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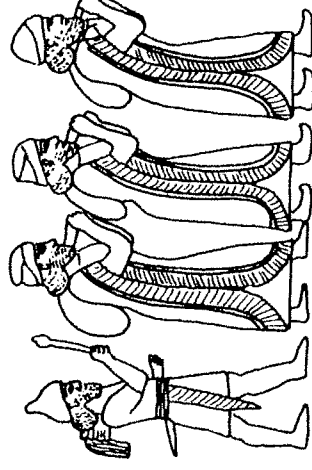
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Kein Land für sich allein

Studien zum Kulturkontakt
in Kanaan, Israel/Palästina und Ebnîârî
für Manfred Weippert zum 65. Geburtstag
herausgegeben von
Ulrich Hübner und Ernst Axel Knauf



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West Semites at Tell Šeḥ Hamad: Evidence for the Israelite Exile?

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1. Introduction*

In the course of the Assyrian expansion to the West during the second half of the eighth century BCE, Assyrian armies bringing an end to the independence of the so-called Northern Kingdom captured the city of Samaria. In my opinion the city was conquered twice: once in 723 by the armies of Shalmanesser V and once in 720 by Sargon as part of a punitive campaign after a rebellion in the West instigated by Iuubi'di, the ruler of Hamath.¹ In line with the politics of the Neo-Assyrian empire² deportations in two directions were carried out after the final conquest of Samaria. Inhabitants from areas conquered by the Assyrians, mainly from Babylonia, were settled in the territory of the former Northern Kingdom.³ On the other hand, inhabitants of the former Northern Kingdom were exiled to Assyria. 2 Kgs 17,6 || 18,11 relates an exilition to «Halah, Habur, the river of Gozan, and the cities of the Medes». A few traces of Israelite exiles have been found in the village of Halahhu, Northeast of the Assyrian provincial centre Guzanu, and in the Assyrian heartland, especially in Kalhu/Nimrud.⁴ These traces corroborate with the Biblical account and make the contents of the Book of Kings, at least on this point, historically trustworthy. Recently, a group of texts from Tell Šeḥ Hamad has been published that contain some West Semitic and even Hebrew names.⁵ These texts register the sales of plots of land in and around Dūr Katlimmu; their possible bearings on the Israelite exile are the object of this paper.

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¹ For a discussion as to the historical reconstruction of these events see BECKING 1992: LAMPRIGHS 1995, 130-135.

² See ODED 1979.

³ See BECKING 1981/82; BECKING 1992, 95-104; NA'AMAN & ZADOK 2000.

⁴ See, e.g., ODED 1979, 12-14, 31, 61; ZADOK 1979, 35-38; ZADOK 1988, 303-12; BECKING 1992, 61-93; YOUNGER 1998; ODED 2000, 91-99. Add to this list SAA 15, 280; CIR 84/84 (DONBAZ 1988, 8); Rev. 22; see SELZ 1998.

⁵ POSTGATE 1993.

2. The «Red House» at Dūr Katlimmu

Before turning to the contents of the inscriptions excavated at Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad, the archaeological and historical context of these texts should be sketched. The four cuneiform tablets⁶ have been excavated in Room XX in Area 6349 IV in the «Mittlere Unterstadt II» in Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad, ancient Dūr Katlimmu.⁷ The site is located at the banks of the Nahr al-Ḥabūr, not far from the present Turkish-Syrian border. This river is considered to be identical with the Habur mentioned in the report in the Book of Kings and also known from Assyrian and Aramaic sources.⁸ Room XX has been part of a so-called «Red House». This name is given in view of the colour of the remains of some of its walls. This «Red House» was built over an older edifice, the «Great House». This «Great House» makes the impression of having been a Neo-Assyrian administrative centre. A layer of ashes over the complete inventory of room QQ, part of the «Great House», indicate that this building has been burned down, probably as a result of a military action.⁹

It should be noted that in neo-Assyrian times Dur-Katlimmu functioned as a regional administrative centre.¹⁰ According to the cuneiform document DeZ 6222 = SH 87/6153 IV 152, excavated at Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad, but as yet unpublished, the city not only housed a LÚ*·EN·NAM, «governor», but also a šaknu, «prefect», and a guggallu, «canal-inspector».¹¹ Recent excavations have unearthed the archive of an Assyrian officer, Shulmu-Sharri that contained some 550 inscriptions including Aramaic legends and docketts.¹² The eponyms in the Aramaic inscriptions cover the period 674-622 BCE.¹³

As to the function of the «Red House» during the Babylonian era, it is to be hoped that the ongoing excavations at Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad would reveal new evidence.

3. Historical Context

The shift from the Assyrian to the Babylonian rule is relatively well documented for the Ḥabūr-region.¹⁴ Our main source for this event still is the *Babylonian Chronicle* 3.¹⁵ From this text the following picture can be deduced:¹⁶

⁶ Two of them also have brief Aramaic epigraphs; see RÖLLIG 1993a.
⁷ KÜHNE 1993.

⁸ See, e.g., HERION 1992; BECKING 1992, 64-65.
⁹ See KÜHNE 1993.

¹⁰ See KÜHNE 1995; ODED 2000, 96.
¹¹ See RADNER 1998, 33 n. 2.

¹² The inscriptions will be published by K. Radner and W. Röllig. An analysis of the eponyms in the Aramaic inscriptions is offered in RÖLLIG 2001.

¹³ See RÖLLIG 2001.

¹⁴ See the outline in RÖLLIG 1993b.

¹⁵ GRAYSON 1975, 90-96.

¹⁶ See basically ZAWADZKI 1988; RÖLLIG 1993b; LAMPRICHS 1995, 182-183; VANDERHOOF 1999, 28-29.

- In Nabopolassar's 10th regnal year (617 BCE) the Babylonians - in a process of rise to power - applied a military strategy comparable to the pincer movement by adding to their attack on Assyria from the South an attack «in the back» by executing military operations in the regions of Hindānu and Sūhu on the Middle Euphrates.¹⁷

- During this campaign the Babylonian king received tribute from inhabitants of the areas just mentioned.¹⁸

- Nabopolassar moved upstream and defeated the Assyrian army near Gablini on Abu, 12th 19.

- In 613 BCE Suhu rebelled against Babylon.²⁰

- Nabopolassar answered this rebellion with a campaign upstream to Suhu in the same year.²¹

- The island of Rahi-ilu, in the Euphrates, is conquered and local Aramaeans submit themselves to the Babylonian rule.²²

- In the next year Nabopolassar conquers, together with Kyaxaras, the city of Nineveh.²³

- Afterwards the king marches upstream and conquers the Assyrian province Rasappa.²⁴ This province was Northeast of the Habur-region and the military event indicates that the area around Dur-Katlimmu has been incorporated into the Babylonian Empire by 612 BCE.

The set of events thus outlined imply that by the beginning of the rule of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II, the area around Dur-Katlimmu was incorporated in the Babylonian empire. The sources available do not hint at a population-shift or deportations during the process of change of power in the area.

4. Assyrian Texts under Babylonian Rule

According to their date formulas the cuneiform tablets excavated at Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad were written in Year 2 and Year 5 of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II.

Tablet I:

44 ITI.APIN 2 MU.MEŠ 45 P^aPA-NIG.DU-PAB MAN URU.KA[.DINGIR(KI)]
 Month of Arahamma, second year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon].^{24a}

¹⁷ Bab Chron 3:1-2; see ZAWADZKI 1988, 41.
¹⁸ Bab Chron 3:2.

¹⁹ Bab Chron 3:4-8.

²⁰ Bab Chron 3:31.

²¹ Bab Chron 3:31-37.

²² Bab Chron 3:32-34.

²³ Bab Chron 3:38-52.

^{24a} ŠH I:44-45; POSTGATE 1993, 110-114.

Tablet 2:

35 ITI.ZIZ UD.5.KĀM* 36 MU.2 PĀPA-NĪG.DU-PAB 37 MAN URU.KĀ.DINGIR.KI 38 LŪ*.A.BA PIR-
pĀ

Month of Šabatu, fifth day, second year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Scribe:
Urad-Nabu.²⁵

Tablet 3:

21 ITI.ŠE UD.2 MU.ME(S) 22 PĀPA-NĪG.DU-PAB MAN URU.KĀ.DINGIR
Month of Addaru, 2 years of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the city of Babylon.²⁶

Tablet 4:

18 ITI.BARAĞ UD.10.KĀM* MU.5 19 PĀPA-NĪG.DU-PAB MAN URU.KĀ.DINGIR.KI
19 Month of Nisanu, tenth day, fifth year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.²⁷

This implies that the texts were written in 603/2 BCE (second year of Nebuchadnezzar: ŠH 1,2 and 3) and 600 BCE (fifth year of Nebuchadnezzar: ŠH 4).²⁸

It is remarkable that the contents of these texts show many features of the Assyrian administrative system. I will point at a few aspects:

- The script of the four tablets is characteristically Neo-Assyrian.²⁹
- The texts have the well-known Neo-Assyrian format of the *egirtu*.³⁰
- In ŠH 1:28 one of the witnesses to the purchase of land, *Šin-na'id*, is indicated by his profession as the EN.URU, *bēl āli*, «lord of the city». This is a typically Assyrian indicator for local rulers or chieftains.³¹
- The second witness in this text is PĀSLIM-man-SANGA-PAB, Salmannu-šangū-ušur, who also is a witness in two of the three other texts.³² His profession is that of a priest, LŪ*.SANGA, *šangū*, which is an Assyrian title.³³ Salmannu-šangū-ušur most probably served as priest of the Assyrian deity Salmannu.³⁴
- The texts contain formulaic stipulations that are characteristic for Neo-Assyrian documents that regulate the sale of lands.³⁵
- The payment formula³⁶: *kas-pu gam-tur ta-din* «The money has been paid completely»³⁷.

²⁵ ŠH 2:35-38; POSTGATE 1993, 114-116.

²⁶ ŠH 3:21-22; POSTGATE 1993, 116-117.

²⁷ ŠH 4:18-19; POSTGATE 1993, 117-119.

²⁸ See also BRINKMAN 1993, 134-135.

²⁹ POSTGATE 1993, 109; HELTZER 1994, 113; KÜHNE 1995, 83; OTTO 1999, 69 n. 312; ODED 2000, 95.

³⁰ See RADNER 1997, 60-61. ŠH 1 and 3 are labelled in their Aramaic legends as ܩܪܬܐ.

³¹ See POSTGATE 1993, 109, with literature.

³² ŠH 1:29; 3:23; 4:20.

³³ See also BRINKMAN 1993, 132.

³⁴ See RADNER 1998.

³⁵ As has been recognized by, e.g., HELTZER 1994, 113; see generally RADNER 1997, 316-356.

³⁶ See POSTGATE 1976, 16-17; RADNER 1997, 349-350.

- Acquisition-formula³⁸: A.ŠĀ ta-al-pi-u-te a-na gi-mir-ti-šū za-rip laq-qi «The field is acquired by purchase»³⁹; A.ŠĀ za-rip laq-qi «The field is acquired by purchase»⁴⁰.

- Exclusion of litigation-formula⁴¹: tu-al[r] de-e-nu da-ba-bu NU-šū «There is no reversion, lawsuit or litigation»⁴².

- Penalties for litigation-formula: This «clause» regulating events that might occur in the future, often is the lengthiest and most complex «clause» in Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents.⁴³ It generally consists in two elements: (a) Contravention and (b) Penalty. Both elements are attested in the tablets under consideration. (a) *man-nu šā ina ur-kiš u ma-te-ma i-zaq-qu-pa-a-ni i-ka[l]-u-mī lu-u Pa-na-nu lu-u A.MEŠ-šū lu-u A.MEŠ A.MEŠ-šū TA P10-A-AŠ TA A.MEŠ-šū TA A.MEŠ A.MEŠ-šū de-e-nu da-ba-bu ub-ta-u-ni* «Whoever, at any time in the future, whether Hananu, or his sons, or his grandsons (and) against Adad-aplu-iddina, or his sons, or his grandsons, initiate lawsuit or litigation», (b)10 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR SUM-an «he shall pay ten minas of silver».⁴⁴

These observations lead to the conclusion that although Dur-Katlimmu was politically and military under Babylonian rule, Assyrian administrative and religious customs were still unbroken.⁴⁵

5. West Semites at Tell Šētū Hamad

In the four texts under consideration various persons, sellers, buyers as well as witnesses, appear bearing West Semitic names.⁴⁶ The names are distributed over the four documents in the following way:

Language	Number	Percentage
West Semitic	21	67.7 %
Mesopotamian	10	32.3 %
Total	31	100 %

³⁷ ŠH 2:16-17; 3:13-14; 4:13-14. The absence of this formula in ŠH 1 can be explained by referring to the specific conditions of this sale: Hananu, the seller, seems to have been forced to sell his land to pay off a fine incurred by his son, Adad-milki-ereš; see POSTGATE 1993, 113.

³⁸ See POSTGATE 1976, 17; RADNER 1997, 351-352.

³⁹ ŠH 1:17-19.

⁴⁰ ŠH 2:18-19; 3:14-15; 4:14-15.

⁴¹ See POSTGATE 1976, 17-18; RADNER 1997, 353-356; NA'AMAN & ZADOK 2000, 169.

⁴² ŠH 1:19-20; see also ŠH 2:19-21; 3:15-17.

⁴³ See POSTGATE 1976, 18-20.

⁴⁴ ŠH 1:21-27. The other texts have different wordings. ŠH 2 and 3 stipulate divine intervention.

⁴⁵ See also BRINKMAN 1993, 132; KÜHNE 1995, 83.

⁴⁶ For an outline see FALES 1993.

§H 2:

Language	Number	Percentage
West Semitic	8	47,1 %
Mesopotamian	9	52,9 %
Total	17	100 %

§H 3:

Language	Number	Percentage
West Semitic	5	36,4 %
Mesopotamian	7	53,9 %
Elamite ⁴⁷	1	7,7 %
Total	13	100 %

§H 4:

Language	Number	Percentage
West Semitic	7	50 %
Mesopotamian	7	50 %
Total	14	100 %

In sum⁴⁸:

Language	Number	Percentage
West Semitic	41	54,7 %
Mesopotamian	33	44 %
Elamite	1	1,3 %
Total	75	100 %

The number of West Semitic personal names is relatively high for Neo-Assyrian legal documents. West Semitic names do occur not infrequently in these texts. A statistical analysis has, as far as I am aware, never been made. It is my assumption, or better: informed guess, that this number does not exceed 5 % of the personal names.⁴⁹ The overrepresentation of West Semitic personal names in the four tablets from Dur-Katlimmu tallies with the fact that a great number of Aramaic ostraca from the second half of the seventh century BCE have been excavated at Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad⁵⁰ and with the preliminary observation that the Neo Assyrian texts as well as the Aramaic dockets and legends in the archive of Shulmu-Sharri contain a high amount of West Semitic personal names.⁵¹ These data can be interpreted either as a reflection

⁴⁷ I construe the name *za-an-ga-ri-du* (§H 3:8) to be Elamite; see, however, ZADOK 1995, 3.

⁴⁸ ZADOK 1995, seems to consider one individual as having an Egyptian name but he does not indicate whom.

⁴⁹ The calculations made by ZADOK 1995, 3, for «foreign» names in Neo-Babylonian archives are all < 4 %.

⁵⁰ See RÖLLIG 1997; RÖLLIG 1999.

⁵¹ Private communications by K. Radner and W. Röllig.

of the fact that an important Aramaic-speaking stratum was present in the population of the Ḥābūr-region,⁵² or as an indication that West Semitic people has been deported to this area in earlier periods of the Neo-Assyrian empire.⁵³ Fales assumes a combination of both explanations.⁵⁴

6. *Israelite Names in the Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad-Documents*

Among the West Semitic names in the inscriptions from Dur-Katlimmu, four Israelite personal names are attested:

*ha-za-qi-ia-a-ū*⁵⁵

He is the owner of a plot of land that borders the land under sale.

The name Hezekiah is attested⁵⁶ in the Hebrew Bible: *הֶזְקִיָּהּ* (Var. *הֶזְקִיָּה*) as the name of (a) King Hezekiah, son of Ahaz and Abi; (b) the father of Amariah and an ancestor of the prophet Zephaniah⁵⁷; (c) the ancestor of a clan in post-exilic Yehud⁵⁸; (d) a son of Neriah, descendant of Zerubbabel⁵⁹; (e) an Ephraimite chief, son of Shallum⁶⁰; in Iron Age Paleo-Hebrew inscriptions as (a) a son of Qoreah⁶¹; (b) owner of a potsherd⁶²; (c) three bullae mention various servants of Hezekiah⁶³; (d) on a royal seal.⁶⁴ In the Inscriptions of Sennacherib, Hezekiah, king of Judah, is mentioned.⁶⁵

*me-na-se-ē*⁶⁶

He is the father of Adad-milki-ereš, one of the witnesses.

The name Manasseh is attested⁶⁷ in the Hebrew Bible: *מְנַשֶּׁה* as the name of (a) the older son of Joseph; (b) the king of Judah; (c) and (d) inhabitants of Yehud

⁵² Thus RÖLLIG 1993b.

⁵³ As has been assumed by PAGE 1968, 147; ODED 2000, 95-96.

⁵⁴ FALES 1993, 140.

⁵⁵ §H 1:4.

⁵⁶ See also FALES 1993, 146.

⁵⁷ Zeph. 1:1; not by definition identical with (a).

⁵⁸ Ezr. 2:16; Neh. 7:21; 10:18.

⁵⁹ 1 Chr 3:23.

⁶⁰ 2 Chr 28:12.

⁶¹ Ophel ostrakon; Jer (7):5.1; see RENZ 1995, 310.

⁶² Potsherd from Tell Beit Mirsim; BMir (8):5; see RENZ 1995, 171.

⁶³ DEUTSCH 1999, 63-67; Nos. 2 [= HESTRIN & DAYAGI 1974, 4], 3 and 4.

⁶⁴ CROSS 1999; cf. AVIGAD 1986, 199; DEUTSCH 1999, 41-42.204.

⁶⁵ *ha-za-qi-a-ū*; e.g. in the Rassam-cylinder (FRAHM 1997, 54): 49 (with variants) and in the Azekah-fragment (FRAHM 1997, 230-232):4'.11'; see also SCHWERNER 2000b.

⁶⁶ §H 1:31.

⁶⁷ See also FALES 1993, 147. Although this name cannot be classified in view of the absence of a theophoric element, I nevertheless construe it as a Hebrew name, since the name is – as far as I am aware – only attested in traditions and inscriptions that refer to Israelite persons.

who had married foreign wives⁶⁸; (e) the (half) tribe of Manasseh; on Iron Age seals⁶⁹, in the Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon⁷⁰ and Ashurbanipal.⁷¹

ah-zī-īā-a-u⁷²

He is the father of Dadi-larim, one of the witnesses.

The name Ahaziah is attested⁷³ in the Hebrew Bible: *אֲחַזְיָהוּ* (Var. *אֲחַזְיָהוּ*) as the name of (a) a king of Israel⁷⁴, (b) a king of Judah⁷⁵, on Iron Age Paleo-Hebrew inscriptions: (a) seals;⁷⁶ (b) a bulla from Jerusalem⁷⁷ and (c) on a seal impression on a royal storage jar from Lakish.⁷⁸ Biran and Naveh have proposed to read the Tel Dan Inscription: 8 ... *אֲחַזְיָהוּ בֶן יְהוֹרָם*, «[Ahaziah, the son of [Jehoram]].⁷⁹ This reading, though almost generally accepted, is far from certain since it is based on the assumption that the inscribed fragments A and B1+2 from Tel Dan were to be joined to one inscription.⁸⁰ In a Neo-Assyrian contract on a sale of land from Nabula *ah-zī-īā-a-u*, the father of the witness *hal-mu-su* is mentioned.⁸¹

sa-me-e-īā-a-u⁸²

He is the father of Am-yadi', one of the witnesses.

The name Shemaiah is attested⁸³ in the Hebrew Bible: *שֵׁמַיָּהוּ* (Var. *שֵׁמַיָּהוּ*) as the name of over 20 different persons, one of them Shemaiah the Nehelamite, a false prophet in Babylon and contemporary with Jeremiah⁸⁴, on some 15 Iron Age Paleo-Hebrew seals⁸⁵ and bullae.⁸⁶ Next to that the name occurs in the delivery-list on papyrus B from Wadi Murabba'at⁸⁷ and in letters from Arad and Lakish.⁸⁸ The hypocoristic form *עַיָּהוּ* is attested on a royal seal.⁸⁹

⁶⁸ Ezra 10:30,33.

⁶⁹ (1) AVIGAD 1963, cf. DAVES 1991, 161; LEMAIRE 1998, 228 No. 114; (2) BORDREUIL & LEMAIRE 1982, 24-25 + Pl. V.5; cf. DAVES 1991, 225; (3) AVIGAD 1986, 103.

⁷⁰ *me-na-si-i* king of Judah; Nin. A-F epis. 21(BORGER 1967, 60):55.

⁷¹ *mi-in-se-e* king of Judah; Cyl. C ii:44; see ZADOK 1988, 125, 302.

⁷² *SH* 1:32.

⁷³ See also FALES 1993, 142.

⁷⁴ 1 Kgs 22:40, 50, 52; 2 Kgs 1:2, 18; 2 Chr 30:35, 37.

⁷⁵ 2 Kgs 8-10//2 Chr 22.

⁷⁶ (1) AVIGAD 1962, No. 19; see DAVES 1991, 164; (2) McCOWN 1947, 163 No. 3; see DAVES 1991, 228.

⁷⁷ SHOHAM 1994, No. 1.

⁷⁸ USSISHKIN 1996, 58, No. 266/1; BARKAY & VAUGHN 1996, 67.

⁷⁹ BIRAN & NAVEH 1995.

⁸⁰ See BECKING 1996.

⁸¹ Gfr. 84/84 (DONBAZ 1988, 8) Rev. 22; see SELZ 1998.

⁸² *SH* 1:33.

⁸³ See also FALES 1993, 148; ZADOK 1995, 3.

⁸⁴ Jer 29:24-31; see, e.g., DIJKSTRA 1983.

⁸⁵ DAVES 1991, 501-02.

⁸⁶ DEUTSCH 1999, No. 42; 90; DEUTSCH & HELTZER 1997, No. 90.

⁸⁷ Murr(7):2,4; cf. RENZ 1995, 285-87.

⁸⁸ Arad(7):31,5; 39,2, 7-8; Arad(6):27,2; Lak(6):1,4,6; 19,4; see RENZ 1995, s.v.

⁸⁹ DEUTSCH 1999, 61-63, 204-205.

In a neo-Babylonian contract dated in 498 BCE, *šā-ma-ah-īā-ma* is the father of the witness Abdu-Yahu.⁹⁰

To the observations, a few remarks will be made. Helzter construes the name *ah-īā-⁹¹* to be a hypocoristic of *Ahi-yahū*.⁹² This interpretation, however, is not convincing in view of the *aleph* in the name. With Fales, I construe the name to be West Semitic.⁹³ Moreover, Helzter states that the names *ha-na-na⁹⁴* and *hal-li-s⁹⁵* can be understood as hypocoristic Hebrew or Aramaic names and that it would be a safe guess to assume that at least one of these names was of Hebrew origin.⁹⁶ These names, however, are of a too common West Semitic character to assume a Hebrew background.⁹⁷

It is remarkable that three of the four names coincide with names of Israelite or Judean kings. This might be pure coincidence, but on the other hand one is tempted to assume that Israelites in Mesopotamia were expressing their ethnic identity by naming their offspring after Israelite kings.

Within the text *SH* 1, and in the reality around the text, the four Israelites play different roles. *ha-za-qi-īā-a-u* is expressis verbis mentioned as a landowner. The other three are fathers of witnesses. Postgate has observed that «in a land sale we often meet the owners of adjacent property among the witnesses».⁹⁸ Although the text *SH* 1 does not hint at the local function or social position of the sons of the three Israelite under consideration, it can be assumed that they took part in the public life at Dur-Katlimmu.

One final remark on the three persons just mentioned should be made. The sons of *me-na-se-e*, *ah-zī-īā-a-u* and *sa-me-e-īā-a-u* do not bear Israelite or Hebrew names. *Adad-milki-eres⁹⁹* is an Assyrian name. *Dadi-larim* and *Am-Yadi'* are to be construed as Aramaic personal names.⁹⁹ This fact reflects the tendency among Israelites in Mesopotamia to give – as time goes by – their offspring non-Yahwistic and even non-Israelite names. This process can be seen as an indication for assimilation to the local culture and to the gradual loss of ethnic identity.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁰ JOANNÈS & LEMAIRE 1999, T. 1:21.

⁹¹ *SH* 1:35.

⁹² HELTZER 1994, 115; see also COLE 1998.

⁹³ FALES 1993, 141-142.

⁹⁴ *SH* 1:1.

⁹⁵ *SH* 1:34.

⁹⁶ HELTZER 1994, 115; ODED 2000, 96, is of the same opinion as regards *hal-li-si*.

⁹⁷ See also FALES 1993, 145; SCHWEMMER 2000a; STRECK 2000.

⁹⁸ POSTGATE 1976, 9.

⁹⁹ See FALES 1993, 143, 144.

¹⁰⁰ See also BECKING 1992, 92-93; HELTZER 1994, 115-116.

7. Remarks on the Theophoric Element *-iá-a-u*

In Neo-Assyrian texts the Israelite theophoric element is written variantly, either as *ia-ú*; *ia^o*; *-ia-a-ú*; *ia-u*; *i-a-a-a*.¹⁰¹ In Neo-Babylonian inscriptions the theophoric element, when in the second place in a personal name, is written as *ia-ma*; *ia-a-ma* or *ia-á-ma*.¹⁰² There are some exceptions to this rule. In a neo-Babylonian contract on the sale of a bovine from *ál-Yāhūdu* («the city of Judah») in Mesopotamia occurs one *ab-du-á-ia/ia-a-hu-ú* both as a witness and as the father of Yahu-Azari, who stands as the guarantor to the transaction.¹⁰³ In another recently published neo-Babylonian contract, dated 532 BCE, on the receipt of 5 sheqel of silver *ab-da-ia-hu-ú* is the person who receives this amount.¹⁰⁴ The Israelite personal names in ŠH I are written with the theophoric element *-iá-a-u*. This observation underscores the fact that we are still in the Neo-Assyrian cultural environment.

Weippert has argued that in analysing the Hebrew material a geographical distinction should be made. Names with *yw* as theophoric element are especially found in North Israelite contexts, whereas names with *yh* seem to have a Judean context.¹⁰⁵ This assumption is generally in accordance with the pre-exilic Hebrew onomasticon.¹⁰⁶

In view of these two remarks, I would like to propose that the theophoric element *-iá-a-u* should be construed as a diphthong: **yáw*. This brings me to the assumption that this theophoric element reflects the Northern Israelite tradition for the rendition of the divine name.

8. Evidence for the Israelite Exile?

According to Vanderhooft, the four individuals discussed above «may have been descendants of deportees from the Northern Kingdom of Israel».¹⁰⁷ This statement cannot be proved, but it cannot be falsified either.¹⁰⁸ A few remarks will be made, however.

The possibility that the four persons have been Judeans should be ruled out.¹⁰⁹ The remarks on the theophoric element *-iá-a-u* hint at an Israelite background. A deportation of Judeans by Sennacherib in the aftermath of his campaign in 701 BCE as suggested by Stohlmann¹¹⁰ is, from an historical point of view, very un-

¹⁰¹ See, e.g., ZADOK 1988; WEIPPERT 1976-80, 248.

¹⁰² See most recently TROPFER 2001 (with lit.).

¹⁰³ JOANNÈS & LEMAIRE 1999, T. 1:12.21.

¹⁰⁴ JOANNÈS & LEMAIRE 1999, T. 2:1.

¹⁰⁵ WEIPPERT 1976-80, 247-248; see also NORIN 1979; VAN DER TOORN 1998, 910.

¹⁰⁶ See ZADOK 1988; DAVIES 1991; RENZ 1995.

¹⁰⁷ VANDERHOOF 1999, 119; later he softened his view: VANDERHOOF *f.c.*

¹⁰⁸ See also ZADOK 1995, 3-4.

¹⁰⁹ See also HELTZER 1994, 115.

¹¹⁰ STOHLMANN 1983.

likely.¹¹¹ The tablets discussed are too early to assume that the Babylonians had already deported Judeans to Mesopotamia since it was not before the battle at Kar-kemish in 605 BCE that Judah came under the Babylonian sphere of influence. The first deportation of Judeans took place in 598 BCE when Nebuchadnezzar II captured Jerusalem during the short reign of Jehojachin.¹¹² Besides, there is no direct evidence for the presence of Judeans in Mesopotamia before 598 BCE.¹¹³

The four persons discussed above should be construed as offspring of Israelites. They might have been descendants of those who had been deported to the Habur area in the end of the eighth century BCE. It should be noted that the Assyrians deported people to this area in order to secure the production of food for the Assyrian mainland. During the reign of Sargon II, an administrative letter was sent from the Habur area to a high officer at the court that refers to problems with the deliverance of the «corn tax of the Samaritans».¹¹⁴ The fact that the persons with Hebrew names in ŠH I are related to agriculture, might indicate a continuity. On the other hand they could have been descendants of persons who migrated voluntarily to Mesopotamia for trade interests. One would expect, however, that such migrants would have settled in the Assyrian heartland and not so much in the periphery. These observations lead me to the assumption that the four most probably were descendants of those brought to «Habur, the river of Gozan».

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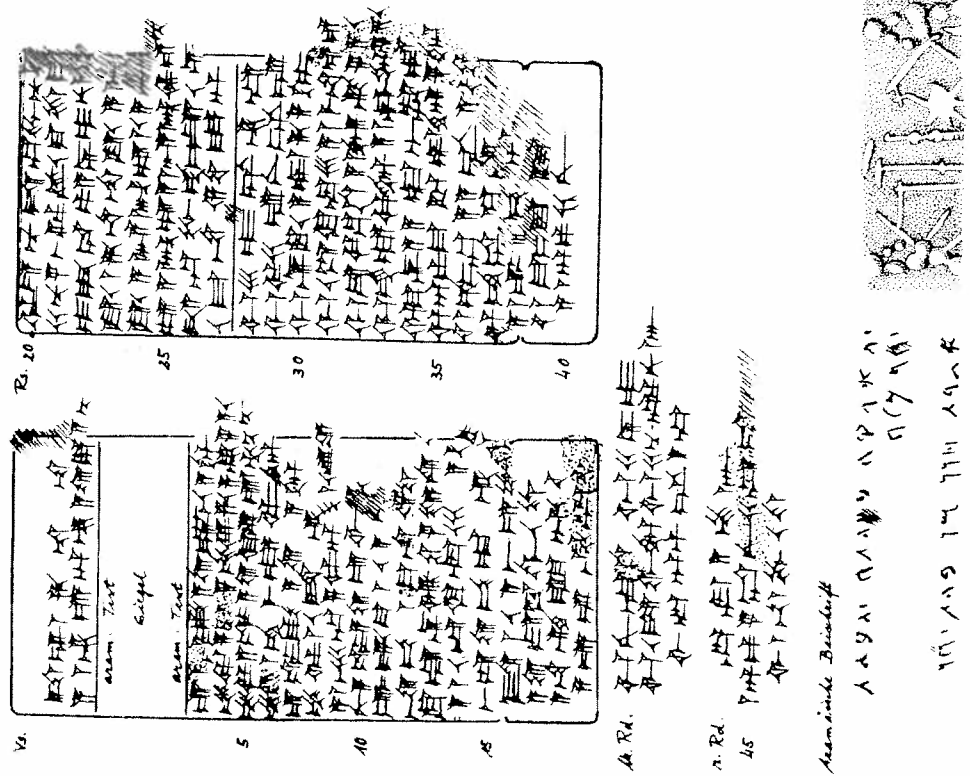
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¹¹¹ See GALLAGHER 1999; VANDERHOOF 1999, 119; *pace* HELTZER 1994, 116.
¹¹² 2 Kgs 24:10-15; Bab Chron 5:Rev. 11-12; GRAYSON 1975, 99-102; see, e.g., BECKING 1998, 43.
¹¹³ ZADOK 1995, 3.
¹¹⁴ SAA I, 220; see BECKING 1992, 107-108; ODED 2000, 95.

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Copy of Tablet SH 1 by W. Röllig (after SAAB 7, 1993, 121), and reconstructed seal impression (ibid., 107 fig. 35b) showing two worshippers attending to cult symbols (note that the legend ibid. erroneously attributes the sealing to SH 2, but the photograph p. 96 fig. 12 establishes the truth of the matter). [cu]