Kein Land für sich allein

Studien zum Kulturkontakt in Kanaan, Israel/Palästina und Ebirnâri für Manfred Weippert zum 65. Geburtstag

hervorgegeben von
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Introduction

Evidence for the Israelite Exile?

West Semites at Tell Sabi Haminadab.
2. The «Red House» at Dūr Katlimmu

Before turning to the contents of the inscriptions excavated at Tell Šēh Hamad, the archaeo-
logical 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 Unterstadl II» in Tell Šēh Hamad, ancient Dūr Katlimmu.7 The site is located at the banks of the Nahr al-Hābūr, 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centre.10 According to the cuneiform document DeZ 6222 = SH 87/6153 IV 152, excavated at Tell Šēh Hamad, but as yet unpublished, the city not only housed a LUR.ÉN.NAM, «governor», but also a šaku, «prefect», and a guggallu, «canal-inspector».11 Recent excavations have unearthed the archive of an Assyrian officer, Shilimu-Sharru that contained some 550 inscriptions including Aramaic legends and dockets.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 Šēh Hamad would reveal new evidence.

3. Historical Context

The shift from the Assyrian to the Babylonian rule is relatively well documented for the Hābūr-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

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 Suhu 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 Kyaxares, 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 Šēh Hamad were written in Year 2 and Year 5 of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II.

Tablet 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>44 ITLIAP</th>
<th>2 MUL.MEŠ</th>
<th>45 P₂P₂A-NIG.DU-PAB MAN URU.KA₄, ŠINGIR.KI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Month of Arasamme, second year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Bab[ylon].24a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6 Two of them also have brief Aramaic epigraphs; see RÖLLIG 1993a.
7 KÜHNE 1993.
9 See KÜHNE 1993.
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.
14 See the outline in RÖLLIG 1993b.
15 GRAYSON 1975, 90-96.
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.
24 Bab Chron 3:49.
of the fact that an important Aramaic-speaking stratum was present in the population of the Ḫabur-region, or as an indication that West Semitic people have been deported to this area in earlier periods of the Neo-Assyrian empire. Fales assumes a combination of both explanations.

6. Israeliite Names in the Tell Šēḥ Hamad/Documents

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

ha-za-qī-i-a-u-ā

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

The name Hezekiah is attested in the Hebrew Bible: הֵזְכִיָּה (Var. הֵזְכִיָּה) as the name of (a) King Hezekiah, son of Ahaz and Abi; (b) the father of Amariah and an ancestor of the prophet Zephaniah; (c) the ancestor of a clan in post-exilic Yehud; (d) a son of Neriah, descendant of Zerubbabel; (e) an Ephraimitic chief, son of Shallum, in Iron Age Paleo-Hebrew inscriptions as (a) a son of Qoreah; (b) owner of a potsherds; (c) three bullae mention various servants of Hezekiah; (d) on a royal seal. In the Inscriptions of Sennacherib, Hezekiah, king of Judah, is mentioned.

me-na-se-ē

He is the father of Adad-milkī-erēš, one of the witnesses.

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

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47 I construe the name za-an-ga-ri-duit (SH 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 %.


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

52 THUS ROLLIG 1993b.

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

54 FALES 1993, 140.

55 SH 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 ostracon; Jer (7):5,1; see RENZ 1995, 310.

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


65 ha-za-qī-i-a-u-ā; e.g. in the Rassam-cylinder (FRANH 1997, 54): 49 (with variants) and in the Azekah-fragment (FRANH 1997, 230-232):4'11'; see also SCHWERNER 2000b.

66 SH 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 Israeliite persons.
en
In Neo-Assyrian texts the Israelite theophoric element is written variously, either as "ia-û; ia-û;, ia-ûa; ia-ûa; ia-û, ia-ûa. In Neo-Babylonian inscriptions the theophoric element, when in the second place in a personal name, is written as "ia-ma, ia-ma or ia-ma-. There are some exceptions to this rule. In a neo-Babylonian contract on the sale of a vineyard from dîl-Yâhûdû (the city of Judah) in Mesopotamia occurs one ab-du-ûa-dûa-a-hu-û both as a witness and as the father of Yahuc-Azar, who stands as the guarantor to the transaction. In another recently published neo-Babylonian contract, dated 532 BCE, on the receipt of 5 shekels of silver ab-da-ia-hu-û is the person who receives this amount. The Israelite personal names in 5H 1 are written with the theophoric element -ia-û-a. 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. This assumption is generally in accordance with the pre-exilic Hebrew onomasticon.

In view of these two remarks, I would like to propose that the theophoric element -ia-û-a should be construed as a diphthong: *ya-w. 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 Vanderhoof, the four individuals discussed above «may have been descendants of deportees from the Northern Kingdom of Israel». This statement cannot be proved, but it cannot be falsified either. A few remarks will be made, however.

The possibility that the four persons have been Judeans should be ruled out. The remarks on the theophoric element -ia-û-a hint at an Israelite background. A deportation of Judeans by Sennacherib in the aftermath of his campaign in 701 BCE as suggested by Stohlmann is, from an historical point of view, very unlikely. 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 Karkein 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 Jehoiachin. Besides, there is no direct evidence for the presence of Judeans in Mesopotamia before 598 BCE.

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 Samarians». The fact that the persons with Hebrew names in 5H 1 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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102 See most recently TROPPER 2001 (with lit).
105 WEIPPERT 1976-80, 247-248; see also NORIN 1979, VAN DER TOORN 1998, 910.
107 VANDERHOOF 1999, 119; later he softened his view: VANDERHOOF f.c.
108 See also ZADOK 1995, 3-4.
109 See also ZADOK 1994, 115.
110 STOHLMANN 1983.

112 2 Kgs 24:10-15; Bab Chon 5:Rev. 11-12; GRAYSON 1975, 99-102; see, e.g., BECKING 1998, 43.
113 ZADOK 1995, 3.
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Copy of Tablet SH 1 by W. Röllig (after SAAB 7, 1993, 121), and reconstructed
gel 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).