

Edward Lipinski (orientalist)



Edward (Edouard) Lipiński (born 18 June 1930 in Lodz, Poland)

is a Belgian Biblical scholar and Orientalist.

His first major work, published in 1965, was a monumental monograph entitled *La royauté de Yahwé dans la poésie et le culte de l'ancien Israël*. In 1969, he was appointed professor at the Catholic University of Leuven, where he taught i.a. the comparative grammar of Semitic languages and history of ancient Near Eastern religions and institutions. He was head of the Department of Oriental and Slavonic studies at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from 1978 to 1984. He directed the publication of the *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique* (1992) and the *Studia Phoenicia* series (from 1983). He also published *Semitic Languages. Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (1997, 2001) and dealt extensively with Old Aramaic dialects and history, in particular in his *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics* (1975, 1994, 2010) and in *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (2000). Referring to the latter work a reviewer noted that it "embodies the accumulated insights of one of the greatest Semitic scholars of our time". Professor Edward Lipiński was awarded a doctorate honoris causa by the Lund University in 2003. Although he retired from KU Leuven in 1995, he continues teaching and doing research mainly in Aramaic and Phoenician studies.

The WorldCat database lists over a hundred publications by Edward Lipiński in his various fields of expertise.

A complete bibliography was published by The Enigma Press. Here is a short list of his major publications:

- *La Royauté de Yahwé dans la poésie et le culte de l'ancien Israël* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Letteren, Jaarg. XXVII, Nr 55), Paleis der Academiën, Brussel 1965, 560 pp. ; second edition, Brussel 1968.
- *Le Poème royal du Psaume LXXXIX, 1-5.20-38* (Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 6), J. Gabalda et Cie, Paris 1967, 110 pp.
- *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics I –III* (Orient. Lov. An. 1, 57, 200), Leuven University Press, Peeters & Oriëntalistiek, Leuven 1975, 1994, 2010, 240 pp., 273 pp., XX + 308 pp.
- Author of volumes 1, 5 and 6 of *Studia Paulo Naster Oblata: Orientalia antiqua* published 1982 Peeters Publishers^[7]
- (Ed.), *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique*, Brepols, Turnhout 1992, XXII + 502 p., 14 colour pls.
- *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique* (Orient. Lov. An. 64; Studia Phoenicia XIV), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 1995, 536 p.
- *Semitic languages: outline of a comparative grammar*, 2000. ISBN 978-90-429-0815-4
- *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (Orient. Lov. An. 80), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 1997, 756 pp.; 2nd ed., Leuven 2001, 780 pp.
- *The Aramaeans: their ancient history, culture, religion*, 2001. ISBN 978-90-429-0859-8
- *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (Orient. Lov. An. 100), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2000, 697 pp.
- *Itineraria Phoenicia* (Orient. Lov. An. 127; Studia Phoenicia XVIII), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2004, XXVI+ 622 pp.
- *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age. Historical and Topographical Researches* (Orient. Lov. An. 153), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2006, 484 pp.
- *Prawo bliskowschodnie w starożytności. Wprowadzenie historyczne* (The Near Eastern Law in Antiquity. A Historical Introduction; Studia historico-biblica 2), Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2009, 492 pp.
- *Resheph. A Syro-Canaanite Deity* (Orient. Lov. An. 181; Studia Phoenicia XIX), Peeters & Departement Oosterse Studies, Leuven 2009, 297 pp.

NOMADISM, ROYALTY, DIGNITARIES

1. NOMADISM AND ROYALTY

The ancestors of the Aramaeans, and the Aramaeans themselves at the time of their proto-history, were nomads or seminomads. Tribes in Babylonia continued that way of live down to the mid-first millennium B.C., and even later, and traces of nomadic customs subsisted also among the tribes which had settled down towards the end of the second millennium or in the beginning of the first millennium B.C. Any study of the Aramaean institutions, social, civil, political, military, and economic, should therefore take that nomadic or seminomadic background into account. Direct information is scanty, but comparison with Arab Bedouin, known from texts or from ethnographic research, may be helpful.

There are three main types of wandering peoples: primitive nomads who do not produce food, pastoral nomads who depend on domesticated livestock for a livelihood but often combine pastoralism with semi-sedentary farming¹, and thirdly tinker or trader nomads, like the gypsies. The Aramaeans belonged to the second category and tended to establish themselves on the borders of the dry farming area and of the true desert. The oldest Assyrian mentions of “Aramaean Ahlamū” already bear record to their flocks and their settlements in the Syrian steppe². One century later, Ashur-dan II refers to their great and small cattle³, which implies that they had permanent dwellings where they stayed at least for

¹ A general presentation, with literature, is given by G.M. SCHWARTZ, *Pastoral Nomadism in Ancient Western Asia*, in J.M. SASSON (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, New York 1995, vol. I, p. 249-258. In particular, the “dimorphic” way of life was described and analyzed by M.B. ROWTON, *Dimorphic Structure and Topology*, in *OA* 15 (1976), p. 17-31. The situation in the Syrian desert at the time of the Roman empire is then examined by M. GAWLIKOWSKI, *The Syrian Desert under the Romans*, in S.E. ALCOCK (ed.), *The Early Roman Empire in the East* (Oxbow Monograph 95), Oxford 1997, p. 37-54.

² *RIMA II*, text A.0.87.1, p. 23, lines 44-63; text A.0.87.3, p. 37-38, lines 29-35; text A.0.87.4, p. 43, lines 34-36; text A.0.87.13, p. 59-60, lines 4'-9'. One of the earliest commentaries on these passages is due to É. DHORME, *Palmyre dans les textes assyriens*, in *RB* 33 (1924), p. 106-108, reprinted in *Recueil Édouard Dhorme*, Paris 1951, p. 291-293.

³ *RIMA II*, text A.0.98.1, p. 133, lines 13-15 and 21-22.

a part of each year and planted crops before moving out with their livestock in search of grazing. These peoples can be described as seminomadic or even semisedentary, and their way of life can be compared with that, for instance, of the villagers of Ḥarrān today. These are semi-settled Arabs, with other nomads pitching their tents and tending to settle on the outskirts. The shepherds take the flocks to graze on Tektek Dağ, 16 km to the east, but they help sowing and harvesting the summer crops at the foot of the mountain.

Each nomadic or seminomadic group has its established territory, and beyond that smaller groups own certain wells. Single nomadic bands, of originally 20 to 50 persons, depend from a sheikh, the father of the family who is still called *māre' baytā* in Syriac. The real or legendary ancestor of the "family" or *bayt* is called '*amm*⁴, a word which is attested also with the concrete meaning "great-grandfather"⁵. The members of the family, clan or tribe are called "sons" of the '*amm*, e.g. *bənē Zammān*, "the sons of Zammān"⁶. The sheikh, *māre' baytā* or simply *māri*, "lord", possesses extensive powers, but the leader of a larger clan or of a tribe must consult the "elders", i. e. the heads of the single patriarchal families. The members of this old institution are called *šāb*, "elder", in Aramaic, a title which was translated by *ši-bu-ti* in an Assyrian administrative text from Gōzān belonging to the archive of Mannu-ki-Aššur⁷. True, this text relates to elders on a different level, that of city elders, but the tribal and the sedentary aspects of the institution cannot be separated: the elders of the families became the city elders, although the annexation of Gōzān to the Assyrian empire brought in a new social element, viz. the Assyrian officials. In fact, some elders bear Aramaic names, while others have Akkadian names, which does not mean necessarily that these are all Assyrians. Inscriptions of Ninurta-kudurri-ušur, the semi-independent governor of the land of Sūḥu in the mid-8th century B.C., mention "the elders of his land and the elders of the land of Laqē", *šibūt mātišu u šibūtu ša māt Laqē*⁸. But this phrase has a quite general meaning and its context may indicate that simply "old men" are meant, who still remember events from the past, instead of referring to the communal institution

⁴ See here above, p. 153, 205, 469, and below, p. 605.

⁵ J.T. MILIK, *Nouvelles inscriptions nabatéennes*, in *Syria* 35 (1958), p. 227-251 and Pl. XVIII-XXI (see p. 228).

⁶ See here above, p. 161.

⁷ E.F. WEIDNER - A. UNGNAD - J. FRIEDRICH, *Die Inschriften vom Tell Halaf* (AfO, Beih. 6), Berlin 1940, No. 20.

⁸ RIMB II, text S.O. 1002.1, p. 293, line 47; text S.O.1002.2, p. 297, line 34; text S.O.1002.8, p. 314, lines 19'-[20'].

of the elders. The *māre' baytā* was assisted also by “servants”, ‘*abdīn*, like the one Abraham sent to Aram-Naharaim in order to find a wife for his son Isaac (Gen. 24, 2).

The sheikh's authority remains usually in the same family, believed to descend in direct line from the eponym ancestor, but it does not pass automatically to the eldest son. The leadership of the family was probably determined by the possession of the household gods⁹. Thus Rachel's appropriation of her father's teraphim¹⁰ may be viewed in the light of the Emar texts¹¹ as an attempt to secure the right of leadership in the family of Laban the Aramaean for herself and for her husband.

An important role was played by the “brothers” of the tribal leader. The appellation “brothers” also occurs with a figurative meaning and may in addition be used in the sense of “colleagues”. In consequence, it is not certain at all that close blood ties are implied when the “brothers” of an Aramaean chieftain or king are mentioned. For example, Adad-nirari II refers to the “brothers” of Mūquru the Temanite, ruler of Gidara¹², and Panamuwa I of Šam'al mentions his “brothers and friends (*mwdd*)”¹³, while Bar-Rakkāb speaks of “the seventy brothers” of his grandfather Bar-Šūr¹⁴. Stela III from Sefire refers several times to the king's “brothers”¹⁵, but mentions them once (lines 4-5) between the officials (*pqdy*) and the courtiers (*srsy*), suggesting that the word is used in a broader meaning, like “kindred” in general. In the case of the head of Bēt-Adini, a very large sense is implied by the Assyrian poetic text alluding to the events of 857 B.C. and mentioning “the son of Adini and his companions”, *mār Adini ibrišu*¹⁶, who probably stand for the same body as the “brothers” of Hamiyatas in the Luwian inscription of

⁹ See, in particular, M. GREENBERG, *Another Look at Rachel's Theft of the Teraphim*, in *JBL* 81 (1962), p. 239-248.

¹⁰ Gen. 31, 19. 30. 34-35. It is likely that the teraphim were ancestor statuettes or small symbolic stone pillars. Cf. K. VAN DER TOORN, *The Nature of the Biblical Teraphim in the Light of the Cuneiform Evidence*, in *CBQ* 52 (1990), p. 203-222. See also H. ROUILLARD - J. TROPPER, *Trpym, rituels de guérison et culte des ancêtres d'après I Samuel XIX 11-17 et les textes parallèles d'Assur et de Nuzi*, in *VT* 37 (1987), p. 346-361.

¹¹ The household gods are often mentioned in testaments; cf. M. SIGRIST, *Gestes symboliques et rituels à Emar*, in J. QUAEGBEUR (ed.), *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (OLA 55), Leuven 1993, p. 381-410 (see p. 390).

¹² *RIMA* II, text A.0.92.2, p. 150, line 59.

¹³ *KAI* 214 = *TSSI* II, 13, 24. The next following lines have a broader scope, as it seems.

¹⁴ *KAI* 215 = *TSSI* II, 14, 3.

¹⁵ *KAI* 224 = *TSSI* II, 9, 4.9.13.17.18.[21].

¹⁶ *SAA* III, 17, 7. Cf. here above, p. 187.

Ariyahinas' son¹⁷. It is difficult to see in how far this group of "brothers" differs from the "elders" of the clan or tribe. As for the king's "magnates", GAL.MEŠ in cuneiform texts¹⁸ and *rabbīn* in Aramaic inscriptions¹⁹, this is a general and vague designation of dignitaries and courtiers.

Titles other than *māri'* are sometimes ascribed to Aramaean sheikhs, in particular *nasīku* that often designates the head of an Aramaean tribal group in Assyro-Babylonian sources²⁰, and the same noun *nāsīk* means "prince" or "sheikh" in biblical Hebrew²¹. However, this word never occurs in ancient Aramaic, since *ksyky* instead of *nsyky* must be read in the Proverbs of Aḥiqar²². Moreover, the Targum translates the Hebrew word *nāsīk* by Aramaic *rabrābē*²³, "great men, princes", thus showing clearly that *nasīku* is no Aramaic term. In consequence, its meaning cannot help us to understand the Aramaean world through its own conceptual framework, but its history reveals some aspects of the intercultural relation in the ancient Near East. Its earliest apparent reference occurs in an economic text from the time of Rīm-Sīn of Larsa (1726-1667 B.C.), in which an individual is called ^{lu}*na-sī-ku*²⁴. This early isolated reference may bear no relation to the later institution of *nasīku*. The next attestation, so far, occurs in the 13th century at Emar where a *nasīku* puts two men to work at two different water channels²⁵. It would appear therefore that the *nasīku* was originally a foreman responsible for water supply, perhaps a "pourer", as possibly indicated by the meaning of the Westsemitic verb *nasāku*, "to pour, to shed". There follows an epithet of Nebuchadnezzar I of Babylon (1125-1104 B.C.), who is called *na-sik šarri*^{meš}²⁶, possibly "chieftain of kings". Though Aramaean Aḥlamū are

¹⁷ A.M. JASINK, *Gli stati neo-ittiti. Analisi delle fonti scritte e sintesi storica* (Studia Mediterranea 10), Pavia 1995, p. 95 and 96; *CHLI*, Tell Aḥmar 1, § 16.

¹⁸ *RIMA* II, text A.0.101.2, p. 211, line 125; *SAA* II, 2, I, 2'.6'.8'.23', etc.

¹⁹ *KAI* 222 = *TSSI* II, 7, A, 39-41; *KAI* 223, B, 3; C, 15-16 = *TSSI* II, 8, C, 15-16.

²⁰ DION, *Araméens*, p. 233-235.

²¹ Josh. 13, 21; Ez. 32, 30; Mich. 5, 4; Ps. 83, 12; Sir. 16, 7.

²² *TAD* III, C1.1, 167.

²³ A. SPERBER, *The Bible in Aramaic* II, Leiden 1959, p. 24 (Josh. 13, 21); vol. III, Leiden 1962, p. 344 (Ez. 32, 30) and p. 446 (Mich. 5, 4).

²⁴ Ch.-F. JEAN, *Contrats de Larsa I* (TCL X), Paris 1926, No. 80, 11.

²⁵ M. SIGRIST, *Miscellanea*, in *JCS* 34 (1982), p. 242-252 (see p. 246-247). The context suggests a "foreman", but no "sheikh", since this kind of work is typical for sedentary populations.

²⁶ L.W. KING, *Babylonian Boundary-Stones and Memorial Tablets in the British Museum*, London 1912, No. VI, col. I, 11. M.-J. SEUX, *Épithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes*, Paris 1967, p. 201, reads *na-siq šarri*^{meš} and translates "d'élite parmi les rois".

already found at that time in the area of Rāpīqu, on the Babylonian frontier²⁷, the first clear references to the tribal *nasīku* occur in the texts of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.). A ruler of the eastern land of Dagara, in the Zagros mountains, is referred to as *nasīku*, although he is probably no Semite and bears the Assyro-Babylonian name Nūr-Adad²⁸. Also a chieftain of the mixed Aramaean-Arabian federation of Laqē²⁹, called ^m*I-la-a* (^ʾ*Ilaha*)³⁰, is designated as a Laqaean *nasīku*³¹. Besides, there is a report on Ashurnasirpal II's appointment of 'Ilān of Bēt-Zammāni "to sheikhdōm", *ana nasīkūte*³². Next in time, *ca.* 765 B.C., the Babylonian legal document BM. 40548 from the 9th year of Erība-Marduk names a certain ^m*Il-ti-ḥa-ni* ^{lú}*nasīku*³³, and ^{lú}*nasīkāti ša Aram* are mentioned in an early Neo-Babylonian letter from Nippur³⁴. In Assyrian sources of the 8th century B.C., there are isolated occurrences of the term *nasīku* before the reign of Sargon II³⁵, but the references become abundant in the time of the Sargonids. *Nasīku* was then referred chiefly to sheikhs of Aramaean or North-Arabian tribes dwelling in southeastern Babylonia, but leaders of other Westsemitic nomads or seminomads can be meant as well³⁶.

The hypothesis of an Aramaic origin of the term *nasīku* can safely be excluded, since this word is not used in ancient Aramaic. Instead, the proper name *Ns^lk* often occurs in North-Arabian inscriptions³⁷ and can correspond to *nasīku*³⁸. In fact, the proper names *Nasīku* and its feminine *Nasīkatu* are found already in Late Babylonian texts³⁹ and cannot be dissociated from Thamūdīc and Šafaitic attestations of the name. These anthroponyms and the title *nasīku* should be interpreted in the light of

²⁷ Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 B.C.) fought them in the area of Rāpīqu: *RIMA* II, text A.0.87.3, p. 38, line 33; text A.0.87.4, p. 43, lines 35-36; text A.0.87.13, p. 60, line 7'.

²⁸ *RIMA* II, text A.0.101.1, p. 203-204, lines 23-31.

²⁹ See here above, p. 77-82.

³⁰ This is a well attested North-Arabian name: HARDING, *Arabian Names*, p. 71; *Safaitic Cairns*, p. 54; A. NEGEV, *Personal Names in the Nabatean Realm* (Qedem 32), Jerusalem 1991, p. 12, No. 88; J.K. STARK, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions*, Oxford 1971, p. 4b and 68a.

³¹ *RIMA* II, text A.0.101.1, p. 215, lines 43-46.

³² *RIMA* II, text A.0.101.19, p. 261, line 91; cf. here above, p. 158.

³³ BM. 40548, line 3, quoted by BRINKMAN, *PKB*, p. 274 and 280. This name may be either North-Arabian or Aramaic; cf. here above, p. 423-424.

³⁴ *Nippur* IV, No. 27, 19-20.

³⁵ *CTN* II, 119, 10.

³⁶ I. EPH'AL, *The Ancient Arabs*, Jerusalem 1984, p. 93, n. 300.

³⁷ HARDING, *Arabian Names*, p. 587; *Safaitic Cairns*, p. 615.

³⁸ Etymological š and s are expressed in North-Arabian inscriptions by the unique sign s^l; cf. LIPÍŃSKI, *Semitic*, § 14.3.

³⁹ ZADOK, *WSB*, p. 124.

the North-Arabian term *nusuk*, a “broken” plural designating the ceremonies of the spring pilgrimage and sacrifices. Such a plural normally implies a singular **nisāk*, which must be borrowed from Babylonian *nisakku*, “first offering” and “spring”⁴⁰, exactly as the North-Arabian priestly titles *'pkl* and *'pklt* are borrowed from Babylonian *apkallu* and *apkallatu*⁴¹. Similarly, *nasīku* must be borrowed from *nešakku*, “priest”⁴², the plural of which was pronounced and written ^{lú}*né-si-ik-ke-e* in Neo-Babylonian⁴³. This spelling is very close to ^{lú}*na-sik-ke* ^{lú}*Na-aq-ri* ^{lú}*Ta-ni-e*, “sheikhs of the Naq(ī)ru and of the Tanīye (tribes)”, in Tiglath-pileser III’s annals for the year 745 B.C.⁴⁴. There are no sacrificial or cultual priests among Arab nomads, but the sheikh usually acts as sacrificer if a common sacrifice (*nusuk*) is offered by the tribe⁴⁵. The main *nasīku*’s cultual act was thus performed by the chieftain, hence his title in Assyro-Babylonian sources, unless we explain it simply by the occasional Neo-Babylonian use of the *nešakku* or *nesikku* to designate the chief civil official of provincial capitals. This use, which may have a ritual background, was already prepared in the Middle Babylonian period by the attribution of the *nešakku* title to the governor of Nippur.

In Arabic, the borrowed terms *nusuk* (< *nisakku*) and *nasīk* (< *nesikku*) gave rise to a new connotation of the verb *nasaka*, “to sacrifice, to be devout”⁴⁶, and to the secondary formations *nāsik*, “pious man”, and *man-sik*, “ritual of the pilgrimage, place of sacrifice”.

The basic structures of the patriarchal family and of the clan, as exposed above, also form the framework of the larger tribal entity. W.H.R. Rivers defined a tribe as “a social group of a simple kind, the

⁴⁰ AHw, p. 794b; S.J. LIEBERMAN, *The Sumerian Loanwords in Old Babylonian Akkadian* I, Missoula 1977, p. 416-417, No. 517. The connection of the two meanings is understandable in the light of the Arabian spring festival, when first-born lambs were sacrificed; cf. J. HENNINGER, *Les fêtes de printemps chez les Arabes et leurs implications historiques*, in *Revista do Museu Paulista*, N.S., 4 (1950), p. 389-432; Id., *Les fêtes de printemps chez les Sémites et la Pâque israélite*, Paris 1975.

⁴¹ AHw, p. 58; CAD, A/2, p. 171-173.

⁴² AHw, p. 782b; CAD, N/1, p. 190-191. Cf. J. RENGGER, *Untersuchungen zum Priestertum der altbabylonischen Zeit. 2. Teil*, in *ZA* 59 (1969), p. 104-230 (see p. 138-141).

⁴³ SAA X, 112, 29.

⁴⁴ *Tigl. III*, p. 42, line 6; cf. p. 150, line 8: ^{lú}*na-si-ku* ^{lú}*Na-aq-ru*.

⁴⁵ J. HENNINGER, *Arabica sacra* (OBO 40), Freiburg-Göttingen 1981, p. 195, 199; cf. J. WELLHAUSEN, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 2nd ed., Berlin 1897, p. 114, 118, 142.

⁴⁶ The original meaning of Arabic *nasaka* was most likely “to shed”, as proposed by Th. NÖLDEKE, in *ZDMG* 41 (1887), p. 791, hence “to shed” blood, to sacrifice, under the semantic influence of the borrowed cultic terms.

members of which speak a common dialect, have a single government, and act together for such common purposes as warfare"⁴⁷. Other typical characteristics include a common name, usually alluding to a common ancestor, a contiguous territory, a relatively uniform culture or way of life, and a tradition of common descent. However, the "Aramaeans commonwealth" was a much larger group, comprising many tribes, and yet it was perceived by the Aramaeans themselves and by their neighbours, viz. the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Israelites, and the Judaeans, as a relatively uniform social reality. The criterion of political integration was obviously inapplicable in this case, since most Aramaean tribes were politically autonomous. Neighbouring peoples most likely perceived the existence of that "commonwealth" on the ground of linguistic and cultural resemblances.

This perception explains the general appellation "Aramaeans", which occurs in cuneiform and Hebrew texts, as well as the use of the title "king of Aram", which appears in a Shalmaneser III's inscription⁴⁸ and was borne by both the king of Arpad⁴⁹ and the king of Damascus⁵⁰. Even more expressive is the phrase "all Aram", attested twice in the Sefire treaties and explained by the distinction made there between Upper-Aram and Lower-Aram⁵¹. The phrase "all Aram", ^{lú}A-ram gab-bi, occurs also in a Babylonian letter found at Nippur and dating from the mid-8th century B.C., but the entire Puqūdu tribe may be meant, since the letter deals precisely with the Puqūdaeans and the religious festivity they celebrated in Nippur⁵².

The firm social framework, as described above, enhanced the ability of the Aramaean tribes to adapt themselves to the new social and economic conditions of settled populations and of territorial states, whose unity was based primarily upon a sense of extended kinship ties, despite the presence of alien population groups in the same areas with a distinct culture and a different language. This situation is mentioned explicitly in Kilamuwa's inscription from Zincirli, in Šam'al, which goes back to the 9th century B.C.⁵³.

⁴⁷ W.H.R. RIVERS, *Social Organization*, London 1924.

⁴⁸ RIMA III, text A.0.102.2, p. 19, line 38.

⁴⁹ KAI 201 = TSSI II, 1, 3.

⁵⁰ KAI 202 = TSSI II, 5, A, 4.

⁵¹ Stela I, A, 5-6.

⁵² Nippur IV, No. 27, 16. See also No. 15, 8-9: ^{lú}A-ram^{meš} gab-bi-šú-nu, where a determined group is meant as well.

⁵³ See here above, p. 236.

A characteristic of Aramaean settling down in the 10th-9th centuries B.C. is the appearance of dynastic monarchies and of a monarchical ideology in several Aramaean states. This phenomenon has many reasons behind it, which varied according to places and circumstances. In general, the main causes were the seizure of existing urban centres with local administration and changes in the technique of warfare, which were required by the new situation of a sedentary population. The traditional nomad tactics in war consisted in harassing the enemy on the march, constantly retreating before him and avoiding a general engagement. The conditions of warfare were quite different in a sedentary society. Tribal leaders were often war lords and, once settled down, they had to defend their cities against foreign threats, especially against the Assyrians. The urban centre was for them a capital and a fortress, from which they governed their state and to which they transplanted a part of their tribal kinsmen.

The monarchy was, in any case, a new institution for the Aramaeans and the ruler had to give his authority a legitimation satisfactory to many of his people. We do not have any direct report on the very beginnings of the monarchical institution among the Aramaeans, but the king willingly stressed the facts that he has been called to power by divine designation and that his achievements had been so brilliant because they were a work of divine providence. King Hazael of Damascus says: "Hadad made me king and Hadad went in front of me"⁵⁴. The Baal of Heaven announces to king Zakkūr: "Fear not, because it was I who made [you] ki[ng, and I shall st]and by you, and I shall deliver you"⁵⁵. Panamuwa I says: "There stood with me the gods Hadad and 'Il and Resheph and Rakkāb-'Il and Šamaš, and into my hands did Hadad and 'Il and Rakkāb-'Il and Šamaš and Resheph give the sceptre of the succession (to the throne), ... and whatever I asked from the gods they used to give it to me"⁵⁶. This royal ideology had to be expressed on stone in writing, in relief, or in statuary art. The life-size basalt statue of Hadd-yiṭ'i, from Tell Faḥarīya, was erected before "Hadad who dwells in Sikkān"⁵⁷, thus expressing the relation between the ruler and the deity. The enthroned monarch is shown on the stela from Zincirli which represents king Bar-Rakkāb of Šam'al

⁵⁴ Inscription from Tell al-Qāḍi, lines 4'-5'.

⁵⁵ KAI 202 = TSSI II, 5, A, 13-14.

⁵⁶ KAI 214 = TSSI II, 13, 2-4.

⁵⁷ Damascus Museum, Inv. No. 7439 (SAIO II, p. 2). The original location of the statue is indicated explicitly in the Assyrian text, lines 24-26, and in the Aramaic text, lines 1 and 15-16; cf. SAIO II, p. 35-37 and 48-50.

seated on the throne, while his chief scribe is standing before him⁵⁸. Royal ideology also needed to be provided with cultic undergirding. It had to be reaffirmed regularly in the cult, in which the king played a leading role on special or festal occasions: he was not only building temples, raising stelae and statues for the gods, but also doing sacrifices to them, and invoking their name⁵⁹. There is no evidence, instead, for the existence of a cult of the king regarded as a divine or semi-divine being. No Aramaean king is ever represented wearing a horned miter and the Zincirli socket consisting of two lions and a dwarfed man squatting between them does not really prove that the statue of a bearded figure fitting into the socket represents a deified dead king⁶⁰. Also a large column of the palace could be supported at Zincirli by two sphinxes with a lion's body, bird's wings, and a woman's head⁶¹. More significant is the pointed headdress of the kings of Šam'al⁶², which seems to derive from Neo-Assyrian pointed helmets⁶³ and to be a remainder of the king's original status of war lord.

Thus, the sheikh or *māri'* became a king, subsuming the old title in the new conditions of a territorial state⁶⁴, but assuming the royal title of *malk* as well. This passage from the nomadic or seminomadic way of life to a sedentary one is best illustrated by the "royal" insignia of Nūr-Hadad, the Temanite ruler of Nusaybin, who surrendered in 896 B.C. to

⁵⁸ Berlin VA S.6580: *ANEP*, No. 460. Excellent reproductions can be found in H. KLENGEL, *Geschichte und Kultur Altsyriens*, Leipzig 1979, Pl. 72, and here above, p. 2.

⁵⁹ *RIMA II*, text A.0.99.2, p. 151, lines 72b-76a; *KAI* 202 = *TSSI II*, 5, B, 9; *KAI* 214 = *TSSI II*, 13, 14-16.

⁶⁰ *ANEP*, No. 530; cf. H. NIEHR, *Zum Totenkult der Könige von Sam'al im 9. und 8. Jh. v. Chr.*, in *SEL* 11 (1994), p. 57-73.

⁶¹ *ANEP*, No. 648; H. KLENGEL, *op. cit.* (n. 58), Pl. 65.

⁶² *ANEP*, Nos. 455, 460; H. KLENGEL, *op. cit.* (n. 58), Pl. 60, 62, 72.

⁶³ Cf. J. BORCHHARDT, *Homerische Helme*, Mainz a/R 1972, p. 97, 99.

⁶⁴ For the title *māri'* used by the king of Aram-Damascus, see here above, p. 388-389, 390-391. One should also mention the unique two-winged seal impression discovered in Stratum V at 'Ein-Gedi (Tell al-Ğurn): B. MAZAR - T. DOTHAN - I. DUNAYEVSKY, *En-Gedi: The First and Second Seasons of Excavations, 1961-1962* ('Atiqot. English Series 5), Jerusalem 1966, p. 34-35, Fig. 12, Pl. 26, 1. The "head" of the two-winged scarab is replaced here by an inscription which was read *lmr'* by S. YEIVIN, instead of *lmlk*. Stratum V was dated by archaeologists from the end of the Judaeen kingdom, but the handle from 'Ein-Gedi belonged to a jar type from the late 8th century B.C., as noted by G. BARKAY, *King of Babylonia or Judaeen Official?*, in *IEJ* 45 (1995), p. 41-47, who reads *lmr'* instead of *lmr'*. It is unlikely, however, that the personal name of a Judaeen official, in case *Nr'*, would appear above the royal emblem, as Barkay proposes. We should rather assume that the legend is Aramaic *lmr'*, that the royal emblem has been assimilated to the Mesopotamian winged disk (cf. St. DALLEY, *The God Šalmu and the Winged Disk*, in *Iraq* 48 [1986], p. 85-101), and that *mr'* was thus referring to Sennacherib during his stay in Judah, in 701 B.C. or even later.

Adad-nirari II⁶⁵. Among the precious objects carried off as booty from the residence of Nūr-Hadad was “a gold tent befitting his royalty”, *kultār ḥurāši simat šarrūtīšu*⁶⁶. This tent was a remainder of the time when the Temanites were living in tents, “the houses of the steppe” (*bēt šēri*), with a particular tent reserved for their chief.

2. DIGNITARIES

In the new social order of the kingdom, the chief's “servants” or ‘*abdīn*’ became ministers and used the qualification ‘*bd*’ followed by the name of the king to signify their status, like on the seal “of Nūr-Ši”, servant (‘*bd*’) of ‘Attarsumki”, king of Arpad⁶⁷, on that “of ‘Azzi-Baal, servant (‘*bd*’) of Bar-Šūr”, king of Šam'al⁶⁸, or on the seal “of Hadda-rāqī, servant (‘*bd*’) of Hadda-bi'di”⁶⁹, ruler of an unknown principality in Upper Mesopotamia⁷⁰. This title ‘*bd*’ does not specify the function of the office holder, but only expresses his dependence from the “lord”, the *māri*'.

Two terms qualify royal officials in the Sefire treaties, Stela III, 10, viz. *ngd* and *pqd* that appear together also in Jer. 20, 1. The first word is often read *ngr* instead of *ngd*⁷¹, and a new argument has been recently put forward in favour of the reading *ngr*⁷²: in a cuneiform text from Sūḥu, dating back to about 770 or 760 B.C., the headman of Aramaean

⁶⁵ See here above, p. 116.

⁶⁶ RIMA II, text A.0.99.2, p. 151, line 71.

⁶⁷ P. BORDREUIL, *Catalogue des sceaux ouest-sémitiques inscrits*, Paris 1986, No. 86; N. AVIGAD - B. SASS, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, Jerusalem 1997, p. 282, No 753.

⁶⁸ R. DEUTSCH - M. HELTZER, *New Epigraphic Evidence from the Biblical Period*, Tel Aviv-Jaffa 1995, p. 75-76.

⁶⁹ A. LEMAIRE, *Le sceau CIS, II, 74 et sa signification historique*, in *Semítica* 28 (1978), p. 11-14 and Pl. I; N. AVIGAD - B. SASS, *op. cit.* (n. 67), p. 281, No. 751.

⁷⁰ The same name is attested very likely in the Harrān Census: SAA XI, 206, 4'.

⁷¹ A. DUPONT-SOMMER - J. STARCKY, *Une inscription araméenne inédite de Sfiré*, in *BMB* 13 (1956 [1958]), p. 23-41 and Pl. I-VI, read *ngry*, comparing Akkadian *nāgīru*, “herald”, and this reading is followed by É. PUECH, *Les inscriptions araméennes I et II de Sfiré: nouvelles lectures*, in *RB* 89 (1982), p. 576-587 and Pl. XIII (see p. 584), and A. LEMAIRE - J.-M. DURAND, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré et l'Assyrie de Shamshilu*, Genève-Paris 1984, p. 145. However, J.A. FITZMYER, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*, 2nd ed., Rome 1995, p. 151, is perfectly right in maintaining that the lower part of the vertical shaft of the supposed *r* does not continue in the same direction and looks therefore as if it was either a slip or a secondary cut. This feature is not paralleled by other *r* on the stela, not even in *yrb* of line 26, contrary to É. Puech's opinion.

⁷² DION, *Araméens*, p. 278, n. 31.

invaders from the Sarugu clan bears the title of NIMGIR, “herald”, i. e. *nāgīru* in Assyro-Babylonian⁷³. Long known as the court “herald” whose proclamation might call forth royal levy or assemble a city for war, the Elamite *nāgīru* (^{lu}ŠUDUN instead of NIMGIR) appears instead in Neo-Assyrian texts as a field-officer of high rang⁷⁴. The use of this title in the document from Sūḫu simply reflects a particular Neo-Assyrian terminology. It does not fit the context of the Sefire treaty which deals with high-treason and regicide. The argument thus misses the point.

The word *ngd* must occur also in the Adon letter from the end of the 7th century B.C. where the material reading, either with *d* or with *r*, cannot be established on palaeographical grounds, while the context is broken⁷⁵. The solution must be provided by the Aramaic language itself that only possesses a noun *ngr*, “carpenter”, whereas Syriac *nāgūdā* and Jewish Aramaic *nāgōdā* mean “chief, leader”, a word that is certainly used in Imperial Aramaic and in the Aḥiqar story as well, where it designates a dignitary of the court⁷⁶. If we now compare this general purport of *ngd* with the meaning “to report” of the denominative Hebrew verb *higgīd*, we must assume that the royal *ngd* of the Aramaic texts of the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. corresponds somehow to the *mār šipri* of the Late Bronze Age⁷⁷. He was the “messenger” or “ambassador”, but played an important role also in the overland trade between Near Eastern royal courts⁷⁸.

If the Early Aramaic *ngd* was such a royal “envoy”, his particular mention among people who might conspire against the king is quite

⁷³ RIMB II, text S.O.1002.2, p. 295, line 12.

⁷⁴ Cf. *Sennacherib*, p. 45, lines 82-84; M. STRECK, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's* (VAB 7), Leipzig 1916, vol. II, p. 324, line 6; R. BORGER, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals*, Wiesbaden 1996, p. 299, line 3 I 6. For *nāgīru*, see CAD, N/1, p. 115-118; L. SASSMANNSHAUSEN, *Funktion und Stellung der Herolde (NIGIR/nāgīru) im Alten Orient*, in *BaM* 26 (1995), p. 85-194.

⁷⁵ TAD I, A1.1, 8.

⁷⁶ TAD III, C1.1, 10; C3.11, 12; J.B. SEGAL, *Aramaic Texts from North Saqqâra*, London 1983, No. 13, 3.

⁷⁷ The problem of the semantic relation between the *hiph'īl* “to report” and the basic meaning “to set out” was examined recently by M. ESKHULT, *Über einige hebräische Verben des Sprechens — Etymologie und Metapher*, in *Orientalia Suecana* 38-39 (1989-90), p. 31-35 (see p. 33), but on a too speculative basis assuming a direct shift from the basic stem to the causative. Instead, the latter results most likely from the function exercised by the *ngd*, comparable with a *mār šipri*.

⁷⁸ A.F. RAINEY, *Business Agents at Ugarit*, in *IEJ* 13 (1963), p. 313-321; C. ZACCAGNINI, *Lo scambio dei doni nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV-XII* (*Orientalis Antiqui Collectio* 11), Roma 1973, p. 51-58; Y. LYNN HOLMES, *The Messengers of the Amarna Letters*, in *JAOS* 95 (1975), p. 376-381; C. ZACCAGNINI, *The Merchant at Nuzi*, in *Iraq* 39 (1977), p. 171-189.

understandable, since he would belong to the group of high officials involved in relations with foreign courts. This assumption also clarifies the position of Aḥiqar's nephew who has to serve Esarhaddon of Assyria among the king's *ngdn* as the successor of a "wise scribe, counselor of Assyria"⁷⁹. A fortiori, the *ngd' znh* of the Adon letter must be a messenger, either sent by the Pharaoh or bringing Adon's letter to the king of Egypt.

The Aramaic acceptation "envoy" or "messenger" of the word *ngd* is also attested in biblical Hebrew, in three passages the original language of which was most likely an Aramaic dialect. Two passages occur in the Book of Job 29, 10 and 31, 37 where the flavour of its original language is preserved. Both texts clearly refer to "messengers":

"The messengers drowned the voice
and their tongue adhered to the palate" (Job 29, 10).

"I shall report the detail of my steps to him,
like a messenger I shall approach him" (Job 31, 37).

This acceptation of *nāgīd* occurs also in Prov. 8, 6, in a chapter which is well-known for having used older sources, partly written not in Hebrew but in Aramaic. This Aramaic background appears clearly in the verse under consideration which uses the pa'el of the verb *dbar* with the meaning "to direct"⁸⁰. It is the Wisdom which is speaking:

"Listen! For I shall direct messengers:
the utterance of my lips is righteousness".

The connotation "envoy" or "messenger" was therefore known in ancient Palestine, even if it did not belong to the dialect that became the standard Hebrew language of the Bible. And the meaning "to report" of the denominative hiph'il *higgīd* in Hebrew derives precisely from this particular sense of *nāgīd*.

This brings us to the question of the origins of the title *ngd* in Aramaic and to the long proposed identification of *nāgīd* with *nāqīdu/nōqēd*, "shepherd"⁸¹, i. e. the man "setting out" with flocks for transhumance

⁷⁹ TAD III, C1.1, 12.

⁸⁰ For this verb, cf. E. LIPÍŃSKI, "Leadership": The Roots DBR and NGD in Aramaic, in M. DIETRICH - I. KOTTSIEPER (eds.), "Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf ...". Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient. Festschrift O. Loretz, Münster 1998, p. 501-514 (see p. 505). This verb is probably used also in Ps. 18, 48 and 47, 4, but its vocalization as hiph'il is then artificial. For another explanation, cf. E. LIPÍŃSKI, *La royauté de Yahwé dans la poésie et le culte de l'ancien Israël*, 2nd ed., Brussel 1968, p. 412, n. 2.

⁸¹ J.J. GLÜCK, *Nagid — Shepherd*, in VT 13 (1963), p. 144-150; cf. H. CAZELLES, review in VT 8 (1958), p. 321-326.

and “leading” herds to more suitable places as the seasons change. This interpretation was rejected in different quarters⁸² in consideration of an argument contradicted by the ample evidence for a Semitic voiced *qāf* and for a shift *q* > *g*, both in ancient and in modern dialects⁸³. This evidence shows at least that *nāgīd* and *nāqīdu/nōqēd* may go back to the same Semitic root *ng/qd*, “to set out”, because the velar middle radical can reach a different phonemic status in the different dialects and had been variously fixed according to the semantic value of the derivatives⁸⁴. The office of the royal *ngd*, “envoy”, may thus derive from the role of the “shepherd” in ancient Aramaean seminomadic households. This was most likely a dignitary of a higher rank than the *ml’k*, the “emissary” sent with letters to another prince and corresponding to the Neo-Assyrian *šīru*, often mentioned in the plural *šīrāni*⁸⁵. The noun *ngd* was probably pronounced *naggād* rather than *nagīd*⁸⁶, like the Semitic word borrowed by the Sumerians as *n a - g a d*⁸⁷ and attested as personal name *Na-ga-du* in Amorite⁸⁸. There is also a spelling *na-qīd-da* attested at Nippur in the mid-8th century B.C.⁸⁹.

The office of *pqd* associated with *ngd* in the Sefire treaty can likewise go back to the seminomadic social structures of the Aramaeans, since this title does not appear either in earlier Syrian sources or in Neo-Assyrian texts. It is basically a passive form *paqīd* derived from the Aramaic verb *pqd*, “to survey”⁹⁰, and etymologically designating one who is under a command, thus a “subordinate”. The distinction between *paqīd* and *‘abd* may perhaps be compared to the one existing among Arabs between a *ḥaddām* or *ḥādim*, “servant”, “attendant”, and an *‘abd*, although a clearly cut distinction cannot be established for an ancient period. In a later period there were seemingly differences of rank between persons who bore the title of *pqd*.

⁸² Cf. F. GARCÍA-LÓPEZ, *ngd*, in *ThWAT* V, Stuttgart 1986, col. 188-201 (see col. 189); G.F. HASEL, *nāgīd*, in *ThWAT* V, Stuttgart 1986, col. 203-219 (see col. 207).

⁸³ For example, J. CANTINEAU, *Les parlers arabes du Hōrân*, Paris 1946, p. 114, 125-127; C. RABIN, *Ancient West-Arabian*, London 1951, p. 55, 125-126.

⁸⁴ For a more detailed discussion, cf. E. LIPÍŃSKI, *art. cit.* (n. 80), p. 512-514.

⁸⁵ *AHW*, p. 1105 (translation to be corrected); *CAD*, S, p. 213.

⁸⁶ The spelling *ngyd* does not occur in epigraphy, contrary to *pqyd*, a passive in opposition to *pāqīd* (cf. above, p. 430); cf. *DNWSI*, p. 713-714 and 932-933.

⁸⁷ A. DEIMEL, *Sumerisches Lexikon* II, Roma 1928-33, No. 70, 48; I.J. GELB, *Glossary of Old Akkadian* (MAD 3), Chicago 1957, p. 205.

⁸⁸ J. EIDEM, *The Shemshāra Archives 2: The Administrative Texts* (Historisk-filosofiske Skrifter 15), Copenhagen 1992, No. 18, 2.

⁸⁹ *Nippur* IV, No. 122, 24.

⁹⁰ The basic Akkadian connotation is “to entrust”; cf. S.A. KAUFMAN, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (AS 19), Chicago 1974, p. 79-80.

Other titles of royal officials were inherited from local sedentary administrations or borrowed from the Assyrians. An important function was exercised by the scribe, who is not mentioned so far in Early Aramaic royal inscriptions⁹¹, but who occupies a prominent place on a king Bar-Rakkāb's stela from Zincirli⁹². Written documents required by various kinds of political and economic agreements were produced by scribes, whose technical skill was highly appreciated. They seem even to have been very proud of their profession as suggested, for example, by the short Aramaic inscription of a cylinder seal dating probably to the end of the 8th century B.C.: *l-Nbd spr'*, "(belonging) to Nabū-ūda, the scribe"⁹³. Although the scribe's name is undoubtedly Assyro-Babylonian, the use of the Aramaic language certainly demonstrates his Aramaean origin. The legend is inscribed behind the figure of a man worshipping a god who stands on a couchant bull and blesses the owner of the seal. In a parallel scene, a woman worships a goddess who sits on a throne above a couchant lion and likewise blesses the worshipper. There is little doubt that the humans thus represented are supposed to be the scribe himself and his wife. The fine quality of the engraving testifies to the wealth of the man simply qualified as "the scribe". A contemporary stamp seal bears a similar Aramaic inscription *l-Hwdw spr'*, "(belonging) to Hōdaw, the scribe"⁹⁴, while a beardless scribe is represented standing before king Bar-Rakkāb on the famous stela from Zincirli⁹⁵. Although his name is not mentioned, his social status is demonstrated by his appearance on the stela, and his function results clearly from the writing palette he holds in his left hand and from the writing material under his arm. Royal scribes are probably mentioned on two Nimrud bronzes from the 8th century B.C. brought from Syria as booty: *l-'lhly spr'*, "(belonging) to 'Ilahilī, the scribe", and *l-B'l'zr spr'*, "(belonging) to Baal'azar, the scribe"⁹⁶. Scribes were important functionaries within

⁹¹ Epigraphic references can be found in *DNWSI*, p. 798-799 and 801, where the distinction between *spr*₂ and *spr*₅ can hardly be understood.

⁹² *ANEP*, No. 460. Excellent reproductions can be found in H. KLENGEL, *op. cit.* (n. 58), Pl. 72, and here above, p. 2.

⁹³ O. 1499, cf. *SAIO* II, p. 244-245.

⁹⁴ British Museum: *CIS* II, 84; S.A. COOK, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology*, London 1930, Pl. IX, 4; J.C. GREENFIELD, *Studies in Aramaic Lexicography I*, in *JAOS* 82 (1962), p. 290-299 (see p. 297, n. 77); F. VATTIONI, *I sigilli, le monete e gli avori aramaici*, in *Augustinianum* 11 (1971), p. 47-87 (see p. 54, No. 41); L.G. HERR, *The Scripts of Ancient Northwest Semitic Seals*, Missoula 1978, p. 11-12, No. 2. Similar legends are attested in Moabite and in Hebrew.

⁹⁵ See here above, n. 92.

⁹⁶ R.D. BARNETT, *Layard's Nimrud Bronzes and Their Inscriptions*, in *E.L. Sukenik Memorial Volume* (ErIs 8), Jerusalem 1967, p. 1*-7* (see Nos. 6 and 7 = *CIS* II, 46).

the royal bureaucracy at different levels, but their names and their title *spr* appear also in private legal documents⁹⁷. In other words, the title characterizes the kind of work provided by these specialists of the scribal art, regardless of the hierarchic position of any particular scribe. The importance of Aramaic scribes in Babylonia was so big that the Aramaic term *spr* was borrowed in the 8th-7th centuries B.C. into Neo-Babylonian to designate the scribe writing on papyrus, leather or parchment⁹⁸.

One of the highest officials in a Syro-Palestinian kingdom of the Late Bronze Age and of the Iron Age was the *sākinu/sūkinu/sōkēn*. However, different categories of *sākinu* are attested at Ugarit⁹⁹, as “the *sākinu* of the land”, “the *sākinu* of the royal palace”, and “the *sākinu* of the city”. Early Aramaic inscriptions only mention a *skn byt mlkh* at Ḥamath¹⁰⁰, who probably was the chief minister in charge of the royal administration and not only the steward of the royal residence or the administrator of the Crown properties. In any case, the *bēt malkā* of the Persian period appears as a centre of state management¹⁰¹. Besides, the title *skn* appears on a stone weight of unknown provenance, with an inscription written in Aramaic and probably dating from the 8th century B.C.¹⁰².

Among court officials, one finds the *srs*, mentioned twice in the Sefire treaties and already in the trilingual inscription of Ninurta-bēl-uṣur, governor of Til-barsip, who presents himself in the Aramaic version of the text as the *srs* of Shamshi-Adad V (823-811 B.C.)¹⁰³. The term appears later in Aramaic texts from the period of the Sargonids, especially in the impression of the seal belonging “to Pan-Aššur-lāmur, courtier of Sargon”, ¹[l-]Pn'sr²[l]mr *srs* z³[y] *Srgn*¹⁰⁴. Another seal, the authenticity of

⁹⁷ See, for instance, J. NAVEH, *The Development of the Aramaic Script*, Jerusalem 1970, p. 22-24. On an Aramaic tablet dating to the 7th century B.C., the last witness bears the title of “scribe”, *spr* (line 20); cf. above, p. 46, n. 125.

⁹⁸ DNWSI, p. 801. The best study on the scribes is that by M. DANDAMAYEV, *Babylonian Scribes* (in Russian), Moscow 1983.

⁹⁹ M. HELTZER, *The Internal Organization of the Kingdom of Ugarit*, Wiesbaden 1982, p. 141-152.

¹⁰⁰ OTZEN, *Hama*, p. 275-277, *AramGraf* 1-2, cf. 3-4.

¹⁰¹ B. PORTEN, *Archives from Elephantine*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1968, p. 60.

¹⁰² M. HELTZER, *An Inscribed Weight in the Reuben and Edith Hecht Museum*, in *Michmanim* 12 (1998), p. 44*-46*.

¹⁰³ Sefire Stelae I, B, 45 and III, 5. For the trilingual inscription, see *CHLI*, forthcoming.

¹⁰⁴ S.A. KAUFMAN, *The History of Aramaic Vowel Reduction*, in M. SOKOLOFF (ed.), *Arameans, Aramaic and the Aramaic Literary Tradition*, Ramat-Gan 1983, p. 47-55 (see p. 53-54); N. AVIGAD - B. SASS, *op. cit.* (n. 67), p. 283, No. 755. The old incorrect reading of the seal impression is still followed by DION, *Araméens*, p. 276, n. 26.

which is somewhat doubtful¹⁰⁵, would have belonged “to Akkad-bāni, son of Gabbār-Adda, the courtier, who has offered (it) to Hadad”, ¹*l-kdbn* ²*br Gbrd* ³*srs* ⁴*zy hqrb* ⁵*l-Hdd*¹⁰⁶. *Rb srs* occurs on a bilingual tablet dated from the eponym year of Nabū-šar-ušur (682 B.C.), who bore the title of “chief courtier”¹⁰⁷. The word *sarīs*, attested also in Syriac, is certainly borrowed from Neo-Assyrian *ša-rēši*¹⁰⁸, but it refers to the attendant of an Aramaean king only in the Sefire treaties that reveal a strong Assyrian influence. One may doubt therefore that the *srs* really belonged to the normal staff of an Aramaean royal court or was an Aramaean state functionary, independently from the question whether this term always designates courtiers who are eunuchs or no¹⁰⁹.

The Aramaic inscription *l-šqy*’ inscribed across the shoulder of a store jar which was discovered in 1961 at ‘Ein Gev, on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, was at first regarded as providing the title of a high Aramaean official, “the cup-bearer”¹¹⁰. However, the plural of the similar inscription *l-ṭb[h]y*’ on a bowl discovered at Tell al-Qāḍi¹¹¹ makes it likely that also the first inscription is a plural and that these Aramaic epigraphs from the 9th century B.C. refer to wine butlers and to butchers or cooks.

A very different type of dignitaries are priests and prophets. Priests are never mentioned in Aramaic royal inscriptions but their title *kumr* is well-known from other texts¹¹² and this word appears as first element of a genitive compound name *Kmr’lh*, “Priest of God”, parallel to the well-known names meaning “Servant of God”. The name is inscribed on a bronze cup found in Luristan (Iran) and dating from the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 7th century B.C. It is followed by the patronymic and by the title of the proprietor of the cup: *Kmr’lh br ’lsmk ‘bd ‘zr*¹¹³.

¹⁰⁵ J. NAVEH - H. TADMOR, *Some Doubtful Aramaic Seals*, in *AION* 28 (1968), p. 448-452 (see p. 452).

¹⁰⁶ *CIS* II, 75 (BM. 89154).

¹⁰⁷ F.M. FALES, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period* (*Studi semitici*, n.s. 2), Roma 1986, p. 136, No. 2, 6.

¹⁰⁸ The phonetic spelling *š[á-r]eš* occurs in *Nippur* IV, No. 120, 10; Aramaic *srys(’/h)* with internal *y*, already in *TAD* III, C1.1, 61.63.69; IV, D23.1, Va, 6.

¹⁰⁹ Recent literature on this question is collected by DION, *Araméens*, p. 277-278, n. 29, whose positive statements seem to go beyond the available evidence that suggests more caution. On the problem of interpreting the office represented by the title *ša rēši*, see J.A. BRINKMAN - St. DALLEY, *A Royal Kudurru from the Reign of Aššur-nādin-šumi*, in *ZA* 78 (1988), p. 76-98 (see p. 85-86).

¹¹⁰ *TSSI* II, 3.

¹¹¹ *TSSI* II, 4.

¹¹² *DNWSI*, p. 515-516.

¹¹³ *TSSI* II, 12.

The excellent quality of the cup and the title *'bd 'zr* seem to indicate that the man was a court dignitary in an unknown princedom, and his name would suit a member of a priestly family. The title *kumr*, "priest", is used in Old Assyrian and in the Old Babylonian dialect of Mari¹¹⁴, where it might be considered as an Amorite loanword. It is attested also in Middle Assyrian, but it does not appear in the Amarna correspondence¹¹⁵. In the first millennium B.C., the priestly title *kumr* occurs, as a rule, only in Aramaic¹¹⁶, but there is nowhere a concrete description of his office and his activities. The only indication is provided by the mention of Ši'-gabbār, priest of the Moon-god at Nerab, in a letter addressed to Sargon II, in which this *kumr* is called ^{lu}SANGA and "servant of the king"¹¹⁷. The *sangû* was a priest of high rank or the chief religious administrator of a temple, by no means an ecstatic, and his qualification as "servant of the king" suggests that he was considered as a high dignitary. Both funerary stelae of the priests of the Moon-god at Nerab, Ši'-gabbār and Šīn-zēr-ibni¹¹⁸, also indicate that these were important men, most likely high priests of the local sanctuary.

There were also priestesses in the Aramaean commonwealth. They are called *kumirtu*, a title used in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions¹¹⁹ to designate an Arab queen-priestess and translating Arabic *'apkallatu*¹²⁰. Since the term *kumr* was not used in Neo-Assyrian, its feminine counterpart *kumirtu* must be an Aramaic derivative proving the existence of priestesses in the Aramaean world. Their function is unknown, but the *kumirtu* was obviously distinguished from the *knh* and from the *'nyh*,

¹¹⁴ AHw, p. 506a; CAD, K, p. 534-535.

¹¹⁵ The alleged *kumiru* (AHw, p. 506a) should be suppressed, since *kummirû*, "they heaped up", is to be read in EA 129, 9, while the reading is uncertain in EA 131, 19. As for *kamiru(m)* in EA 1, 15.33, this is a phonetic variant of Semitic *kabîr*, "influential, eminent"; cf. LIPÍŃSKI, *Semitic*, § 11.6.

¹¹⁶ The alleged Phoenician attestation from Amathus (Cyprus) and the Neo-Punic one from Althiburos are both uncertain, although they are reported in DNWSI, p. 515. The few biblical examples of *komer* are borrowed from Aramaic and reserved for priests of heathen deities.

¹¹⁷ S. PARPOLA, *Si'gabbar of Nerab Resurrected*, in OLP 16 (1985), p. 273-275; SAA I, 189, 7-9.

¹¹⁸ KAI 225-226 = TSSI II, 18-19. See also S.A. KAUFMAN, *Si'gabbar, Priest of Sahr in Nerab*, in JAOS 90 (1970), p. 270-271. One can find a reproduction of both stelae in ANEP, Nos. 280 and 635; H. GENGE, *Nordsyrisch-südanatolische Reliefs*, København 1979, vol. II, Fig. 117 and 118. This type of reliefs has been discussed by J.D. HAWKINS, *Late Funerary Monuments*, in B. ALSTER (ed.), *Death in Mesopotamia* (Mesopotamia 8), Copenhagen 1980, p. 213-225. See also below, p. 640.

¹¹⁹ M. STRECK, *op. cit.* (n. 74), vol. II, p. 216, No. 15 (K. 3087), line 1; p. 222, No. 19 (K. 3405), line 12; R. BORGER, *op. cit.* (n. 74), p. 70, line 12.

¹²⁰ See here above, p. 80; cf. DNWSI, p. 95-96.

both mentioned in the Plaster inscription from Deir 'Allā¹²¹, and from the *mḥwt mlkyn*, referred to in Aramaic in Prov. 31, 3.

The cultic function of the *knhh* cannot be deduced straightforwardly from the Deir 'Allā inscription, since the activities described in this part of the text are contrary to the normal world order¹²². It would seem that the *knhh* behaves there as the belle of a brothel, while in Arabic *kāhina* is a diviner or soothsayer¹²³. Also the '*nyh* is believed to be a kind of prophetess¹²⁴, although she is "mixing myrrh" (*rqht mr*) according to the text. Literally, she would be a "respondent" or "answerer", the equivalent of the *āpiltu* known from the Mari texts¹²⁵ and of the *raggim/ntu*, "she-speaker", attested in Neo-Assyrian documents¹²⁶. Considering however that there is an intentional inversion of normal activities in this passage of the Deir 'Allā inscription and that myrrh played an important role in the cult, "mixing myrrh" should be related to the *knhh*, while the '*nyh* would be the "songstress", like in Syriac and in Is. 51, 21; 54, 11, where Jerusalem is called in such a way¹²⁷. Music and dance are portrayed in erotic scenes and the '*nyh*, either cultic or secular, may thus be connected with erotic situations¹²⁸. The Aramaic title of professional female ecstasies is mentioned in Prov. 31, 3, where the *mḥwt mlkyn* are certainly "kings' prophetesses"¹²⁹. This appellation is identical with Assyro-Babylonian *mahḥūtu*¹³⁰.

¹²¹ Combination I, 11 (13). Cf. *SAIO* II, p. 103-170, with literature. The Deir 'Allā inscription, despite the exertions of some scholars, is written in an Aramaic dialect, different from the one used at the time, around 800 B.C., either in Upper Mesopotamia or in Šam'al.

¹²² Combination I, 7 (9)b-16 (18); cf. *SAIO* II, p. 131-139.

¹²³ This capacity of predicting future events and announcing events that happen far away is ascribed therefore to the famous North-African queen-priestess Al-Kāhina; cf. M. TALBI, *Un nouveau fragment de l'histoire de l'Occident musulman (A.H.) 62-196/(A.D.) 682-812: L'épopée d'Al-Kahina*, in *Cahiers de Tunisie* 19 (1971), p. 19-52; J. DÉJEUX, *La Kahina, de l'histoire à la fiction littéraire, mythe et épopée*, in *Studi Magrebini* 15 (1983), p. 1-42; M.H. FANTAR, *La Kahina, reine des Berbères*, in *REP-PAL* 3 (1987), p. 169-184.

¹²⁴ J. HOFTIJZER - G. VAN DER KOOIJ, *Aramaic Texts from Deir 'Alla*, Leiden 1976, p. 212.

¹²⁵ A comprehensive survey is that of E. NOORT, *Untersuchungen zum Gottesbescheid in Mari* (AOAT 202), Neukirchen-Vluyn-Kevelaer 1977. See also A. MALAMAT, *Mari and the Bible*, Leiden 1998, p. 59-162.

¹²⁶ See S. PARPOLA, *Assyrian Prophecies* (State Archives of Assyria IX), Helsinki 1997.

¹²⁷ *SAIO* II, p. 135-136.

¹²⁸ One might relate '*nyh* also to Arabic *gāniya*, "pretty girl", but a typical professional term fits the context better.

¹²⁹ E. LPIŃSKI, *Les "voyantes des rois" en Prov. XXXI 3*, in *VT* 23 (1973), p. 246.

¹³⁰ *AHW*, p. 583a; *CAD*, M/2, p. 176-177.

Other Aramaic prophetic titles occur in the Zakkūr inscription¹³¹, where the Baal of Heaven is said to have spoken to the king “through seers (*hzyn*) and messengers (*‘ddn*)”¹³². God’s oracle is introduced by the typical formula “Fear not!” (*’l tzh̄l*), which characterizes the Hebrew salvation oracles and thus implies a similar cultic background¹³³. As for a differentiation of the *hzh*, literally “seer”, from the *‘dd*, attested at Ugarit with the meaning “spokesman”¹³⁴, it is difficult to establish it on such a tenuous basis, but the inscription seems to distinguish the man of God who receives the divine message and the one who notifies it to the person to whom it is addressed. In the Deir ‘Allā inscription, however, the same man, viz. Balaam, son of Beor, receives “‘Il’s revelation” (*mš’ l*) in his dream and communicates the doom oracle to his people¹³⁵. He is described in the text as “the man seeing the gods”, *’š hzh lhn*¹³⁶, while Numb. 22, 5 calls him *pātōrā*, “interpreter” of visions and dreams. Also this term was used in Aramaic, since it is quoted in Numb. 22, 5 in its Aramaic form, in the emphatic state¹³⁷.

The origins of the local administration in Aramaean states show different aspects. While the city elders and the elders of the village communities maintain the tradition of the tribal or sub-tribal elders, the mayor of the city represents a function based on sedentary institutions. Since he is called *hzn qryt’* or simply *hzn* (*hazzān*)¹³⁸, like in Assyro-Babylonian, his title and his office should be considered as borrowed.

¹³¹ See here above, p. 255.

¹³² KAI 202 = TSSI II, 5, A, 11-12. Cf. J.F. ROSS, *Prophecy in Hamath, Israel and Mari*, in *HTR* 63 (1970), p. 1-28.

¹³³ J. BEGRICH, *Das priesterliche Heilsorakel*, in *ZAW* 52 (1934), p. 81-92, especially p. 83, reprinted in J. BEGRICH, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, München 1964. For the Zakkūr inscription, see H.J. ZOBEL, *Das Gebet um Abwendung der Not und seine Erhörung in den Klageliedern des Alten Testaments und in der Inschrift des Königs Zakir von Hamath*, in *VT* 21 (1971), p. 91-99; J.C. GREENFIELD, *The Zakir Inscription and the Danklied*, in *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies I*, Jerusalem 1972, p. 174-191, especially p. 182-189. The same phrase “Fear not!” occurs in Hattušili III’s Apology in which the goddess Šauška of Šamuḫa is said to have appeared to the king in a dream; cf. H. OTTEN - H.M. KÜMMEL, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III*, in O. KAISER (ed.), *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments I/5*, Gütersloh 1985, p. 481-492 (see p. 483).

¹³⁴ KTU 1.4, VII, 46. The noun derives from the same root as Arabic *‘adda*, “to reckon, to enumerate”.

¹³⁵ Combination I; cf. SAIO II, p. 115-117.

¹³⁶ Combination I, 1; cf. SAIO II, p. 117.

¹³⁷ SAIO II, p. 111-112, with literature.

¹³⁸ DNWSI, p. 361.

Authors have assumed that the *b'ly kpyry* of a Šam'al inscription¹³⁹ are "heads of villages"¹⁴⁰. However, this interpretation is based on a questionable translation of a passage in an older Šam'al inscription, where one should read *l-nšb tyrt w-l-nšb zrry w-l-bny kpyry*¹⁴¹. The noun *tyrt* corresponds to Nabataean *ṭwr*, Sabaic *ṭwr*, and Arabic *ṭi'r*, "foundation wall" or "breast wall"¹⁴², with the well attested variant *w/y*, like in *ṭwb/tyb*, "be good"¹⁴³. This connotation explains the use of the verb *nšb*, "to raise", which usually does not govern nouns like "city" or "tree"¹⁴⁴. Also *zrry* does not mean "city" or "town", but it can derive from the root *drr*, which may convey the idea of watering or sprinkling in Epigraphic South-Arabian¹⁴⁵ and in Arabic (*darra*). As *zrry* is governed here by *nšb*, it should mean "gutters" or the like. As for *kpyry*, it can be linked with Sabaic *kfr*, probably "sluice" or "covered cistern"¹⁴⁶, with Late Babylonian *Nār ka-pi-ri*¹⁴⁷, "Canal of the reservoir" or the like, and with Neo-Assyrian *kupīru* which is most likely no "bitumen"¹⁴⁸ (*kupru*, *kupuru*), but a "coated" or "bituminized cistern". Bitumen is known to have been used in Mesopotamia and in northern Syria for sealing water-conduits and irrigation canals¹⁴⁹, and the Assyrian word *kupīru* occurs precisely in a comparable context: *l bībi lā gamur kupīru tabiu*¹⁵⁰, "1 gutter, non completed, a bituminized cistern, in progress?". The term seems to derive from the root *kpr*, "to cover", like

¹³⁹ KAI 215 = TSSI II, 14, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Thus DION, *Araméens*, p. 254, n. 55 and 56; cf. p. 284, n. 63, and p. 302-303. It will suffice here to file G. GARBINI, *Lessico militare fenicio a Sam'al*, in *Rivista di Studi Fenici* 24 (1996), p. 181-183, who explains *b'ly kpyry* as a Phoenician phrase designating heavy-armed infantry, while the *zrrw* would be earth ramparts.

¹⁴¹ KAI 214 = TSSI II, 13, 10. The word *tyrt* has also been read *qyrt*, "cities", and *qyst*, "trees", but there is no visible trace of a shaft, what excludes the *qāf* and favours *ṭ* or *'*.

¹⁴² The Nabataean inscription CIS II, 350, 2 refers to "foundations" or "breast walls" (*ṭwry*); cf. DNWSI, p. 420-421. As for the Sabaic noun *ṭwr* or *ṭr*, it seems to designate a stone foundation (*Sabaic Dictionary*, p. 173), but the word is at least related to Minaic *ṭṭwr* and to Arabic *ṭi'r*, "buttress" or "breast wall"; cf. K. CONTI ROSSINI, *Chrestomathia Arabica Meridionalis Epigraphica*, Roma 1931, p. 160b; C. RABIN, *op. cit.* (n. 83), p. 27; M.A. GHUL, *Early Southern Arabian Languages and Classical Arabic Sources*, Irbid 1993, p. 214.

¹⁴³ C. RABIN, *op. cit.* (n. 83), p. 129; LIPÍŃSKI, *Semitic*, § 11.13 and § 43.17.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. J.J. KOOPMANS, *Aramäische Chrestomathie I*, Leiden 1962, p. 34.

¹⁴⁵ *Sabaic Dictionary*, p. 40.

¹⁴⁶ *Sabaic Dictionary*, p. 77.

¹⁴⁷ RGTC 8, p. 374; AHW, p. 444a; CAD, K, p. 184a.

¹⁴⁸ J. BOTTÉRO, ARMT VII, Paris 1957, p. 299-300; SAA XI, p. 163a.

¹⁴⁹ R.J. FORBES, *Studies in Ancient Technology I*, Leiden 1955, p. 56-83; R. NAUMANN, *Architektur Kleinasien von ihren Anfängen bis zum Ende der hethitischen Zeit*, 2nd ed., Tübingen 1971, p. 53-54.

¹⁵⁰ SAA XI. 16. r. I. 4'-5'. 7'-8'.

Hebrew *kapōr*, “plated vessel”¹⁵¹. The reason why these particular king’s achievements are mentioned at Zincirli on the Hadad statue is that the Storm-god was the divine “water controller of heaven and earth”, as forcefully expressed in the Tell Faḥārīya inscription, lines 1-4.

Therefore, the *b’ly kpyry w-b’ly rkb* of the later Šam’alian inscription are “proprietors of bituminized cisterns and proprietors of a cart”¹⁵². The noun *b’l* means “proprietor” here and does not refer to village officials or to military commanders. The whole clause deals with agriculture, enhanced by properly built cisterns and irrigation channels, and by the use of carts for field labour and conveyance of agricultural produce.

A military commander is mentioned instead in the inscription engraved on the bronze covering of a shield, having a boss decorated with a bull-head and three knobs in concentric circles¹⁵³, much like a similar object from Zincirli¹⁵⁴. The inscription names the owner of the shield: [?]*t’rkdy rb mšm’t*, “Tarko(n)day¹⁵⁵, chief of the bodyguard”. The term *mšm’t*, “bodyguard”, occurs in biblical Hebrew¹⁵⁶ and in the Moabite inscription of king Mesha, line 28¹⁵⁷. Its attestation in the present inscription, which is roughly contemporaneous with the Moabite stone, indicates that the word was used also in the early Aramaean world of northern Syria, possibly in the kingdom of Šam’al, where the population was partly Luwian. Another military title, *šar šabā’*, is attributed in the Bible to the commander-in-chief of the Aramaean army of Hadadezer¹⁵⁸. This must be a translation of Aramaic *rab ḥeylā*¹⁵⁹, as

¹⁵¹ JASTROW, p. 657b.

¹⁵² Only one interpretation should therefore be kept in *SAIO* II, p. 204-205, for *šm mt b’ly kpyry wb’ly rkb* (*KAI* 215 = *TSSI* II, 14, 10): “he made the land(men) proprietors of bituminized cisterns and proprietors of a cart”, thus renouncing to the widely accepted translation of *kpyry* by “villages”.

¹⁵³ M. KREBERNIK - U. SEIDL, *Ein Schildbeschlag mit Bukranion und alphabetischer Inschrift*, in *ZA* 87 (1997), p. 101-111 and Pl. 1-4.

¹⁵⁴ Photograph *ibid.*, Pl. 2b; cf. F. VON LUSCHAN, *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli V. Die Kleinfunden von Sendschirli*, ed. by W. ANDRAE, Berlin 1943, p. 89, 170, and Pl. 54c.

¹⁵⁵ The first letter is uncertain. It was probably preceded by the preposition *l*. The vocalization is based on the Luwian name *Ταρκονδαιος*: L. ZGUSTA, *Kleinasiatische Personennamen*, Prag 1964, p. 487, § 1512-4. The spelling without *n* is justified by L. Zgusta in the case of *Ταρκο(ν)δίμοτος* as follows: “Vor einem Konsonant ist der Nasal nicht besonders fest” (*ibid.*, p. 488, n. 42). The Aramaic transcription *trk* of the Luwian name of the Storm-god is attested by *Trkmnh* = *Τρογομωνης*: W. KORNFELD, *Onomastica Aramaica aus Ägypten*, Wien 1978, p. 116.

¹⁵⁶ I Sam. 22, 14; II Sam. 23, 23; I Chron. 11, 25.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. E. LIPÍŃSKI, *Etymological and Exegetical Notes on the Meša’ Inscription*, in *Or* 40 (1971), p. 325-340 (see p. 339).

¹⁵⁸ II Sam. 10, 16.18; I Chron. 19, 16.18.

¹⁵⁹ References in *DNWSI*, p. 1049-1050.

suggested by the title *šar ha-ḥayil* used in the plural by the biblical writer when dealing with the commanders of the troops of Bar-Hadad I¹⁶⁰. In these passages, *rab ḥeylā'* and *rabbānē ḥeylāwātā'* appear in Targum Jonathan¹⁶¹.

The Chaldaean leaders were called collectively *lūra'sāni ša māt Kaldi*, "headmen of Chaldaea", in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III¹⁶² and in the royal correspondence¹⁶³. The term *rš* (*r'sš*) is used later in Palmyrene and Nabataean inscriptions to designate the leader of a caravan, the guardian of a source, the ruler of Palmyra, and the prefect of Taymā' or Hegra¹⁶⁴, but there is no evidence so far that this word was employed in Early Aramaic as title of the head of a village or town. Neither are there attestations of **rb kpr*, although *rb* occurs in Assyro-Babylonian and in Aramaic, especially in Syriac, with many professional qualifications¹⁶⁵, while the plural *rabrābē* translates *nāsikē* in the Targums¹⁶⁶.

Here mention should be made of the inequality in development which characterizes the Aramaeans, even in the 9th-8th centuries B.C. Aramaean tribes in Babylonia then continued their nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life, without creating any states, unlike the Aramaeans of Upper Mesopotamia and of Syria. Thus, it is appropriate at this stage to draw up a brief typology of different Aramaean states in these areas and to classify them according to the degree of development they had reached before their annexation to the Assyrian empire. This "degree of development" should not be assessed solely in relation to the evolution of institutional structures, but it should result from an analysis of the whole social and economic life. A great deal of variety is to be found, owing to the existence of intermediate types in the principal categories.

The main distinction which must be made is that between tribal state and city-state which is best rendered as "state without a single urban centre" and "state with an urban centre". Aram-Damascus was initially a typical city-state: its territory included the whole of the oasis known as

¹⁶⁰ I Kings 15, 20; II Chron. 16, 4.

¹⁶¹ A. SPERBER, *The Bible in Aramaic* II, Leiden 1959, p. 175 and 252.

¹⁶² *Tigl. III*, p. 122, line 14; p. 130, line 17; p. 132, line [3']; p. 196, line 18.

¹⁶³ For example, *ABL* 418 = *SLA* 60, r. 6: *lūra-šā-ni ša māt Kal-du*. Cf. BRINKMAN, *PKB*, p. 265, n. 1705.

¹⁶⁴ J. STARCKY, *Note additionnelle*, in *RB* 64 (1957), p. 215-217 (*r'sš 'yn L'bn*); F. ALTHEIM - R. STIEHL, *Die Araber in der alten Welt* V/1, Berlin 1968, p. 306-308, Fig. 54, lines 2-3 (*ryš Hgr'*) and 5 (*ryš Tym'*); D.R. HILLERS - E. CUSSINI, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, Baltimore 1995, p. 411-412.

¹⁶⁵ R. PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus Syriacus* II, Oxford 1901, col. 3784-3786.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. here above, p. 494, n. 23.

the Gūṭah and the surrounding areas, but the city of Damascus was its political centre. In a tribal state, by contrast, there might even be no urban centre at all. This seems to have been the case of Bēt-Reḥob, although there were some major settlements on its territory. The bulk of the population probably lived scattered about in villages over a quite wide area. The political links which bound them together might have been of a very loose kind; the "state" existed only in a very diffuse sense. One factor which was often decisive in the lack of centralization was the geographical constitution of the territory, which made it difficult for the tribal state to be transformed into a city-state with a single urban centre. The tribal states, like Bēt-Reḥob, the Laqē confederation, and the Temanite towns, represent a much less developed stage than the city-state and chronologically they often precede it. It is in fact exactly in those regions where the city-state developed little, if at all, that the tribal state is to be found in the 9th century B.C., that is to say in the Beqa' Valley, at the confluence of the Ḥābūr and of the Euphrates, and in the area of Nusaybin, i.e. in areas which had been early absorbed by other states, viz. Assyria and Ḥamath. The identity of the original tribal groupings was nevertheless able to preserve itself in different degrees for a considerable time after the integration of their territories into the Assyrian Empire. It should be noted straightaway that a development beyond the purely tribal stage began to take place among the Laqaeans and the Temanites: within the same "tribal" group city-states might begin to grow up, become more or less independent from the tribe or from the tribal confederacy, and pursue an autonomous political life. Such was the case, for instance, with Bēt-Ḥalupē and Šūr in the Laqaeen confederacy. Two special cases, where one can see the original unity of the tribe more or less eliminated by the development of various centres in its midst, is that of the Temanites and of Bēt-'Adini: in the 9th century, Gidara and Nisibis on the one hand, Kaprabi and the chieftain Aḥūni on the other, appear to act independently from each other in front of the Assyrian attacks. There has never been a Temanite federal state, as it seems, and the unity of Bēt-'Adini under Aḥūni was only an artificial one, imposed from above by the most powerful sheikh.

If one looks at a map, one sees that tribal states occupied an appreciable part of the Aramaean-held territory in the early 9th century B.C., and yet their importance in ancient Aramaean history was, at first sight, a limited one. Such a conclusion may nevertheless be premature and not correct. In fact, the Aramaizing of Babylonia may be due in a large part to the Aramaeans of that area which had never formed real states of their

own, except the highly Babylonized Chaldaeans. Far more significant than any state formation was the gradual but inexorable inner transformation that had overtaken Babylonia under Aramaic influence but never became virtually complete in Antiquity.