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Outraging the Resident-Alien

King David, Uriah the Hittite, and an El-Amarna Parallel

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This article compares the treatment that king David inflicted on Uriah the Hittite in 2 Sam 11, who was a *gēr tôšāb* “resident alien” according to the rabbis, and the outrage that a high official of a pharaoh committed to an *ubāru* “resident-alien” in El-Amarna times. The Amarna letters span, in absolute dates, from around 1385/1375 to 1355 B. C. E., from about the last decade of the reign of Amenophis III, the 17-year reign of Amenophis IV, to the three or four years before Tutankhamen abandoned the city. The letter EA 162 was sent by the pharaoh Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) to Aziru, a kinglet of the city of Amurru.¹ In his letter, the pharaoh requests that one of his high commissioners, occupying a post in the land of Canaan, be extradited. The crime the Egyptian administrator had committed is serious enough for the pharaoh to ask his vassal Aziru to imprison the culprit and send him back to Egypt together with his family, probably for trial. The consequences of the commissioner’s misdeed affect his entire family, his sons, and his wives. A similar idea of collective responsibility is found in the Hittite Laws (§ 173), in which it is stated that the punishment for disobeying the order of the king would involve the offender’s “house,” “his house will become a heap of ruins,” i. e., his whole household and extended family would be executed.² The reference is unique, however. Elsewhere, throughout the code, individual responsibility is the rule.

The pharaoh Akhenaten enumerates a group of men who seem to have committed grave offenses; they are to be imprisoned and escorted back to Egypt by a special royal envoy named Ḫanni. He appeals to the loyalty of Aziru, his vassal. Some time later, Aziru will change allegiance and become a vassal of the Hittites. A treaty concluded by Šuppiliuma I (1370–1345 B. C. E.)³ with Aziru

¹ Some less frequent abbreviations used in this article: *CCT* = *Cuneiform Texts from Cappadocian Tablets in the British Museum* I–V, London, 1921f.; *KUB* = *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*; *PRU* = *Palais royal d’Ugarit*; *ARMT* = *Archives Royales de Mari, Textes*; *LAPO* = *Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient*.

² H. A. Hoffner, Jr., *The Laws of the Hittites, A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 218: “Very likely it means that he and his whole family must be killed, so that there will be no continuance of this line.”

³ The exact date is still a subject of debate, H. Klengel, *Die Geschichte des hethitischen Reiches*, unter Mitw. von F. Imparati, V. Haas, T. P. J. van den Hout, HdO 1/34 (Leiden:

of Amurru, shows that the latter actually switched allegiance from Egypt to Hatti despite the letters he wrote to the pharaoh. EA 162 thus comes from the period of the political tensions between the Egyptians and the Hittites, who were competing for hegemony over the land of Canaan and Syria. Characteristic of the rising Hittite prestige in the region is the Egyptian queen's request, Tutankhamen's widow who wrote to Šuppiluliuma I, asking for a Hittite prince whom she could marry and make king of Egypt. The plan failed because the Hittite prince Zannanza (KUB 19.4) was killed on his arrival to Egypt, and his father had to send an army to avenge him. It remains a moot question, who killed Zannanza. Some scholars think that it was Ay, the future pharaoh.⁴ Another suggests that Zannanza, the bridegroom to be, was not assassinated since there is no clear textual evidence to confirm this. Rather, he might have died of a plague that ravaged Egypt. The plague reached the land of the Hittites through infected Egyptian prisoners of war whom the Hittites had captured and brought to Anatolia following their punitive expedition to Egyptian territory.⁵ Nevertheless, Šuppiluliuma I holds the Egyptians as being responsible for the death of his son. Two of the Amarna letters were written in Hittite (EA 31 and 32), and one in Hurrian (EA 24). EA 17 contains a passing reference to a victory of Tušratta of Mitanni over the Hittites and his efforts to reestablish diplomatic relations with Amenophis III, and to maintain them with his successor (EA 26).

Recent archaeological excavations have revealed new sites that yield Hittite archives tying Anatolia to Egypt, Syria, Cyprus, and Mesopotamia during the Late Bronze Age (1600–1200 B. C. E.).⁶ Šuppiluliuma's successors were, on the whole, able to maintain the empire. Muwatalli II fought the battle of Qadeš (1300 B. C. E.) against Ramses II of Egypt. Claimed as a victory by both sides, the battle left the status of Hittite and Egyptian possession in Syria unchanged. Against the danger stemming from Assyria's rise to power, Ḫattušili III concluded a peace treaty with Ramses (1284 B. C. E.) and later (1271) gave him his daughter to wife.⁷ Tudḫaliya IV (*circa* 1250 B. C. E.) still held Syria, including

Brill, 1999), p. 135 (with bibliography).

⁴ So O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, 1969), p. 31: "We are told that the Hittite prince was put to death on his arrival in Egypt, presumably by agents of the priest and courtier Ai, who became the next king of Egypt and appears to have married Ankhnesnamun, thus legitimating his usurpation of the throne." So also T. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. 195–199.

⁵ H. Klengel, *Die Geschichte des hethitischen Reiches*, 1999, p. 163, on Zannanza. Cf. pp. 139–140 for a list of EA letters that mention Hittite kings (EA 17; 35; 44; 45; 51; 52; 53; 55; 56; 59; 75; 116; 126; 129; 140; 151; 157; 161; 164–167; 170; 174; 175; 196; 197).

⁶ T. Özgüç, *Excavations at Maşat Höyük and Investigations in its Vicinity* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimeri, 1978) (about 200 tablets in cuneiform Hittite, most of them letters from the Hittite king to his officials).

⁷ E. Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache I–II* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994); *idem*, *Der Vertrag*

Amurru. Most of his military activity was in the west. The Hittite empire found its demise either on account of internal strives for dynastic succession or was destroyed by marauding invaders, known as the Sea Peoples, around 1200 B. C. E. Both factors might have played a role in the destruction of the Anatolian Hittites. The only information comes from the Egyptian records of Ramses III, which mention, in his eighth year (*circa* 1190), the onslaught of the Sea Peoples who are said to have overrun all the countries “from Ḫatti onwards.” After the fall of Hattuša, the imperial Hittite culture survived in southern Anatolia and northern Syria. Karkemiš, an ancient Northern Syrian trading city controlling one of the main crossing points of the Euphrates, was ruled by the Hittites in the second millennium B. C. E. It survived the destruction of the Hittite empire, and remained an important center, with, however, only some remains of Hittite culture, until the Assyrian conquest in 716 B. C. E. The so-called Neo-Hittites of the 1st millennium B. C. E. should not be seen as a continuation of the 2nd millennium Anatolian Hittites. They are two radically different entities.

“Now the king, your lord, has heard that you wrote to the king, saying, ‘May the king, my lord, send Ḫanni, the messenger of the king, once more, so I can have the enemies of the king (^{lú} *ayyabē ša šarri*) delivered into his charge.’ He herewith goes off to you, in accordance with what you said. So have them delivered, omitting no one. The king, your lord, hereby sends you the names of the king’s ene⟨mi⟩es (^{lú} *ayyabē ša šarri*) on [this] tablet given to Ḫanni, the messenger of the king. Have the[m] delivered to the king, your lord, omitting no one. Copper fetters are to be put on their ankles.”⁸

(EA 162:55–67)

These lines show that the pharaoh had already sent a messenger named Ḫanni to his vassal Aziru. The culprits who have to be arrested and imprisoned are called “enemies of the king” (^{lú} *ayyabē ša šarri*) on two occasions (162:58,62). They have to be handed over to the justice of the pharaoh and must not be left unpunished (ll. 64–65). The following lines enumerate the men that Aziru has to arrest:

⁶⁷ *a-mur lú.meš ša tu-še-ib-bi-il lugal en-li-ka* ^{68m} *ša-ar-ru qa-du gab-bi*
dumu.meš-šu ^{69m} *tu-u-ia* ^{70m} *li-e-ia qa-du gab-bi dumu.meš-šu* ^{71m} *pi-iš-*
ia-ri qa-du gab-bi dumu.meš-šu ^{72lú} *ḫa-at-nu ša* ^m *ma-an-ia qa-du*
dumu.meš-šu ⁷³ *qa-du dam.meš-ti-šu aš-ša-te-e-šu* ^{74lú} *pa-ma-ḫa-a ša*
ḫa-an-ni-pa i-de₄-e-i-ú ⁷⁵ *ša-šu <ša> u-bá-a-ra il-ta-na-as* ^{76m} *da-a-šar-ti-i*
^m *pa-a-lu-ú-ma* ^{77m} *ni-im-ma-ḫe-e* ^{lú} *ḫa-bá-tù i-na* ^{kur} *a-mur-ri šu-ú*

zwischen Ramses II. von Ägypten und Hattušiliš III. Von Hatti (WVDOG 95, Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1997). S. Langdon / A. H. Gardiner, “The Treaty of Alliance between Hattusili, King of the Hittites, and the Pharaoh Ramesses of Egypt,” *JEA* 6 (1920), pp. 179–205.

⁸ W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 249.

⁶⁷“Here are the men whom you are to have delivered to the king, your lord: ⁶⁸Šarru along with all his sons; ⁶⁹Tuya; ⁷⁰Leya along with all his sons; ⁷¹Pišyari along with all his sons; ⁷²the son-in-law of Manya, along with all his sons, ⁷³along with his wives; ⁷⁴the *commissioner, who is expert in sacrilege*, ⁷⁵that fellow *⟨who⟩ has mocked a resident-alien*; ⁷⁶Da-ašarti; Baaluma; ⁷⁷Nimmaḫe—he is a brigand in Amurru.”⁹
(EA 162:67–77)¹⁰

Most of the names mentioned in this text have been identified as being Egyptian.¹¹

Lines 72–75 are the most pertinent ones for our comparison. W. Moran suggested that the phrase in ll. 74–75, “the commissioner, who is expert in sacrilege, that fellow who has mocked the resident-alien,” could be taken as an additional identification of “the son-in-law of Manya.” The name Manya is attested as an Egyptian name of a person found in the Hittite capital.¹²

One has to analyze each term in these two lines in order to understand what exactly the high official was accused of.

⁷⁴*pa-ma-ḫa-a ša ḫa-an-ni-pa i-de₄-e-i-ú* ⁷⁵*ša-šu ⟨ša⟩ u-bá-a-ra il-ta-na-aš*
⁷⁴“the *commissioner, who is expert in sacrilege*, ⁷⁵that fellow *⟨who⟩ has mocked a resident-alien*.”

There are two suggestions concerning the meaning of the term ^{lú}*pamaḫu*. According to W. F. Albright, the term is of Egyptian origin (*p³-mḫ-³b*), and should be rendered with “commissioner,” literally “plenipotentiary,”¹³ a translation adopted by Moran. The term would represent an Egyptian equivalent of Akkadian *rābiṣu* designating an official representative or a prefect appointed by a high authority.¹⁴ In this context the pharaoh would have appointed this high commissioner.

According to another explanation, the term ^{lú}*pamaḫu*, stands for a special category of Egyptian soldiers. J. Zorn explained the term in the following manner: ^{lú} represents the Akkadian determinative indicating that the title refers to a

⁹ W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 1992, p. 250.

¹⁰ J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915), I, p. 658, II, pp. 1266–1269 (with commentary).

¹¹ J. Zorn, “^{lú}*pa-ma-ḫa-a* in EA 162: 74 and the Role of *mhr* in Egypt and Ugarit,” *JNES* 50 (1991) 129–138, esp. p. 130, n. 3 (with bibliography).

¹² A. Goetze, “A New Letter from Ramesses to Hattušiliš,” *JCS* 1 (1947) 241–251, esp. p. 249, KUB 3.22: 13: ^m*Ma-a-ni-[ya]*.

¹³ W. F. Albright, “Cuneiform Material for Egyptian Prosopography 1500–1200 B. C.,” *JNES* 5 (1946) 7–25, esp. p. 8, and 18 (no *42).

¹⁴ *CAD* R, pp. 20–23, gives two meanings of Akkadian *rābiṣu*: 1) an official representative of and commissioned by a high authority, attorney; 2) a demon and protective genius. Cf. M. Larsen, *Old Assyrian City-State and Its Colonies* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1976), p. 185.

human category; *pa* stands for the Egyptian definite article, and *ma-ḥa-a* a noun that represents an Egyptian deformation of an originally Semitic term reflected in the Hebrew root \sqrt{mhr} “fast, rapid.” Explained in this way, the term would represent a special category of rapid soldiers.¹⁵ J. Zorn’s explanation rests on a complex development involving three languages, Canaanite, Egyptian and Akkadian, since it presupposes a term of West-Semitic origin *mhr* “rapid soldier” that entered the Egyptian administration vocabulary and reappeared in El-Amarna Akkadian in an altered form. For want of a better explanation, the one offered by Albright might still be the most acceptable.

The crime committed by this Egyptian administrator needs to be specified. According to Moran, “the charge seems to refer to a serious breach of international law involving a foreign dignitary.”¹⁶

The term *ḥa-an-ni-pa* comes from the root *ḥanāpu*. The word is extremely rare in Akkadian but quite frequent in other Semitic languages like Ugaritic, Arabic and Hebrew. Since the term occurs only twice and uniquely in El-Amarna, and never in Mesopotamian Akkadian texts, the two standard dictionaries *AHw* and *CAD*, consider it to be of Canaanite origin.¹⁷

The word occurs in a Ugaritic epic text where goddess Anat obtains the permission from El to launch an independent action. Realizing that nothing can keep Anat from her course of action, El notes the intensity of her emotional charge, her anger and malicious zeal (KTU 1.18, I 16–17):

¹⁶*yḏʿtk . bt.k ʾnšt . wi[n . b ilht]* ¹⁷*qlšk . tb° . bt . ḥnp . lb[k . ʾšl.ʾ]*¹⁸

“¹⁶I know (my) daughter, (I know) that you are a manly sort, and that [among goddesses] ¹⁷there is none so emotional as you. (So) let anger (against me) depart (from) [your] heart, (my) daughter.”¹⁹

¹⁵ J. Zorn, *JNES* 50 (1991), p. 133.

¹⁶ W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, 1992, p. 251, n. 13.

¹⁷ *AHw*, p. 320a: “kanaanäisches Fremdwort,” EA 288:8: “die Gemeinheit, die er beging.” *CAD* H, p. 80, *ḥannipu* “vileness,” EA West Semitic loanword EA 162:74 *ša ḥa-an-ni-pa ūteyu* “who knows vileness (only too well).”

¹⁸ D. Pardee, “The ‘Aqhatu Legend” CTA 18, in W. W. Hallo (ed.), *The Context of Scripture* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), I, p. 348. A. Caquot *et alii*, *Textes ougaritiques I: Mythes et legends* (LAPO 7, Paris: Cerf, 1974), p. 435, III D i,17: “El, le miséricordieux au grand co[eur], répond: ‘Je sais, ma fille, combien tu es irascible, que nu[ll]e déesse] n’est aussi émotive que toi. Pars, ma fille [tu] es en colère [...] *Ḥnp lb[k ?]*”; cf.: “I know (my) daughter, that thou are gentle and (that) there is no baseness [in thee], but depart, daughter, take the teeming thoughts of thy heart,” G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), p. 57 (l. 15).

¹⁹ In the Sumerian composition called *The Exaltation of Inanna* one finds a similar statements concerning Inanna’s unpredictable temper: *šà-ib-ba-za a-ba i-te-en-te-en šà-ḥul-gál-la-za te-en-te-bi maḥ-a* “Who can temper your raging heart? Your malevolent heart is beyond tempering,” cf. W. W. Hallo / J. J. A. Van Dijk, *The Exaltation of Inanna* (YNER 3, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 19, ll. 38–

Concerning *hnp* . *lb*[k.], B. Margalit²⁰ points out that the Ugaritic expression corresponds to the Hebrew one in Job 36:13 *whnpy lb yšymw ʾp* “But those of polluted heart become enraged” (cf. Margalit’s literal translation: “The polluted-of heart [i. e. “unbelievers, cynics”] hold, lit. “place” their noses [in disdain]”).

H. Zimmern was the first to have related Akkadian *hanāpu* with Hebrew *hanep*²¹. The Akkadian term *hanāpu* appears once more in EA 288:40 in a letter from the mayor of Jerusalem, ʿAbdi-Ḥeba, where he says that in the land that he administers on behalf of the pharaoh, there is no mayor who remained in the service of the Egyptian overlord. The Apiru killed some of them (EA 288:40). He goes on to enumerate all the mayors that have been assassinated and complains of being besieged on all sides. He describes the outrage done to him through accusations and calumnies by other mayors of the region. He defends his loyalty to the pharaoh like a soldier who remains faithful to the post to which he has been assigned by the pharaoh. He remains steadfast even if he feels abandoned. Being attacked, slandered and left without protection is described as “outrage, sacrilege,” or “act of impiety.” EA 288:8 uses the noun and the verb of the same root, *ḥa-an-pa ša iḥ-nu-pu* “It is impious, therefore, what they have done (to me).”²²

If the Akkadian term *hanāpu* represents a loanword from Canaanite as it is generally admitted, it would square well with the fact that it was used by the administrator of Jerusalem in a letter written in that city and sent to the pharaoh. We are probably dealing with a “proto-Hebrew” term and it is therefore legitimate to agree with Zimmern in turning to biblical Hebrew in order to elucidate its meaning (see below).

To be falsely accused, left without protection by his superiors, deserted by his colleagues, is characterized by ʿAbdi-Ḥeba by the term *hanāpu*. This situation is comparable to the one in which Uriah the Hittite will find himself some centuries later. Following the specific order of David, the new owner of the Jebusite citadel of Jerusalem, Uriah will be abandoned on the battlefield, deserted by his immediate superior, the field-commander Joab and by his comrades, officers and soldiers.

39, and commentary on p. 52: te-en-te-en; te-en *balū*, *bullū*; CAD s. v. “assuage, extinguish.”

²⁰ B. Margalit, “Lexicographical Notes on the Aqht Epic (Part I: KTU 1.17–18),” *UF* 15 (1983) 65–103, esp. pp. 94–95. Most dictionaries give two etymologically undifferentiated meanings for Heb. *hnp*: 1.) “pollution”; 2.) “profane, godless, impious,” which Margalit explains as a blending of two different PS roots: 1.) **hnp* “to pollute, render vile” (= Ug. *hnp*; Canaanite, EA 288:8, *hanāpu*); 2.) *hnp* “twist, turn in a wrong direction” (=Ar. *ḥanifa*). G. Del Olmo Lette / J. Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. I, p. 399: *hnp* “impiety, sin.”

²¹ H. Zimmern, “Die Keilschriftbriefe aus Jerusalem,” *ZA* 6 (1891) 245–263, esp. p. 256, n. 5.

²² *CAD* H, p. 76 *hanāpu* A, EA 288:8: *ḥanpa ša iḥnupū ana muḥḥiya* “the villainy they committed against me.”

The term *i-de₄-e-i-ú* = *ideyu* comes from the root *yd'* "to know." The final *-u* represents the subordinative/subjunctive.²³ It indicates a relative subordinate clause referring to the high official ¹⁰*pamaḥu* "who knows sacrilege." The spelling of this verb being unusual for Akkadian, it is interpreted as being due to a possible Assyrian influence.²⁴ *šášu* is a personal pronoun in the accusative, meaning "who." In the proposition *u-bá-a-ra il-ta-na-aš* "(who) mocks the resident-alien," the root of the verb *iltannaš* is *šanāšu*. In MB times, *š* changes frequently to *l*. According to *CAD*, *šanāšu* means "to sneer, to scoff, to mock."²⁵ The term occurs in a Babylonian proverb where it is said, "(Do not marry a prostitute) *ina šal-ti-ka-ma elika šá-an-ša-at* she will sneer at you when you are involved in a dispute."²⁶

In this El-Amarna letter, the term is analyzed as a form of the Gtn conjugation,²⁷ which serves to designate an iterative or repetitive action. This means either that the high commissioner committed the outrage several times or that he habitually showed a scornful or contemptuous attitude toward resident-alien.

Finally, we arrive at the key term in this accusation against the Egyptian high commissioner. He scorns the *ubārum* or the "resident-alien." According to W. von Soden, the term is of Sumerian origin: U.BAR²⁸. For the first Sumerian element U, one obtains the following Akkadian equivalents: *ešer* "ten," but also 60×10 , $60^2 \times 10$, $10/60$, $10/3600$ etc. The second element BAR corresponds to *aḥû* "foreign, enemy, non-canonical," or *kamû* "outside, exterior."²⁹ Together, the term could designate a group or a fixed number of foreigners. One should not exclude, however, the possibility of the word being originally Semitic and that U.BAR might be a false Sumerogram, built on an originally Akkadian *ubārum*. In texts quoted below where the Sumerian is used as an equivalent for *ubārum* there occur other Sumerograms than U.BAR. For example, one MA text uses the Sumerogram SUḪUŠ.15 = *Ubru-Ištar*. The reason why SUḪUŠ was used remains unexplained.³⁰ In one proverb (see below) *ubārum* is seen as an Akkadian

²³ D. Bodi, *Petite grammaire de l'akkadien à l'usage des débutants* (Paris: Geuthner, 2001) § 51, p. 114.

²⁴ Z. Cochavi-Rainey, "Tenses and Modes in Cuneiform Texts Written by Egyptian Scribes in the Late Bronze Age", *UF* 22 (1990) 5–23, esp. p. 21. G. Wilhelm, *Untersuchungen zum Hurro-Akkadischen von Nuzi* (AOAT 9, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 1970), p. 45.

²⁵ *CAD* Š/1 (1989), p. 370: "to sneer, to scoff, to turn up one's nose."

²⁶ W. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), p. 102, l. 76.

²⁷ J. Black / A. George / N. Postgate (eds.), *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), p. 355a.

²⁸ *AHw* p. 1399c: *ubārum* from *U-BAR *wabrum*, *ubru* "Ortsfremder, Beisasse, Schutzbürger."

²⁹ R. Labat, *Manuel d'épigraphie akkadienne* (Paris: Geuthner, 1976), n° 411: U = *ešer* "10"; and n° 74: BAR = *aḥû* "étranger, ennemi, non-canonique."

³⁰ R. Borger, *Assyrisch-babylonische Zeichenliste* (AOAT 33, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neu-

equivalent of the Sumerian *gir*₅. Another one of its equivalents is *lasāmu* which means “to run, to travel fast” or “courier,” a meaning that would underline one of the roles played by the *ubārum*: they were employed as message-bearers, relaying orders from the overlord to a vassal city. The Nuzi texts cited below often mention the fodder provided for their horses which they might have used as a rapid means of transport.

Certain linguists warn readers of ancient texts against a uniquely lexical approach which isolates a term out of its context. Even the notion of the “basic meaning” of a term might be an illusion. The meaning of a term should not be reduced to its root or its etymology. It depends much more on the role a particular word plays in a locution or even in a larger context. In order to define the meaning of the term *ubārum*, it is necessary to review several Sumerian and Akkadian texts where it occurs and to analyze the context in detail.

In the Gilgameš Epic (12:11–14) (NA copy of a much older Sumerian forerunner), Gilgameš advises his friend Enkidu, who is about to visit the netherworld, to be particularly prudent. In order not to be recognized by the denizens of the netherworld, he has to disguise himself and avoid wearing clean clothes. Otherwise he would run the risk of being recognized as an alien (*kīma ú-ba-ra-ta*)!³¹ The Sumerian composition “Gilgameš, Enkidu and the Netherworld” (= GEN) is the thematic forerunner of the Akkadian Epic of Gilgameš. The following lines offer a comparison between the translation of the Sumerian and the Akkadian texts. In this text, the Sumerian term *gir*₅ corresponds to Akkadian *ubārum*.

¹⁸¹Gilgameš answers Enkidu:

¹⁸²If this day you would descend

to the netherworld,

¹⁸³I will give you counsel, take my counsel.

¹⁸⁴I will speak a word to you, to my word,
lend your ear!

¹⁸⁵Do not put on your clean garment,

¹⁸⁶They would surely mark you as an alien.

(*gir*₅-*gin*_x *giskim na-an-ni-ibi*¹-*è-eš*)

(...)

²⁰⁶E[nkidu] heeded not his king's [wor]d,

²⁰⁷He put on his clean garment,

²⁰⁸They marked him as an alien.”

(*gir*₅-*gim giskim im-ma-an-ne-eš*)

(GEN 12:181–186 and 206–208³² || Akk. Epic of Gilgameš 12:10–14 and 31–33)

¹¹⁰*Gilgameš* [answers] *Ekidu*:

¹¹¹*If you would* [descend]

to the netherworld,

¹²[*Be sure to heed*] *my counsel*.

(tablet 12 omits this line)

¹³[*Do not put on*] a clean garment

¹⁴*They would mark you as an alien.*’

(*ki-ma ú-ba-ra-tam-ma ú-a-a*[*d-du-ka*])

³¹[*He hee*]ded [not his lord's counsel]

³²*He put* [on his clean garment]

³³*They mar*[ked] him as an a[lien].”

kirchener Verlag, 1978) n^o 201.

³¹ J. Tournay / A. Shaffer, *L'Épopée de Gilgameš* (LAPO 15, Paris: Cerf, 1994), p. 258. *ubārāta* is a G stative.

³² A. Shaffer, *Sumerian Sources of Tablet XII of the Epic of Gilgameš*, unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1963 (Ann Arbor, Michigan, University Microfilms, 1963), Sumerian text p. 74 and p. 78 with translation on p. 107 and p. 110.

The term *ubārum* occurs in the Laws of Eshnunna. Promulgated by Daduša, they are older than the Code of Hammurabi and are dated to the 19th century B. C. E.

A, iii 30–31

³⁰*sum-ma ubārum(U.BAR) na-ap-
ṭà-rum*

ù mu-du-ù šikar-šu i-na-di-in

³¹*sa-bi-tum ma-ḫi-ra-at i-la-ku*

šikaram i-na-di-in-šum

“If a sojourner, a host, or an acquaintance, wishes to sell his beer (ration), the *sābītum* will sell the beer for him at the current rate.”

(LE § 41, A, iii 30–31 || B, iii 14–16)³³

B, iii 14–16

¹⁴*šum-ma ubārum(U.BAR) na-ap-
ṭà-rum*

ù mu-du-ù šikar-šu i-na-ad-di-in

¹⁵*sa-bi-tum ma-ḫi-ra-at i-il-la-ku*

¹⁶*ši-ka-ra-am i-na-ad[-ta]-di-šum*

The three nouns *ubārum*, *napṭarum* and *mūdūm* denote three classes of people who are entitled to a beer ration. While the *ubārum* lived in a *wabartum* “settlement” outside the town and in the protection of its walls where foreigners live according to their own laws, the *napṭarum* lived in a *bīt napṭarim* “guest house.” (*ARMT* 2, 72:36; 73:16; 129:15). The Nuzi texts cited below allow us to understand better who the *ubārim* are in this law. Together with the *napṭarum* and *mūdūm*, the *ubārum* are part of a social group whose subsistence is provided by the Palace. If they want to sell their ration of beer, the person who holds the monopoly in the sale of fermented beverages, the alehouse keeper *sābītum*, can perform that service for them. The Palace, however, intervenes in order to protect the rights and the interests of the *ubārum* by stipulating that the *sābītum* has to sell the beer on behalf of the *ubārum* at the current rate.³⁴

For B. Landsberger *ubāru* is synonymous with *napṭaru* “a host,” and designates the special position of a person authorized to bear a weapon (*ša kakki sūni*).³⁵ Apparently, the *ubāru* were allowed to go around the city armed. The two terms *ubāru* and *napṭaru* being synonymous, the precision brought by J. J. Finkelstein concerning the latter is important:

“*napṭarum* is a person who, by his social status, has the power to ‘go bail’ for other persons, in the sense that he can offer temporary sanctuary or immunity to persons or objects for longer or shorter periods of time, *pa-*

³³ A. Goetze, *The Laws of Eshnunna* (AASOR 31, New Haven: American School of Oriental Research, 1956), pp. 106–107, 109–111, 116–117. Goetze rendered *ubārum* with “metic” and *napṭarum* with “one awaiting redemption.” R. Yaron, *The Laws of Eshnunna* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1969, ²1988), p. 69, leaves the three terms *ubārum*, *napṭarum* and *mūdūm* untranslated saying, “[t]he meaning of all these [terms] is uncertain” (p. 160).

³⁴ E. Cassin, “Quelques remarques à propos des archives administratives de Nuzi,” *RA* 52 (1958) 16–28, esp. p. 28.

³⁵ B. Landsberger, “Jungfräulichkeit: Ein Beitrag zum Thema ‘Beilager und Eheschließung,’” in J. A. Ankum / R. Feenstra / W. F. Leemans (eds.), *Symbolae iudicae et historicae Martino David dedicatae* (Iura Orientis Antiqui 2, Leiden: Brill, 1968) 41–105, esp. p. 98.

tāru = lit. ‘to render immune, inviolable against interference by third parties.’ Such protection is customarily effected in the house, or some part of the house, of the *naṣṭarum*. It is not a public building or institution but the residence of a specific individual.”³⁶

The term *ubru* “resident-alien, foreigner, sojourner, protégé,” appears in Middle-Assyrian personal names from Tell Billa, the ancient Šibaniba, fifteen miles northeast of Mosul. The MA tablets were dated to the reigns of Adad-nirāri I and Shalmaneser I, i. e., the first half of the 13th century.³⁷ One tablet gives the names of individuals and their city of origin. It is possibly an eponym or *limu*-list.

n° 55:4: ^m*Ub-ru aḥu-šu* [...]; and 55:7: *Ub-ru mār Kidin-^dSin Hu-šār-še*
n° 83:11: ^m*Ub-ru*-[...]. Here only the first part of the name was preserved and the name of the city of origin is broken as well.

Cf. n° 75:5 ^m*Ub-ru-d*[...-]DI ša [...].

n° 79:3: ^m*Ub-ru-^dIštar*(15) ša E-[...].

And in a tablet containing a list of offerings by individuals, n° 80:22:
^m*Ub-ru-nāšir*.

The term *ubru* appears at a later date as part of a Neo-Assyrian personal name.³⁸ A certain *Ubru-Ištar* purchased an estate of 40 homers of land. In the NA contract the purchaser’s name is written twice and spelled differently each time. In l. 7 it is spelled SUḪUŠ.15 and in l. 17 ^m*ub-ru-15* = *Ubru-Ištar* as in the MA tablets from Tell Billa, ^d15 being the number of the goddess Ištar. The name should probably be translated as “The protégé of Ištar.”

In his classic onomastic study of Akkadian names, J. J. Stamm has adduced several names composed with the term *ubāru*. While the theophorous name ^d*Nabû-inaššar-u-bar-šu* can be understood in the sense, “the god Nabû guards his protégé,”³⁹ the single names like *U-bar-rum*, *U-bar-ru-um* are difficult to translate. Should they be interpreted as “foreigner” or “protégé”? The interpretation depends on whether one understands *ubāru* in a negative or a positive way. If the term is understood in a negative way, the parents were probably applying a well-known apotropaic procedure. By giving their child a negative

³⁶ J. Finkelstein, “Some New Misharum Material and Its Implications,” in H. H. Güterbock / Th. Jacobsen (eds.), *Studies in Honor of B. Landsberger* (AS 16, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1965), p. 234, line 38, here p. 238.

³⁷ J. J. Finkelstein, “Cuneiform Texts from Tell Billa,” *JCS* 7 (1953) 111–176, esp. p. 144 (bottom).

³⁸ J. N. Postgate, *The Governor’s Palace Archive* (Hertford: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1973), pp. 67–68, note 7.

³⁹ J. J. Stamm, *Die akkadische Namengebung* (MVAG 44, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939), p. 240 and p. 251. F. Joannès, *Textes économiques de la Babylonie récente* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1982), p. 416, lists fifteen Neo-Babylonian names written either ^mú-bar or composed with *ubāru*.

name they were warding off the danger of him becoming a sojourner and a foreigner.⁴⁰ If understood in a positive way, the child's name was synonymous with a privileged status of a protégé, i. e., they hoped he would enjoy the favor of the Palace. The relative frequency of Akkadian names composed with the element *ubāru* would militate for a rather positive understanding of this term.

The term appears in a bilingual Sumero-Akkadian proverb on a late copy found in Assurbanipal's library (7th century B. C. E.)⁴¹:

Sumerian	Akkadian
gir ₅ uru.kúr.ra.àm sag.ga.àm	<i>u-bar-ru āli šá-nim-ma ri-e-ši</i>
"A metic is chief in a foreign city." (B. Meissner's translation)	

The correct translation of this proverb has been a subject of controversy. Here again the meaning depends on the way the term gir₅ = *ubāru* is understood: a socially inferior person (in German "Untertan") implied in rendering "metic" or resident-alien with a special, privileged status? At first, in translating this proverb and interpreting its meaning, scholars have followed the interpretation proposed by B. Meissner, taking it as a Sumerian-Akkadian counterpart of our own expression, "Nobody is prophet in his own country" (cf. Mk 6:4; Lk 4:24 "no prophet is acceptable in his own country"; Jn 4:44). Meissner correctly identified the *ubāru* as a foreigner on the basis of a parallelism with *nakru* "foreign, enemy," in SBH n^o 25:32, *anāku nakrāku anāku ú-ba-ra-ku*. "I am a foreigner, I am an *ubāru*."⁴² In his time, M. David had adduced an additional text where *ubāru* occurs in a parallelism with *nakru*.⁴³ An omen text in CT 41, pl. 31:25 explains an event with ominous portent: *u-ba-ri ana bītī-šu ir-ru-ub* "an *ubāru* will enter his house." The commentary explains that *ubāri* corresponds to *nakri* "enemy," and gives an additional alternative interpretation saying, *ina ālī-šu a-ḫi-i i-ta-ri* "in his city he will become a foreigner."

In Ugaritic texts dating from the 13th century B. C. E. *ubāru* occurs frequently in documents that represent a royal authorization conferring the right of exemption from certain charges. Persons receiving these authorizations are exempted from the obligation of providing food and lodging for the *ubāru*. J. Nougayrol named these documents with the technical term "billet de loge-

⁴⁰ The same difficulty occurs in understanding whether Nabal in 1 Sam 25 was named "churlish, foolish" by his parents or "noble" (from Ar. *nabil*), cf. J. Barr, "The Symbolism of Names in the O. T.," *BJRL* 52 (1969) 11–29, esp. pp. 21–22. T. Donald, "The Semantic Field of 'Folly' in Proverbs, Job, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes," *VT* 13 (1963) 285–92.

⁴¹ B. Meissner, *Studien zur assyrischen Lexikographie* (MAOG III/3, Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1929), p. 45: "Ein Metöke ist in einer fremden Stadt ein Oberhaupt."

⁴² G. Reisner, *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln griechischer Zeit* (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1896), n^o 25:32.

⁴³ M. David, "Beiträge zu den altassyrischen Briefen aus Kappadokien," *OLZ* 36 (1933), cols. 209–220, esp. col. 214, n. 8.

ment” akin to the practice current in Europe in previous centuries where during troop movements, a royal decree placed the local population under the obligation to provide board and lodging to military personnel, officers and soldiers. In Ugarit a series of texts repeat the same formula conferring the right of exemption from a series of services normally incumbent upon certain citizens:

šanītam^{lū} *ubru ana bītīšu lā irrubina māri šipri šarri’ lā illak* ^{lū}*habiru ana bītīšu lā irrub*

“Another matter, the *ubru* will not enter his house; he will not go to/with the messengers of the king; the *habiru* will not enter his house.”

(PRU 3, 15.109 + 16.296)⁴⁴

The term *ubāru* appears several times as an Akkadogram ^{LÚ}*UBĀRU* in Hittite sources: KUB 2.5 i 7; KUB 10.1 i 15; KUB 11.20 ii 24.⁴⁵ The first text, KUB 2.5 i 7–9, mentions the role played by the *UBĀRU* in the festival of AN.TAḪ.ŠUM^{SAR}:

⁷[EGI]R-*pa* ^{LÚ.MEŠ}*Ú-BA-RU* *a-še-eš-šar* ⁸[*hu*]-*u-ma-an ša-ra-a hu-u-i-it-ti-ya-an-zi* ⁹[*t*]*a a-ra-an-ta*

“[The]n the *UBĀRU* pull up [i. e., bring to their feet] [the en]tire congregation and they stand.”

(KUB 2.5 i 7–9)⁴⁶

The text could also be understood as describing activities of the *UBĀRU* who draw the entire congregation toward the top, i. e. toward the citadel of the city?

The second text KUB 10.1 i 13’–15’, describes the festival of KI.LAM:

^{13LÚ}GUDU₁₂ ^{URU}*A-ri-in-^rna* ^{14LÚ}GUDU₁₂ ^{URU}*Zi-ip-^rpa¹-la-an-da* {x}
^{15LÚ.MEŠ}*Ú-BA-RU*-*ya* LUGAL-*i* ¹⁶*hi-in-kán-ta*⁴⁷

“The anointed one from the city of Arinna, the anointed one from the city of Zippalanda, and the *UBĀRU* bow down (before) the king.”

The third text KUB 11.20 ii 23–24, is a fragment of a religious festival. The text is only partially preserved:

⁴⁴ J. Nougaurol, *Le palais royal d’Ugarit III. Textes akkadiens et hourrites* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1955), p. 105; cf. 15.109:54; (p. 140) 16.132:20; (p. 83) 16.157:23.

⁴⁵ I thank Alice Mouton for translating, commenting and providing bibliography for these Hittite texts.

⁴⁶ This text was partially translated by J. Puhvel, *Hittite Etymological Dictionary* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991), vol. 3 (H), 1991, p. 346.

⁴⁷ A duplicate, KBo 21, 52, i 5’, reads *hi-in-kat-ta*. It often occurs that a group of nouns representing the subject takes the verb in singular. I. Singer, *The Hittite KI.LAM Festival*, Part Two (StBoT 28, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1984), p. 23, offers a transcription of this text. On p. 299, the author translates the Akkadogram ^{LÚ}*UBĀRU* with “stranger, amphictyon(?)” and lists additional duplicates mentioning it.

²³ *ta UŠ-KE-EN* x [...] ²⁴ *lú.meš Ú-BA-RÚ* x [...]”
 “and they bow down [...] and the *UBĀRU* [...]”

It is probable that the people performing this act are the dignitaries (*BE-LU^{HA}*), the functionaries of the palace (*DUMU^{MEŠ} É-GAL*), and the *MEŠEDI* and not the *UBĀRU*. They all bow down probably in front of the king (*LUGAL-i*) as in the previous text.

What is striking in these Hittite texts is the high position occupied by the *UBĀRU*. In the first text they take an active part in the festival by drawing the congregation to a higher level, maybe the citadel. In the last two, they are present before the king during the festival and bow down to him. They appear to have been treated as highly honored foreigners. It is not excluded, however, that the Hittite texts use the term *UBĀRU* in an idiosyncratic manner giving it another meaning than the one found in Akkadian texts. The entire dossier of the *UBĀRU* in the Hittite texts would need an independent study.

The early Assyriologists, who translated the word *ubāru* with “metic” brought to mind the situation known in ancient Greece where metics were foreigners living in Athens and with special political status. An essential feature of the classical Greek city-state was the presence of a large body of metics who were more or less permanent immigrants. Most of them were from other Greek cities, and played a large part in the economic, social, and political life of the community but were excluded from citizenship in all but most exceptional cases. Their position was far from being a privileged one. Rather, they were something like second-class citizens. For example, even the great Aristotle had the status of a metic. He was not born in Athens but in Stagira in Thrace.⁴⁸ In Athens, the metic was often an artisan and therefore useful to the economic development of the city with his work and trade. Although he enjoyed a legal position superior to that of a simple sojourner, he remained an economically exploited person. As a metic he had to pay a special poll-tax, *metoikion*, for living in the city of which native Athenians were exempted. According to M.-F. Baslez, the Athenian metic was the earliest example of a “Gastarbeiter” or “travailleur émigré.”⁴⁹ Moreover, the citizens who discharged certain duties of public interest perceived indemnities of which the metics were deprived. The citizens received meat rations from the numerous sacrifices that were carried on in the temples of Athens, privileges which the metics had no right to. Occasionally, the city of Athens took care of distributing wheat to its citizens. Here again the metics were excluded.⁵⁰ Exemptions from fiscal and military burdens that laid heavy on Athe-

⁴⁸ On Aristotle being a metic in Athens see D. Bodi, *Jérusalem à l'époque perse* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 2002), p. 264. D. Whitehead, “Metics,” *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, S. Hornblower / A. Spawforth (eds.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 969.

⁴⁹ M.-F. Baslez, *L'étranger dans la Grèce antique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984), pp. 127–149.

⁵⁰ D. Whitehead, *The Ideology of the Athenian Metic* (CPS Supplementary volume 4, Cambridge: The Cambridge Philological Society, 1977), pp. 17–20: “Typology of the

nian metics came only with higher-status niches such as *isotelēs*, a class of metics in Athens exempted from poll-tax and from the obligation of finding a patron but still without the right of citizenship. The Greek understanding of *metoikos*, from which our word “metic” derives, might not correspond, however, to the Semitic world, where metics were not necessarily underdogs. In the light of all these differences, the term “metic” should probably be abandoned in discussing the term *ubāru* in the ancient Near East.⁵¹

This new understanding of the term *ubāru* comes from 15th century B. C. E. Nuzi documents where it stands for resident-aliens who enjoyed a special rather privileged status.⁵² As pointed out by C. Kühne: “*ubāru* etwa ‘Gastfreund’, ‘Schutzbürger’ (...) wobei betont werden muss, dass es sich, im Gebrauch der Zeit, um eine sozial hochstehende und dementsprechend bevorrechtete Personenklasse handelt.”⁵³ The position of the *ubāru* is in no way inferior to that of native dwellers.

The Nuzi texts have revealed that in the local Palace there were foreign persons from Ḫanigalbat who were qualified with the term *mār šipri* “messengers, couriers” and more frequently with *ubāru*.⁵⁴ In Nuzi, these foreign representatives were entitled to receive clothing, barley rations, horses, chariots, and luxury items like a large quantity of golden cups. Their horses were taken care of as well and rations of fodder were provided for them. They belonged to a special group of people whose livelihood was provided by the royal Palace. Some texts enumerate the rations of barley that the *ubāru* received. In HSS 14, 48:12–13⁵⁵ they received a ration of barley for five days (*še’a a-na 5 ūmī a-na amēlūti*^{mes} [ú]-ba-ru-ti ša ^{mal}[Aš]-šur) “Barley for 5 days for the men, resident-aliens from Assur.” The monthly ration of barley for an *ubāru* consisted of 3 *sāti* (approximately 20 liters), or 0,67 liters a day (HSS 14,60:15–16).

E. Cassin who has studied the Nuzi documents extensively, concludes her findings on the term *ubāru* in the following manner:

metic.” M. Hansen, *La démocratie athénienne à l’époque de Démosthène* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993), pp. 147f.

⁵¹ P. Vargyas, “Immigration into Ugarit,” in K. van Lerberghe / A. Schoors (eds.), *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East, Festschrift E. Lipiński* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), pp. 395–402, who still argues that the situation of the *ubru* in Ugarit is comparable to that of the Athenian metic.

⁵² E. R. Lacheman, “Nuzi Geographical Names I,” *BASOR* 78 (1940) 18–23, esp. p. 20. *Idem*, *BASOR* 81 (1941) 10–15, esp. p. 10.

⁵³ C. Kühne, *Die Chronologie der internationalen Korrespondenz von El-Amarna* (AOAT 17, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), p. 29, n.128 (with bibliography).

⁵⁴ C. Zaccagnini, “Les rapports entre Nuzi et Ḫanigalbat,” *Assur* 2/1 (1979) 1–27, esp. pp. 15–16.

⁵⁵ E. R. Lacheman, *Excavations at Nuzi, vol. V: Miscellaneous Texts from Nuzi, part II, The Palace and Temple Archives* (Harvard Semitic Series 14, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), plate 23, tablet 48.

“In short, here is what one can deduce from all these texts on the *ubāru* in Nuzi: They are foreigners whose native country is occasionally indicated: Mitanni, Assyria, Akkad or Mari. The fact that they receive food rations for short periods of time (HSS 14,48:12–13) indicates that they were under the supervision of the Palace. They do not own fields to till themselves or to give for tilling. They never appear as being dependent on a private citizen as was the case for a certain number of *ḥabiru*. It should be noted that on ration lists, they are often placed next to individuals of higher rank as in HSS 14,97, where they are listed between the *mārē šarri* ‘sons of the kings’ and the *urqanḥulu*, undoubtedly gardeners. Occasionally one learns that they arrived at Nuzi in the wake of a prince of the land: It is in such a manner that one should understand the passage in HSS 14,136:21–22: *ún-du₄ ^{lú}ú-bá-ru ša URI-A^{ki} it-ti ^mḤu-ut-Te-šup mār šarri it-tal-ku-ni* ‘when the *ubāru* of Akkad arrived with Ḥut-Tešup, son of the king.’”⁵⁶

Another Nuzi text states that one chariot was given as a gift or a contribution to the *ubāru* who had the status of a dignitary.

“One chariot as the contribution (*iškaru*) of Nuzi to the one (occupying the office of) Resident-Alien (^{lú}*ubārūtu*) of the land of Ḥanigalbat on the feasts of Kinūni of the City of the Gods (*āl ilāni*) was given. Seal of Šurki-tilla son of Akip-tašenni.”⁵⁷

This Nuzi text was taken by H. Lewy as decisive proof that *ubāru* should be understood as persons enjoying a far higher status than hitherto assumed,

“Since according to the text here under discussion (...) the *ubārūtu* received the corvée (*iškaru*) of the city of Nuzi, it is obvious that in the city of Nuzi the *ubārūtu*, far from being merely tolerated foreigners, were high personages representing the overlord, and this all the more since, according to the unpublished text SMN 589 (...), one of them was given thirty golden cups. (...) these facts suggest that the *ubārūtu* were men sent, in various functions, by their government to a foreign—or subdued—country, in our case by the king of Ḥanigalbat-Mitanni to the Arpaḥa-(Nuzi).”⁵⁸

While Speiser suggested translating the term with “ambassador,” or “governor general,” and Lacheman with “diplomats,” H. Lewy suggested comparing their

⁵⁶ E. Cassin, “Quelques remarques à propos des archives administratives de Nuzi,” *RA* 52 (1958) 16–28, esp. p. 27.

⁵⁷ E. A. Speiser (Translation and Commentary) / R. H. Pfeiffer (Transliteration), *One Hundred New Selected Nuzi Texts* (AASOR 16, New Haven: American School of Oriental Research, 1936), n^o 83.

⁵⁸ H. Lewy, “The Nuzian Feudal System,” *Or* 11 (1942) 297–349, esp. p. 320–322, esp. p. 321, n. 1.

status with that of the “résident général” of French colonial administration in Tunisia, who used to direct foreign affairs of the protectorate. She too made the *ubāru* something akin to a governor. Such a highly positive appreciation of the term is probably exaggerated. Akkadian texts mention people designated with terms like *šākin māti* “governor” and *ḥazannu* “mayor” or *ḥazannūtu* “office of mayor” which would correspond to the office described by H. Lewy. In Mari letters, the vassal Ḥāya-Sūmū of the city of Ilān-surā, married both daughters of his suzerain Zimri-Lim, Šimātum, the elder, and Kirūm, the younger. Realizing that Kirūm was in fact spying on him on behalf of her father Zimri-Lim, Ḥāya-Sūmū decides to get rid of her. He threatens her: “You occupy here the office of *ḥazannūtu* (political representative or official resident). Since I am going to kill you, may your Star (Zimri-Lim) come and take you back” (ARMT 2, 32: 11’–15’).⁵⁹ Apparently Kirūm besides being one of the vassal’s royal wives, occupied an important political role in the city of her vassal husband. When establishing an alliance, the suzerain would send a *ḥazannu* as his political representative to the vassal city as a guarantee of his authority and control of his vassal.⁶⁰ This role is described in ARMT 2, 109:9–10, where Šukru-Teššub, the king of Eluḥ-ḥut writes to Šüb-Rām, the governor of Šubat-Enlil and of nearby Susā: *kīma*^{lu} *ḥazannī ina ālim*^{ki} [še-t]u wāšib u ālum^{ki} Amaz^{ki} iyaum a[t-t]a tūde “you know that like my political representative (*ḥazannu*) he dwells in that city and the city of Amaz is mine.”⁶¹ According to other texts, this office corresponds to that of the “mayor” of the city as in Ugarit (^{lu}*ḥazannu āli*).⁶² The office of *ubārūtu* probably designates an intermediary position somewhat inferior to *ḥazannātu*.

The Nuzi texts have also provided a reference to the existence of a *bīt ubārūti* “a guest house.” A man called Artura, son of Kuššia, had three sons and five daughters with his wife Šilwaduri. In his *šimtu* or testament (HSS 19, 10), a document where he stated what he wanted to leave to his wife, probably after his death, he mentions a two-storied house where the second floor was used as a “guest house” (*bīt ubārūti*). Moreover, Šilwaduri will keep all the furniture from her own house and will keep with her their five daughters.⁶³

The *ubāru* in Nuzi are not present on account of commercial, trading, or mer-

⁵⁹ On the tragic story of Kirūm which ended in divorce see the detailed study by J.-M. Durand, “Trois études sur Mari,” *MARI* 3 (1984) 127–180, esp. pp. 162–180 III. “Les femmes de Ḥāya-Sūmū.”

⁶⁰ A. Finet, “Iawi-Ilā, roi de Talḥayūm,” *Syria* 41 (1964) 117–142, esp. pp. 130–134.

⁶¹ J.-M. Durand, *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari* (LAPO 16, Paris: Cerf, 1997), vol. I, p. 516, transcribes the title as *ḥaššīānum* and defines it as “a local representative of the suzerain’s interests.” On Šüb-Rām and *ḥaššīānum* see p. 517 nn. b) and c).

⁶² PRU 3, 15.137:15 (p. 134). *AHw*, p. 338: “Bürgermeister.” *CAD* H, p. 163, *ḥazannu* “chief magistrate of a town, of a quarter of a larger city, a village or large estate-mayor, burgomaster, headman.”

⁶³ E. Cassin, “Pouvoirs de la femme et structures familiales,” *RA* 63 (1969) 121–148, esp. p. 126.

cantile activities. They receive chariots, are equipped with horses, and are allowed to move around the city armed. As far as the *ubāru* from Ḥanigalbat are concerned, they are found in groups and under the orders of a chief. These combined data would tend to point to some kind of military or police activity that they discharged. Their distinctive characteristic is that they are foreigners enjoying a somewhat privileged status.

In light of the Nuzi documents, one could suggest translating the above-mentioned Sumero-Akkadian proverb in the following manner, "The Resident-Alien is chief in a foreign city," meaning that the city is not entirely free but probably takes orders from another superior power.

Was Uriah the Hittite a Native Israelite or a Resident-Alien?

Opinions of Rabbinic Authors

In the biblical texts, Uriah is almost always qualified with the designation "the Hittite" (2 Sam 11:3,6,17,21,24; 12:9,10; 24:39; 1 Kgs 15:5; 1 Chr 11:41). When, however, in the course of the story, he is mentioned several times in a row, the narrator omits the qualification Hittite in order to avoid superfluous repetitions. One can say that the biblical texts insist on his non-Israelite i. e., foreign origin.

Already the rabbinic tradition expressed uncertainty concerning Uriah's ethnic background. The Babylonian Talmud, *Qiddušin* 76b, comments on the phrase in 1 Chr 7:40 concerning the king David's army (chiefs of fathers' houses, elite men, valiant warriors, chiefs of the princes) "their number enrolled by genealogies for service in war." The Talmud defines them as being men of good extraction in order that their own merit and that of their fathers might come to their aid in combat. The same tractate continues by quoting the following rabbinic discussion:

"But there was Tseleq the Ammonite (2 Sam 23:37), surely that means that he descended from Ammon?—No; that he dwelt in Amon. But there was Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 23:39); surely that means that he descended from Heth?—No; that he dwelt among the Hittites. But there was Ittai the Gittite (2 Sam 15:19). And should you answer, here too it means that he dwelt in Gath.—but R. Naḥman said: Ittai the Gittite came and destroyed it."⁶⁴

In these series of statements, the final one made by Rabbi Naḥman implies that the reasoning used by his predecessors was faulty and not beyond objection. Since king David employed foreigners (*gērîm*) in his army like Uriah the Hittite and Ittai the Gittite, could he have used the virtues of idolaters for his own

⁶⁴ I. Epstein (ed.), *The Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nashim, Kiddushin*, Bilingual Hebrew-English edition, Engl. Tr. H. Freedman (New York: The Rebecca Bennet Publications, 1959), vol. II, pp. 392–393.

benefit? Uriah the Hittite dwelt (*mitgorer*) as a resident-alien (*gēr*) among the Israelites, while Ittai the Gittite was free from the constraint formulated in *Avoda zara* 44a⁶⁵ according to which one should not draw profit from idolaters because he had renounced idolatry. From this, one can deduce that originally he was indeed an idolater and a foreigner.

The tractate *Avoda zara*, 44a, comments on the behavior of king David toward the idols of the Philistines and the Ammonites. 2 Sam 5:21 states: “And the Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away.” Already in the biblical texts this attitude of David was found inappropriate, therefore the redactor of 1 Chron 14:12 decided to change the end of the account by saying “And they (the Philistines) left their gods (*’elohim*) there, and David gave command, and they were burned.” In the same tractate, Rabbi Huna and Rabbi Nahman attempted to harmonize the contradiction between David’s behavior in 2 Sam 5:21 and 1 Chron 14:12 by saying that the first passage refers to the time before Ittai the Gittite came, the latter to the time after his coming. Being a heathen and an idolater, Ittai was able to “annul the idols.”

In the concluding part of the *inclusio* that serves as a frame for the story of David’s misadventure with Bathsheba, the murder of Uriah the Hittite, and the rebuke by the prophet Nathan, the king was invited by his general Joab to come to the city of Rabbā in order to conclude the siege. Once the capital of the Ammonites was taken, David proceeds to take the booty: “And he took the crown of Milcom (*Mlkm*) from his head; the weight of it was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was placed on David’s head” (2 Sam 12:30). Since the weight of the crown was considerable (about 35 kg), and in order to prevent any direct contact with an object of idolatry, Rabbi David Qimḥi says that the crown was placed “above” and not “on” David’s head.⁶⁶ Moreover, the rabbis in the Talmud as well as the Greek versions (LXX Marcilianus and Luciani) read here a divine name of the Ammonite god *Mlkm*. The vocalization of the Masoretic text “of their kings” dates from the 6th to 9th centuries C. E. and offers an inferior reading. It represents an easy solution and should be discarded in favor of the *lectio difficilior*: (the god) “Milcom.” The rabbis argue that in order to seize these objects, David made use of the services of heathen soldiers in his service. At the beginning of his career Ittai the Gittite was an idolater (2 Sam 15:19), and therefore the interdiction of deriving benefit from idols did not apply to him. David could have used the services of this foreign soldier in order to benefit indirectly from idolatrous objects without personally transgressing the interdict.

In the 12th century C. E., Rabbi Abraham, son of Maimonides, says in the name of his father, that Uriah the Hittite was a *gēr tōšāb* (גר תושב) “a resident

⁶⁵ I. Epstein (ed.), *The Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin, Avodah Zarah*, Bilingual Hebrew-English edition, Engl. Tr. A. Mischon (New York: The Rebecca Bennet Publications, 1959), vol. II, pp. 218–219.

⁶⁶ Rabbinic Bible *Miqra’ot gedolot, ad. loc.*

alien.”⁶⁷

Rabbi Moshe Alshekh, a decision maker and a Bible commentator (born in 1508 in Adrianopolis and died in Damascus in 1600), and *Keli Yagar*, a commentary on the Pentateuch dating from the 16th century, say that Uriah the Hittite was a resident-alien (גַר) or a foreigner (*ibidem*). There is a discussion on this topic in the *Responsa* of Rabbi Simeon ben Tzemach Duran (*Teshuvot Shim'on ben Ṣemaḥ*) a work known under the acronym *Tashbets*,⁶⁸ The question discussed in the *Tashbets* deals with the ethnic background of Uriah the Hittite, Tseleq the Ammonite, both among David's valiant warriors mentioned in 2 Sam 23:37,39; 1 Chron 11:39,41, and Ittai the Gittite, a foreign soldier who joined David's military forces according to 2 Sam 15:19–22. In 2 Sam 18:2 Ittai the Gittite commands one third of David's army, together with Joab and Avishay in the battle against Absalom when the latter staged a political coup against his father. In 2 Sam 15:19 David attempted to dissuade Ittai the Gittite who wanted to join his expedition by stating explicitly, “Why do you also go with us? Go back, and stay with the king; for you are a foreigner (*nōkrî*), and also an exile (*we-gam gōleh*) from your home.” This juxtaposition is important since it allows one to understand the explanation of the term *gēr* in the question and answer found in the following excerpt from the *Tashbets* where *gēr* appears as a synonym of *nōkrî* “foreigner” and not necessarily in the later talmudic sense of “convert.”

“Question: Was Uriah the Hittite an Israelite or a resident-alien (*gēr*)? In the Talmud, in the last section of the tractate *Qiddušin* 76b, ‘they brought and gave to Tseleq the Ammonite and to Ittai the Gittite, who were the officers in David's army’; were they Israelites or foreigners (*gērîm*)? Concerning Ittai the Gittite, they affirmed that he was a foreigner, however, concerning Uriah the Hittite, it is not clear for our masters of blessed memory, whether he was a foreigner or an Israelite (...).”⁶⁹

Modern Onomastic Studies

At the beginning of Hittite studies, A. Gustavs examined their bearing on Hebrew onomastics and suggested interpreting the name Uriah as an example of a Mitannian, i. e., Hurro-Hittite name in the Bible.⁷⁰ In order to do so, however, he

⁶⁷ Quoted in the explanatory notes in Talmud Bavli *Qiddušin* 76b–77a, *Talmud, L'Édition Steinsaltz*, (Jerusalem: Steinsaltz edition, 1989), p. 321.

⁶⁸ He was born in Majorca in 1361, died in Algiers in 1444 and was the head of the rabbinical court in Algiers. *Tashbets* deal with variegated subjects; most discuss halakah, although others deal with philosophy, biblical commentary, grammar, mathematics.

⁶⁹ *Tashbets* on the CD-ROM from the University of Bar-Ilan, 2002.

⁷⁰ A. Gustavs, “Hethitische Parallelen zum Namen אוריה,” *ZAW* 33 (1913) 201–205. Cf. also O. Schroeder, “Uria der Hettiter,” *ZAW* 35 (1915) 247–248: “Er trägt gewiß keinen israelitischen, sondern hettitischen Namen” (p. 248).

had to change the Hebrew name Uriyyāh into Ariya, where the root *ar-* means “to give.” According to this view, Ariya would be a shortened form of a theophorous name Ari-Tešub “(the god) Tešub had given.” E. Laroche quotes the name *A-ri-ia* as an authentically Cappadocian name found among the indigenous names attested in Assyrian documents from Kültepe, Ališar and Boğazköy.⁷¹ A. Gustavs’ view was reiterated in 1939 by W. Feller who thought that an originally Hurrian name was Hebraized through a popular etymology in order to become Uriyyāh meaning “Yah is my fire (or light).”⁷² There is, however, another Hurrian root that could be adduced for the biblical Uriah. Hurrian *wur(i)* means “to see” with a concomitant deverbal noun *wuri* meaning “sight.”⁷³ Moreover, M. Vieyra derived the biblical Uriah from another Hurrian name *Ewiria*.⁷⁴

One can make several objections to the supposed “Hittite” etymology of Uriah’s name. Firstly, it is somewhat suspect that through this savant etymology Uriah of whom king David, the Semite, stole the wife becomes an Arian with a name that underlines it. This interpretation cannot escape the impression of being somewhat contrived. One finds in the name what one is looking for. Secondly, the root *uri* could well be Semitic since it is found in a masculine name from the Cassite period in Babylon, Ūrī-Marduk, “(the god) Marduk is my light,”⁷⁵ and in a feminine one, ^f*U-ri*. Moreover, in his onomastic study of Hebrew names, M. Noth did not follow the Hittite etymology of the biblical name Uriyyāh.⁷⁶ Thirdly, there is a more satisfactory explanation of the name Uriah without having recourse to emendation. In the 7th century B. C. E. documents from Assyria, one finds the name Uriyā in a sales contract where Milkiya, the governor (*bēl paḥāti*), from the region of Rimusi, appears as the owner of an estate composed of fields, plantations and slaves working on them. In the enumeration of the persons he owns, there is mention of a certain slave named “Uriyā together with his wife, his mother and his brother.” The name of the buyer of the estate is Nūr-Ekalli meaning “The Light of the Palace.” The editor

⁷¹ E. Laroche, *Les noms des Hittites* (Études linguistiques 4, Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1966), p. 38 (CCT III 34b).

⁷² W. Feller, “Hurritische Namen im A. T.,” *ZA* 45 (1939) 216–229, esp. p. 219. F. Israel, “La conquête de Canaan: observations d’un philologue,” in N. Laila (ed.), *Guerre et conquête dans le Proche-Orient ancien* (Antiquités sémitiques 4, Paris: J. Maisonneuve, 1999) 63–77, esp. p. 75, who follows this etymology.

⁷³ E. Laroche, “Études hurrites,” *RA* 56 (1960) 187–202, esp. pp. 193–195.

⁷⁴ M. Vieyra, “Parallèle hurrite au nom d’Urie ‘le Hittite,’” *Revue hittite et asianique* 5 (1938) 113–116.

⁷⁵ A. T. Clay, *Personal Names from Cuneiform Inscriptions of the Cassite Period* (Yale Oriental Series 1, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912), p. 151: *U-ri-Marduk* “the god Marduk is my light.”

⁷⁶ M. Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1928), pp. 168–169.

of this text drew a parallel with biblical Uriyyāh, indicating that in the Assyrian contract the name is written with a long *ā* as in the case of the Hebrew name.⁷⁷ In this sales contract, the slave Uriyā is most probably an Aramean.

The name Uriah is most probably Semitic just like another man in the Bible with the good Semitic name Ahimelech who is called a “Hittite” as well (1 Sam 26:6).

Hittites in the Bible

The Hebrew Bible contains a tradition specific to the city of Jerusalem concerning its partially Hittite origins: “Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite” (Ezek 16:3,45). It probably refers back to the pre-Israelite population of the Jebusite citadel that David spared and left to dwell in his newly acquired stronghold. In the El-Amarna letters, the 14th century B. C. E. mayor of Jerusalem named ‘Abdi(ĪR)-Ḫeba(t) had a theophorous name. It was customary to view Ḫebat as being an originally Hurrian or Hittite goddess.⁷⁸ His name means “Servant of the goddess Ḫebat,” who was the female counterpart of the god Teššub.⁷⁹ The Hurrians preceded the Hittites. Mitanni, a Hurrian kingdom in northern Mesopotamia, was defeated by Šuppiluliuma I along with most of its Syrian territories as far south as Qadesh on the Orontes. Numerous elements of the Hurrian pantheon and religion were assimilated by the Hittites.⁸⁰ Tušratta was the king of Mitanni. Two royal Mittani princesses, Kili-Ḫepa, wife of the pharaoh Amenophis III, and Tanu-Ḫepa, wife of Amenophis IV, who both lived in the Egyptian court in El-Amarna, bear names with the same theophorous element as the mayor of Jerusalem, ‘Abdi-Ḫeba(t). Even in the Hittite capital Ḫattuša, some queens had theophorous names composed with the divine name Ḫebat: Tadu-Ḫepa, who was the wife of Tudḫaliya II/III, Tanu-Ḫepa, the wife of Muwattalli, or Pudu-Ḫepa, the wife of Ḫattušili III. The last one came from Kizzuwatna (south of Anatolia on the border with Syria), where the Hurrians dwelt from early times. Recent studies, however, have shown that

⁷⁷ C. H. W. Johns, *Assyrian Deeds and Documents Recording the Transfer of Property* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell), 1924, vol I, n° 59:7: (cuneiform text: *ú-ri-ia-a*), and commentary vol. III, p. 80 466. n° 59. Cf. p. 82: “Uriyā is temptingly like Uriah, the more so, on account of the long *ā* at the end.”

⁷⁸ L.-H. Vincent, “La sepulture des patriarches, ” *RB* 29 (1920) 507–539, esp. pp. 515–517, transcribed his name Arta-ḫiba saying that he was “un Hittite de pure race.”

⁷⁹ E. Laroche, “Teššub, Ḫebat et leur cour,” *JCS* 2 (1948) 113–135.

⁸⁰ A. Jirku, “Eine hethitische Ansiedlung in Jerusalem zur Zeit von El-Amarna,” *ZDPV* 43 (1920) 58–61. Cf. however the view of M. C. Astour, “Hittites,” *IDBS* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976) 411–415, esp. p. 412: “When Ezekiel (16:3,45) said to Jerusalem that ‘your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite,’ he simply followed the geographical terminology of his time which assigned Jerusalem to the land of Ḫatti or Ḫatti and Amurru.”

Ḫebat was most probably a Syrian goddess adopted in Kizzuwatna where the languages spoken were Hurrian and Luvite.⁸¹ From there the veneration of the goddess Ḫebat spread to Anatolia. At that time the same personal name is attested in Ta'annek, in northern Palestine.⁸² 'Abdi-Ḫeba(t) is therefore a real West-Semitic name.

The biblical texts mention the Hittites among the pre-Israelite populations dwelling in the land of Canaan (Gen 15:20;⁸³ 23; 26:34 *et al.*; Exod 3:8 *et al.*; Deut 7:1; Josh 3:10; 9:1 *et al.*; Judg 3:5; 1 Kgs 9:20 = 2 Chron 8:7; Ezra 9:1; Neh 9:8) and occupying the mountainous regions of the land (Numb 13:29; Josh 11:3). The patriarch Abraham is described as buying the cave of Machpelah near Hebron from the Sons of Heth (Gen 23). Abraham calls himself a foreigner (*gēr*) and a settler (*tōšāb*) (Gen 23:4), while the Hittites living in Hebron are called "natives" (*'am ha'āres*). Esau marries Hittite wives (Gen 26:34; 36:1–3). In the table of nations in Gen 10:15, Heth is not related to Anatolia, however, but is listed as one of the sons of Canaan. This would indicate that the Bible uses the term Hittite in a conventional manner, in the same way as the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian scribes, referring to the populations that inhabited the region of Syria-Palestine. These are all "Late Hittites" or "Neo Hittites" distinct from 2nd millennium B. C. E. Hittites.

Moreover, Solomon is said to have had foreign "Hittite wives" (1 Kgs 11:1), together with Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite and Sidonian ones, and that he sent horses to "all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Arameans" (1 Kgs 10:29; 2 Chron 1:17).

H. Güterbock⁸⁴ pointed out that in the 2nd millennium B. C. E., the Hittite Empire did not incorporate Palestine. At most one can admit the presence of the Hurrian population in cities like Karkemiš and Emar, in Northern Syria. Hurrians lived together with the Amorites in Mari in the 18th century B. C. E., Hittites and Hurrians are found together with the Assyrians in the 15th century B. C. E. Nuzi, and with the Canaanites in Ugarit in the 14th and 13th centuries B. C. E., as well as in Alalakh.⁸⁵

⁸¹ M.-C. Trémouille, *Ḫebat. Une divinité syro-anatolienne* (Eothen 7, Firenze: LoGisma editore, 1997), p. 25. In line with recent studies, she does not define the Hurrians as an ethnic unity but as a conglomerate of tribes speaking various dialects.

⁸² V. A. Gustavs, "Die Personennamen in den Tontafeln von Tell Ta'annek," *ZDPV* 50 (1927) 1–18, esp. p. 10.

⁸³ Most familiar are the lists of tribes such as Gen 15:19–21 (Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaims, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, Jebusites); Josh 3:10 gives a shorter list (Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, Jebusites).

⁸⁴ H. G. Güterbock, "The Hittites," *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), col. 786–790, esp. col. 790.

⁸⁵ The following studies on the Hurrians although dated may still be useful: H. G. Güterbock, "The Hurrite Element in the Hittite Empire," *Journal of World History* 2 (1954) 384–394; J. C. L. Gibson, "Observations on Some Important Ethnic Terms in the Penta-

Since the time of Tiglath-pileser I (1115–1077 B. C. E.), Syria was known to the Assyrians as the “Land of Ḫatti,” with its capital in Karkemiš, meaning that since roughly the beginning of Neo-Assyrian times, *māt Ḫatti* “land of Ḫatti” no longer refers to the Anatolian plateau in Asia Minor but to Northern Syria and the Transeuphrates area. During the siege of Samaria by the Aramean king Ben Haddad of Damascus as described in 2 Kgs 7:6, a rumor was heard that struck panic in the ranks of the Aramean troops,

“For the Lord had made the army of the Syrians hear the sound of chariots, and of horses, the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, ‘Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt (*mišrayîm*) to come upon us’” (RSV).

The Arameans thought that the sound came from the approaching armies arriving to help the besieged Israelites. In place of *mišrayîm* of the massoretic text one should probably read *ham-mušrîm*, i. e., Mušri a region in Northern Syria. In Syria-Palestine in the 9th and 8th centuries B. C. E., the meaning of the term Ḫatti is probably very much the same as in the contemporary Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. The two regions of Ḫatti and Mušri are mentioned together in an inscription by Salmaneser III (852–824 B. C. E.).⁸⁶ The terms stand for the region in Northern Syria northwest of the Euphrates, as over against the valley of Orontes, the Central Syria and the Ghâb, which constitute what the Assyrians called Amurru or “west” in Akkadian.⁸⁷ Or to be more precise, one could think that the biblical designation Ḫatti in the Book of Kings refers to a Syrian-Hittite city-state with some Hurrian population and sufficiently powerful in order to send troops several hundred kilometers to the southwest beyond Damascus and down to Samaria. The most probable candidate for that city-state would be the city of Karkemiš. As in the Aramaic stelae of Sfire dating from the 8th century B. C. E., Mušri in 2 Kgs 7:6 does not designate the land of the Pharaohs but rather the region in Middle Euphrates. Although not devoid of difficulties, the juxtaposition of the toponyms Mušri with Ḫatti in this biblical text is probably far from being fortuitous. It would reflect the geographical situation of the proximity between Ḫatti and Mušri and their relative capacity to lend a helping hand to the Israelites further south in case of military conflict. In fact this is the way several of the city-states in that region attempted to stop Assyrian advance in the west.

In pre-exilic times, the term Ḫatti or Hittites was still used as a scribal convention in the Babylonian royal inscriptions. When Nabuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian army at Karkemiš in 605/604 B. C. E. and succeeded his father on

teuch,” *JNES* 20 (1961) 217–238; R. de Vaux, “Les Hurrîtes de l’histoire et les Horîtes de la Bible,” *RB* 74 (1967) 481–503.

⁸⁶ D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927), vol. I, § 611.

⁸⁷ Nili Wazana, “Border Descriptions and Cultural Barriers,” in G. Wilhelm (ed.), *Akten des IV. Internationalen Kongresses für Hethitologie, Würzburg 4.-8. Oktober 1999* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001) 696–710.

the throne as king of Babylon, he received the submission “of all the kings of Ḫatti.” This locution refers to the kings of Syria-Palestine.⁸⁸ Obviously, this does not mean that in the 7th century B. C. E. Syria-Palestine was inhabited by the Hittites. Under the traditional name of Ḫatti, the Babylonians were in fact referring to Aramean populations.

This literary convention of the Babylonian scribes is important for our understanding of the biblical reference to Uriah the Hittite. He was probably an Aramean since his name appears to be a Semitic one, and he belonged to the pre-Israelite population that inhabited the land of Canaan and whom David incorporated into his newly conquered citadel of Jerusalem. As pointed out already by the son of Maimonides, Uriah the Hittite was a resident alien, *gēr tōšāb*. From an ethnic point of view, it is highly improbable that he had anything to do with Anatolian, Indo-European Hittites.

Conclusion

In the light of our analysis, it appears that Uriah the Hittite was a “resident-alien” among the Israelites. The rabbinic tradition identified Uriah the Hittite as a *gēr tōšāb* “resident alien,” which would be a Hebrew rendering of the Akkadian term *ubāru*. As a *gēr* his status could be comparable to the *ubāru* in the El-Amarna letters and in Nuzi documents. Just like the *ubāru* at Nuzi were dependent on the royal Palace for their subsistence and received rations of food and various gifts, Uriah the Hittite when on leave in Jerusalem, was provided with food from the king’s table (2 Sam 11 : 8: “And Uriah the Hittite went out of the king’s house, and there followed him a present from the king,” cf. also v. 13 where *mš’t* means “a portion” carried to someone, *BDB* 873a). Moreover, in the biblical narrative Uriah the Hittite assumes the role of a courier, carrying messages from Joab to David and vice-versa. One of the functions of the *ubāru* in Nuzi appears to have been that of couriers, who had horses at their disposal in order to discharge that duty. S. Yeivin had suggested that Uriah may have been some official Jebusite representative and perhaps the intended successor of the last Jebusite ruler of Jerusalem.⁸⁹ If David were a high commissioner of the Pharaoh, he would have been revoked from his post and brought to trial for the outrage he committed in respect to Uriah. In the ancient Near East, resident-alien enjoyed certain privileges and prerogatives that the local populations and local administrators did not have the right to flout. King David behaved as a lawless monarch disrespectful of ancient Near Eastern rights.

There is another parallel that this analysis brought to the fore: Hebrew *ḥnp* and Akkadian *ḥanāpu*. In the Hebrew Bible, the term is frequent. The verbal

⁸⁸ D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626–556 B. C.) in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1956), p. 28.

⁸⁹ S. Yeivin, *Zion* 9 (1944) 49–69, cited in D. Boyarin, “Uriah,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), vol. 17, cols. 5–6.

form means “to commit infamy, impiety, villainy, to pollute, or do something atrocious, foul, and abominable.” The adjective *ḥanep* means “impious, irreligious, polluted.”⁹⁰ In Hebrew, the term *ḥnp* also has a particular meaning in relationship to the land that has been polluted, desecrated, or profaned through the impious acts perpetrated by the humans that dwell on it. In Isa 24:5, a collection of oracles traditionally called “The Isaiah Apocalypse” (Isa chs. 24–27), the prophet announces the calamity that befalls the land: “The land lies polluted (*we-ḥā’āreṣ ḥānpā*) under its inhabitants, for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant (*berît ’ōlām*).” In Jeremiah, idolatry designated as harlotry and adultery, pollutes the land of Judah:

“She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I (YHWH) sent her away with a decree of divorce; yet her false sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the harlot. Because harlotry was so light to her, she polluted (*teḥenap*) the land, committing adultery with stone and tree.”

(Jer 3:8–9)

In the perspective of the biblical prophets, the humans through their acts of impiety, negligence of laws, and practice of idolatry pollute the land and provoke the wrath of divine retribution manifest in calamities that befall the land.

This hermeneutical principle is used by the prophets and the redactors of the so-called Deuteronomistic historiography in order to explain the fall of the Israelite and Judean monarchies and the departure of the population in exile. In Num 35:33, the murder of a man provokes the profanation of the land: “You shall not thus pollute the land *taḥanipû* in which you live; for blood pollutes *yahanip* the land.” The blood stands for God-given life (Lev 17:11; Deut 12:23). To shed blood unjustly is to abuse the sacredness of life and to commit profanation. The land that absorbs blood unjustly shed becomes polluted. After Cain murdered Abel, Gen 4:10 states: “The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.”

In my view, one should take into account this ancient Near Eastern and biblical background in order to understand Nathan’s invective against David, after the latter commanded that Uriah the Hittite be murdered. Through this act of impiety, king David polluted the land and attracted divine wrath on himself, his family and his subjects. In fact all his numerous sons, potential successors meet a tragic end except Solomon. According to this particular *Weltanschauung*, reiterated by the biblical prophets, the world is dominated by “divine retribution.” The Hebrew prophets have formulated an almost “karmic” principle,⁹¹ announcing divine punishment according to the misdeeds committed by the indi-

⁹⁰ *BDB*, pp. 337–338.

⁹¹ The Hebrew retribution principle should not, however, be equated with the concept of “karma” in Buddhism and Hinduism where the totality of a person’s actions in any one of the successive states of his or her existence, is thought of as determining his or her fate in the next.

vidual: “Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for what his hands have done shall be done to him” (Isa 3:11). “I the Lord search the mind and try thy heart, to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings” (Jer 17:10). In an oracle against the city of Babylon, Jeremiah announces, “Raise a shout against her round about, she has surrendered; her bulwarks have fallen, her walls are thrown down. For this is the vengeance of the Lord: take vengeance on her, do to her as she has done” (Jer 50:15). Ezekiel prophesied against the city of Jerusalem, “(...) and I will judge you according to your ways; and I will punish you for all your abominations” (Ezek 7:3). “I will requite their deeds upon their own heads” (Ezek 11:21). The prophet Obadiah announces the judgment against the nations according to the same principle: “For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you, your deeds shall return on your own head” (Obad 15). In other words, “you reap what you sow.” This perspective was taken over in the Talmud and the rabbinic commentaries where it was formulated with the following expression, *middâ ke-neged middâ* “measure for measure.” The Babylonian Talmud offers other formulations of this principle as found in the tractate *Sanh* 90a, “as the act, so the retribution,” or *Shab* 55a, “there is no suffering where there is no iniquity.”

Because David had ordered the murder of an innocent man, Uriah the Hittite, an innocent child born from an illicit union between David and Bathsheba died. He left Uriah to die by the sword, abandoning him on the battlefield and giving a laconic message to Joab in 2 Sam 11:25, “Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours now one and now another (...),” therefore the prophet Nathan said to David in 2 Sam 12:9, “You have smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house [...]” The Egyptian high commissioner who outraged the resident-alien (*ubāru*) was revoked from his post in order to be punished by the Pharaoh, the supreme political authority in the region at that time. Likewise, in the biblical perspective, David who outraged his resident alien (*gēr tôšāb*), Uriah the Hittite, was punished by the outworking of divine retribution, as announced by the prophet Nathan.

This vision of divine retribution operating in the affairs of the world is not specifically biblical. It is found in Hittite, Akkadian, Greek, and Egyptian sources.

In the 14th century B. C. E., the Hittite king Muršili II composed a prayer to the Hittite gods concerning a catastrophic plague that had ravaged the Hittite Empire during the reign of his father Šuppiluliuma and had already lasted for twenty years. One of the reasons listed for the outbreak of the plague was the breach of a peace treaty between the Hittites and the Egyptians. In spite of the treaty, the Hittites committed a perjury, breaking the oath of the gods, they attacked a city of Amqa, i. e. the Biq’a plain in Egyptian territory. Moreover, the death of one of Šuppiluliuma’s sons on his way to Egypt to be married to an

Egyptian queen led to another war against Egypt whereby many Hittite prisoners were taken. The plague first broke out among those prisoners and was carried by them into Hatti. The prayer sees the catastrophic plague as divine retribution for the breach of the peace treaty.⁹²

Parallels to the Deuteronomistic retribution principle in respect to the behavior of kings whose duty was to uphold cultic purity and moral and social rectitude, is found in Akkadian literature as well, as for example in Weidner's Chronicle.⁹³ Moreover, according to the 9th century B. C. E. Babylonian Poem of Erra, the god Marduk left his seat in his temple in Babylon, because the people there committed a cultic offense. They did not take proper care of his divine statue, whose appearance was tarnished. As a retribution for this cultic misdeed, war and destruction, incarnated in the plague god Erra/Nergal, devastated Babylon and other major Mesopotamian cities.⁹⁴

The "Retribution principle" appears quite early in Greek classical literature. For example, in his work *Persians*, 807–812, Eschylus (525–456 B. C. E.), who fought against the Persians as a Greek soldier in Salamis and Plataea, explained the defeat of the Persian king Xerxes as divine punishment for sacrilegious acts he committed by burning Greek temples and destroying their altars and divine statues. Herodotus in his *History*, 3:64 and 66, saw in the tragic death of the Persian king Cambyses the consequence of his supposed sacrilegious act. According to the legend, Cambyses committed an act of impiety in Egypt when he killed with his own sword the bull, symbol of the god Apis in Memphis. Cambyses died of a wound that he accidentally incurred to his thigh with his own sword, i. e. at the same spot and with the same weapon with which the bull of the god Apis was slain.⁹⁵

The Ptolemaic *Demotic Chronicle* attempts to explain Egyptian history from 404 B. C. E. down to the time of its composition through the operation of the law of divine retribution. Only the kings (pharaohs of the 27th to the 30th dynasties) who lived in accordance with the will of the gods could prosper. Catastrophes, such as foreign invasions, were explained as a consequence of disobedi-

⁹² A. Goetze, "The Plague Prayers of Mursilis," *ANET*, 1969, pp. 394–396, and A. Malamat, "Doctrines of Causality in Hittite and Biblical Historiography: A Parallel," *VT* 5 (1955) 1–12. Transliterated Hittite text with comments by E. O. Forrer, "The Hittites in Palestine, II," *PEQ* 69 (1937) 100–115, esp. p. 104f.

⁹³ E. Osswald, "Altorientalische Parallelen zur deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbetrachtung," *MIFO* 15 (1969) 286–296.

⁹⁴ D. Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*, OBO 104 (Freiburg/CH: Universitätsverlag, 1991), ch. 2.

⁹⁵ According to historians, Herodotus is transmitting a simple legend. N. Grimal, *Histoire de l'Égypte ancienne* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), p. 474: "These texts simply transcribe the nationalistic propaganda that developed not so much under the Persian domination but later; when the Greeks vanquished the Persians and became the new lords of the land, they carefully maintained this other form of *damnatio memoriae* of their ancient rivals."

ence to the will of the gods. Deliverance from such evils, however, is prophesied in the form of a messiah from Herakleopolis, who will fulfill the divine law and thereby embody the ideal of a perfect and just rule. At 3:16 one reads: "Rejoice over the ruler who will be; for he will not forsake the law."⁹⁶

Malamat's suggestion that Hittite historiography and doctrine of retribution influenced Hebrew historiography through the Jerusalemite "Hittite" connection is probably erroneous.⁹⁷ The Hittite population of Davidic Jerusalem belongs to the "Neo- or Late Hittites" unrelated to the Anatolian one. The issue should not be explained as an example of direct borrowing. Rather, the principle of divine retribution is an element common to all major cultures and civilizations of the Mediterranean basin.

⁹⁶ A. B. Lloyd, "The Inscription of Udjahoresnet* A Collaborator's Testament," *JEA* 68 (1982) 166–180, esp. p. 174.

⁹⁷ A. Malamat, *VT* 5 (1955), p. 1, n. 2.