Bur-sagalê (Aram.), governor of Guzana
725 Ammi-hatî/Mahdie, governor of Nineveh
701 Hanana, governor of Til Barsib
700 Mitunu, governor of Isana
692 Zazaya, governor of Arpad
689 Gihilu, governor of Hatarikka
684 Manzarnê, governor of Kullania
677 Abi-ramu (Aram.), great vizier
676 Banbâ, second vizier
673 Atar-ilu, governor of Lahiru
668 Mar-larim (Aram.), commander-in-chief
667 Gabbaru, governor of Dūr-Sin-ahhe-riba
660 Gir-Ṣapunu
656 Milki-ramu, cohort commander
655 Awianu, governor of Que
651 Sagabbu (Aram.), governor of Harran
649 Ahi-ila'i, governor of Carchemish
620 Sa'ilu, chief cook

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119 See Parpola 2007: 260f.
120 For the eponyms, see Millard 1994.

To these should be added two undatable Aramaic eponyms.[121] Such a significant list of non-Assyrians worth an eponym—not including non-Assyrians with Assyrian names, who would probably make the list much longer—speaks volumes about the infiltration and representation of "foreign" elements in the Assyrian ruling class and helps to explain the triumph of the Aramaic language in Assyria.

Despite the fact that only one governor with a name designated as Aramaic and active in the Assyrian homeland can be found in the *PNA* corpus,[122] the eponym list shows that governors of provinces were frequently recruited from among non-Assyrians, including Aramaeans. The same can be said of local administrators in cities and villages, even in principal cities, who sometimes have Aramaic names.[123]

In addition to the civil administration, the intended permeation of non-Assyrian people into the imperial body becomes evident in the organization of the royal palace, where a significant number of the king's attendants appear to be of non-Assyrian descendance, Aramaeans among them. These include great viziers,[124] heralds,[125] bearded courtiers,[126] gate guards,[127] and a considerable number of officials and royal servants whose position cannot be specifically defined.[128] Royal bodyguards were

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[121] Andarāni (2.), eponym of the village Kapar-Andarani (date lost), and Pāda, palace herald and eponym, attested in sources from ca. 700 B.C. Note also Šīlānu, eponym of the Chaldaean tribe Bit-Šilani (Tig).

[122] Idrāia/Idrīja/Idrī-Aia (4.), governor of Hal [...] can be identified with Atarāia who follows Aššur-alik-pani as the governor of Barhalza (Esh and Asb); Aramaeans were also appointed governors of the western provinces, e.g., Bur-sagalê, governor of Guzana, eponym for 763, and Sagabbu (5.), governor of Harran, eponym of 651.

[123] Abi-rāmu (7.), city overseer in Ashur (Sen); Ah-immê (13.), possibly a mayor from Ashur (post Asb); Addî, (6.), village manager from Tille (Esh); Ammi-iata' (the name is either Aramaic or Arabic) (1.), deputy and servant of the king (Sar); Bahiānu (5.), village manager of the temple stewardess from Nineveh (Sen); Bar-rakkūb, majordomo or member of his household from Ashur (Assur-dān III); Kubābu-satar, (2.), village manager of Sila [...] (not dated); Mannu-kī-ili (the name can be Akkadian or Aramaic) (1.) village inspector (late 9th–early 8th century); Mār-lārim (2.), village manager from Barhalzi (Esh); Mār-nūrī (1.), deputy of Maganuba (Sen); Mār-samsī, deputy from Nineveh (Sen); Sē'-sakâ (4.), majordomo from Nineveh (Esh).

[124] Abi-rāmu (8.), great vizier, eponym of 677 (Esh).

[125] Aširê, herald, son of Abu'a, from Irbu (late Asb); Pāda, palace herald and eponym; cf. above, n. 122 (Sen).

[126] Adda-sūrī (1.), bearded courtier in Calah (Tig).

[127] Arzāni, gate guard from Calah (early Asb); Sagībī (1.), gate guard of the palace of Nineveh (Sen).

[128] Adda-barakka (1.), servant of the king (Sen); Adda-idrī (2.), servant of the chief eunuch (Adad-nirari III); Ahūnu (12.), messenger from the royal court of Nineveh (Esh);

regularly recruited from among deportees and foreigners, and even many Aramaeans can be found as members of the king's guard.[129] Eunuchs (*ša rēši*), among them a few Aramaeans, often feature as the Assyrian king's and queen's personal attendants.[130] The management of the royal women's quarters was likewise in the hands of women partly of non-Assyrian origin.[131]

Temple (4 individuals). In comparison with the royal court, ethnic Aramaeans are not often associated with Assyrian temples. The four individuals with Aramaic names connected to a temple include two priests, one prophet, and one staff member of a temple.[132] If not due to the accident of preservation, the most natural explanation for the conspicuous lack of Arameans in the field of worship is either that the Aramaeans did not adhere to Assyrian cult practices, largely maintaining their non-Assyrian religious traditions even in the Assyrian heartland,[133] or that the temples were more conservative than the royal court in their recruitment

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Arzāiu (1.), official (Sar); Bāia/Baiâ (3.), official responsible for transport of furniture (Sar); Balasî (4.), official of the palace (Esh); Baqī-Amri, official from Calah (Asb); Barūhu-il, official responsible for grain deliveries in Nineveh (7th century); Harrānāiu (1.), female member of the royal court at Calah (Ashur-nirari V or Tig); Harrānāiu (2.), member of the royal court at Calah (Tig); Harrānāin (3.), official active at Calah (8th century); Hazūgâ (1.), member of the royal court at Calah (Tig); Idrāia/Idrīja/Idrī-Aia (11.), servant of the Crown Prince (7th century); Ilā-hāri, official from Ashur (Asb); Il-ma'ādī, (3.), Assyrian official or merchant (Esh); Kapara (4.), craftsman or official (probably Esh); Kul-ba-iadi-il (2.), official in Ilgê (8th century); Lūqu (2.), official responsible for horses (Sar); Makkamê (1.), official (Sar); Matī', member of the royal court at Calah (Tig); Nargî, (15.), official stationed in Ilhini; Sagī', official active in Calah (Tig); Sagīb-Adda (1.), official active in Calah (Tig); Sē'-gabbāri (5.), official or professional from Nineveh (probably 7th century).

[129] Abi-rāmu (4.), royal bodyguard from Calah (?) (Tig/Sar); Adda-ladīn (1.), bodyguard of the king (Esh); Ah-abû (19.), bodyguard (and cook?) from Nineveh (Asb); Balasî (8.), bodyguard and cohort commander of the crown prince (post-Asb); Il-pādi (6.), royal bodyguard from Calah (Tig/Sar); Il-qatar (1.) royal bodyguard (Sen); Kabar-il (2.), king's stand-by of the personal guard (Asb); Qarhâ/Qarhāia (7.) personal guard of the crown prince at Nineveh (post-Asb); Sarsâ, king's personal guard (7th century); Ṣapūnu/Zabūnu (3.), royal bodyguard (Sar).

[130] Idrāia/Idrīja/Idrī-Aia (6.), royal eunuch from Ashur (Asb); Il-iāba (3.), eunuch (?) responsible for misappropriating a village (Asb); Milki-nūrī (1.), eunuch of the queen (Esh and Asb).

[131] Ahi-ṭallī (1.), harem governess of the Central City of Nineveh (Sen). Other harem governesses include Amat-Astārti (Phoenician), harem manager in Calah (post-Asb), and Amat-Ba'al (West Semitic), harem manager in Calah (7th century).

[132] Hamnānu (2.), priest (Esh); Qinṭāia, priest of Tašmetu at Calah (Adad-nirari III); Bāia/Baiâ (5.), prophet from Arbela (Esh); Ginnāia (the name may be Aramaic or Arabic) (4.), member of the staff of a temple (7th century).

[133] Note that the Assyrians themselves promoted the cult of the national deity of the Aramaeans, Amurru, who, in fact was a creation of the Sumerians rather than an indigenous deity; see Beaulieu 2005; id. 2006: 189.

policy. Again, it should be borne in mind that the Neo-Assyrian onomastics hides a significant number of ethnic Aramaeans behind Akkadian names, which makes it probable that the actual number of Aramaeans in Assyrian temples was not quite as insignificant as the meager number persons designated as Aramaic in the *PNA* would indicate.

Scholars and scribes (16 individuals). The most famous person featuring as an Aramaean scholar is the legendary Aḥiqar, known from the Book of Aḥiqar, the only ancient Aramaic wisdom text preserved to us.[134] The many titles given to him in the Aramaic Book of Aḥiqar include "seal-bearer of Sennacherib, king of Assyria" (1: 3), "wise scribe, counsellor of all Assyria" (1: 12), and "father of all Assyria, by whose counsel king Sennacherib and all the host of Assyria were guided" (4: 55).[135] Aḥiqar is also familiar from the book of Tobit (1: 21–22; 2: 10; 11: 19; 14: 10) which presents him, not only as Tobit's nephew, but also as a high official in the court of Esarhaddon.[136] The possibility that these fictitious texts are based on a tradition of a historical personality has been backed up by the Seleucid-era Uruk List of Kings and Sages, according to which "during the reign of Esarhaddon, Aba-Enlil-dari was scholar (*ummānu*), whom the Aramaeans (*aḫlamû*) call Aḥiqar (*a-hu-ʾu-qa-ri*)."[137] This information is difficult to reconcile with other written sources, though: scholars called Aba-Enlil-dari or Aḥiqar are not known from any extant Assyrian source, and it is highly unlikely that a scholar belonging to the king's inner circle would not have left traces in the royal correspondence and other documents, unless the tradition goes back to a scholar known by another name.[138] This is not to say that there could not have been Aramaeans among the Assyrian scholars; the fact is, however, that the *PNA* corpus includes only two scholars with Aramaic names, namely Balasî, the well-known astrologer of Ashurbanipal and Ukumu, a scholar from Niniveh.[139]

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[134] The earliest textual evidence of the Book of Aḥiqar is a fragmentary late-5th-century Aramaic papyrus from Elephantine, and versions of the text exist in, e.g., Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, and Arabic. See Kottsieper 1990; Greenfield 1995; Contini – Grottanelli (eds.) 2005; Niehr 2007.

[135] Other designations include "wise and skillful scribe" (1: 1) and "wise scribe and master of good counsel (3: 42); see Greenfield 1995: 44f.

[136] Cf. Niehr 2009.

[137] Edition: van Dijk 1962, 45 r. 19f; see also Lenzi 2008: 141, 143.

[138] Cf. Beaulieu 2006: 190. Parpola 2005 suggests that the famous Assyrian scholar Adad-šumu-uṣur served as the prototype of Aḥiqar.

[139] Balasî (3.), astrologer of Assurbanipal from Nineveh (Esh and Asb); Ukumu (1.), Babylonian scholar in the royal library at Nineveh (Esh). Otherwise, the list of the inner circle of scholars of the Assyrian kings consists of Akkadian names; see Parpola 1993: xxvi.

Aramaean scribes, however, feature prominently already in the Nimrud Wine Lists[140] and are attested throughout the Neo-Assyrian period. Whether the designation *ṭupšarru armāyu* should always be understood to indicate a scribe of Aramaean origin rather than merely a scribe of any ethnic origin able to write Aramaic,[141] cannot really be known, however.

The Nimrud Wine Lists recognize the three categories of Assyrian, Egyptian, and Aramaean scribes.[142] The lexical tradition makes a distinction between Assyrian and Aramaean scribes,[143] as does a Neo-Assyrian oracle query[144] and a late 8th-century letter from Calah.[145] Finally, the above-mentioned pictorial representations of two scribes, one engraving a clay tablet and the other writing on a scroll, point to the same conclusion. All this indicates that Aramaean scribes were needed to produce documents in Aramaic, and their number and prominence suggests that this need was a constant one. In addition to the anonymous references to Aramaean scribes in Neo-Assyrian sources,[146] perhaps including a reference to six female Aramaean scribes,[147] fourteen of them are known by name in the *PNA* corpus.[148]

Queen and queen mother (1 individual).The last person that remains to be mentioned comes from the very top of Assyrian society: the queen of Sennacherib, who is known both by her Aramaic name Naqia and her Akkadian name Zakutu, both names meaning 'pure.'[149] Even though her origin is not specified in any source, her Aramaic name makes it probable

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[140] See Kinnier Wilson 1972: 62–64.

[141] Thus Garelli 1982: 439f.

[142] *NWL* 9: 18–20; see Kinnier Wilson 1972: 62f.

[143] *MSL* 12: 329 v 5–6: LÚ A.BA KUR.*aš+šur-a-a* LÚ A.BA KUR.*ara-ma-a-a* "Assyrian scribe, Aramean scribe."

[144] SAA 4 144:9.

[145] *NL* 86; see Radner 1997: 83.

[146] E.g., SAA 4 58 r. 10; 144: 9; SAA 14 318 r. 4; SAA 16 123: 8.

[147] Provided that the fragmentary word in SAA 7 24 r. 2: 6 MÍ.A.BA.MEŠ *ár-x*[*x x* (*x x*)] can be reconstructed as *armītu*.

[148] Abā-gû, palace scribe from Nineveh (Sen); Ah-abû (13.), palace scribe from Nineveh (probably Sen); Ah-abû (26.), Aramaean scribe, prob. connected to the army (not dated); Ahu-iddina (17.), Aramaean scribe; Ammāia/Ammâ (1.), Aramaean scribe from Nineveh (not dated); Attâ-sūrī, scribe from Nineveh (Asb); Baṭṭuṭānu (1.), scribe from Nineveh (Esh); Baṭṭūṭu (3.), scribe from Nineveh, active in Ashur (post-Asb); Il-idrī (6.), scribe from Nineveh (7th century); Il-pādi (4.), scribe from Nineveh (Sen); Il-zabadda, scribe of the mayor of Nineveh (not dated); Nargî (4.), scribe from Nineveh (Asb); Nurāia (10.), Aramaean scribe of the crown prince (7th century); Šama' (1.), scribe from Nineveh (Sen). Note also Ahu-[. . .] Aramaean [scribe], in SAA 6 314 s. 1, [Sa']ilu, Aramaean scribe, in SAA 14 153 r. 8, and Ubrî, Aramaean scribe, in SAA 14 75: 3.

[149] Naqī'a, queen of Sennacherib, mother of Esarhaddon, grandmother of Assurbanipal (Sen, Esh, and Asb).

that she actually was an ethnic Aramaean. Naqia was an extremely influential personality both as a queen and as a queen mother during her lifetime, which spanned the reigns of her husband, son, and grandson.[150] She was not an exception as a queen of Assyria of foreign origin, however. Tiglath-Pileser III and his son Sargon II both had foreign wives, called Iabâ and Atalia, both found buried in the same coffin in a royal tomb at Calah. Even though the ethnicity of both queens is uncertain,[151] their names are distinctly non-Assyrian, indicating a practice of intermarriage of Assyrian kings with royal women of the conquered lands and vassal states. As much as this was an act of royal diplomacy, it also contributed to the growing influence of people of non-Assyrian origin in the Assyrian court.

4. *Conclusion*

Throughout its period of growth from the 9th through the mid-7th century B.C., the Neo-Assyrian Empire became an increasingly multilingual and multiethnic political and cultural entity. It was composed of people of different ethnic backgrounds, among whom the West Semites, especially the Aramaeans, formed the biggest and culturally most significant group. Even the Assyrian heartland, the principal cities in particular, were replete with people of non-Assyrian origin. The main reason for this is the imperial practice of mass deportations, which brought about major demographic changes, not only in the countries conquered and annexed by the Assyrians, but also in the Assyrian homeland. In addition, the growing internationalization of the empire may have prompted non-coerced mobility of people.

The contributions of the non-Assyrian population were an absolute necessity for the maintenance of the empire, since the indigenous Assyrian population was too small to sustain the imperial military force and state bureaucracy. While their ethnic background was recogned, the non-Assyrians were nonetheless completely integrated into Assyrian society and identified as Assyrians.[152] The Aramaeans assumed a key position

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[150] For Naqia, see Melville 1999 and Svärd 2008: 31–33.

[151] The *PNA* presents Iabâ as West Semitic or Arabic, while the origin of the name Atalia is given as "unknown" (note that the entry appeared as an appendix to Vol. I/2, p. 433). Some scholars consider it probable that both names are Hebrew (cf. Queen Ataliah in 2 Kgs 11), and that the Assyrian kings, thus, had Judaean wives (Dalley 1998b; cf. Zadok 2002b: 12); however, the Hebrew origin of the names and, hence, the ethnicity of the queens, is not certain (cf. Achenbach 2002; Younger 2002).

[152] Parpola (2004: 6f) compares this with the amalgamation of ethnic and national identities in the United States, where immigrants may maintain their ethnic identities and

among them, not only because of their large number but also because of their language and alphabetic script, which was much more functional and widely understood throughout the empire than the Akkadian language, written in cuneiform. The Aramaic language rapidly became the lingua franca of the empire, with an official status, and even the Assyrian ruling class became fully bilingual.

The above survey of the Aramaean population in the Assyrian heartland is based on an onomastic sample of ca. 600 names drawn from the *Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. It does not yield an exact demography of the Aramaeans in Assyria, but it sufficiently demonstrates that Aramaeans could be found at all levels of Assyrian society, from slaves to queens, gate guards to governors. On the basis of this sample it is evident that Aramaeans had access to any occupation in Assyrian society, including the highest positions in the state bureaucracy. They did not constitute a separate class of people with special privileges or restrictions.

According to the above sample, quite expectedly, the Aramaean population reached its peak in the time of the Sargonid kings, particularly during the reign of Assurbanipal, and remained significant even in the last decades of the Assyrian Empire. No clear diachronic pattern can be discerned with regard to the positions of the Aramaean people, although it appears that the number of Aramaeans in high military and governmental positions increased in the Sargonid period. This indicates a full assimilation of the Aramaeans into the Assyrian upper crust.

Keeping in mind that the onomastic evidence does not reveal the large number of Aramaeans who had been given Akkadian names, one can safely assume that the representation of ethnic Aramaeans in Assyria was much stronger than the sample discussed in this article. Whatever their exact percentage of the population in Assyria may have been, the sources make it evident that the Aramaeans contributed decisively, and more than any other ethnic group, to the building of the Assyrian Empire from early on, having a profound cultural impact on its ideology and practices.

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simultaneously identify themselves as Americans. Another good example could be taken from former Yugoslavia, where the Jews, recognized as a religious and national minority and maintining their Jewish identity to a varying degree, primarily identified themselves as Yugoslavians. See Kerkkänen 2001: 93–99, 187–190.

Postscript:

This paper by Martti Nissinen is limited to the Arameans in the Assyrian empire and the Assyrian heartland in what is today modern northern Iraq, during that period of course. Despite the fact, that the Aramean city-states were conquered and fully annexed into the Assyrian empire since 732 B.C.E. they became only Assyrianized in the sense of being citizens of "Mat Ashur" (the land of Ashur/Assyria) they were of course still aware of their Aramean ethnic identity and even outlived the fall of the Assyrian empire. This is confirmed by many assyriologists, for example Hayim Tadmor, Allan R. Millard, Albert Kirk Grayson, Ran Zadok. There is even evidence that the Arameans and their Aramaic language continued to exist long after this period in history until modern times, for example during the Seleucid era after the times of Alexander the Great, Posedonius of Apamea and many others testify about this. There are many other examples including the literature of the many Syriac church denominations in Edessan Aramaic (classical Syriac) testify about the traditional usage and traditional self-awareness of the Aramean and Aramaic names synonymously with the exonym *Suryoyo/suryaya* forward until modern times but the Aramean name started even in sources from the 4th century AD, the Greek exonym *Surioi* in the form *Suryoyo/Suryaya* somewhere between 390s to the 5th century AD as a starting point.

Martti Nissinen left out the fact that the Arameans lived in Bit Kashiari (Modern Tur Abdin), Matiatu/e, Nasipinu (Nisibin/Nisibis modern Nusaybin), Bit Zammani (around Amid/Omid, modern Diyarbakir). This is evident in the "*Hidden Pearl Vol. I – The Ancient Aramaic Heritage*" by Sebastian Brock and David Taylor, Witold Witakowski and Eva Witakowski with reference to sources; this is mentioned by Glenn M Schwarz, Jeffrey Szuchman in his "Bit Zamani & Assyria", Andre Dupont Sommer "*Les Araméens*" (also available in Swedish and Arabic, under the name *Araméerna* and *al-Aramiyun*) just to mention a few. At least five Assyrian kings if not more testify to Aramean presence there and that Assyrians waged battles against the Arameans there. Some of these facts are outside the scope of this paper but evident outside the field of Assyriology, where the field of expertise of Nissinen is limited to despite the fact that he wrote in his conclusion that the Arameans were fully assimilated into the Assyrian upper crust. What happened to the Arameans after the fall of the Assyrian empire centuries and millenniums into modern time is not answered by him. Nor were the Arameans outsiders from the Syrian Desert who migrated to the area between the Tigris and Euprates and west of the Euphrates but rather indigenous to that region. the earliest were not camel nomads as was claimed 30 years ago by scholars but new excavations testify to this besides it is anachronistic to claim that the earliest Arameans were camel nomads some of the later Arameans especially after the 800s BC and forward used camels but in general they lived on farming and sheep and goats and later of course established Arameans kingdoms and city-states. The Arameans were semi-nomadic.