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Amorites in the early Old Babylonian Period

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CHAPTER 2

What is an Amorite?

2.1 The Amorites from the Early Dynastic to the Old Babylonian period

2.1.1 *Introduction*

In the cuneiform script the word for 'Amorite' is mostly written in Sumerian as MAR.TU and sometimes spelled syllabically in Akkadian as *a-mu-ur-ru-(ú)* = *amurru(m)*.[4] These words also indicate 'The West' on the compass.[5] In the literature the overlap of these terms is sometimes confusing, because people indicated as MAR.TU could also come from the area to the north east of Babylonia, the Jebel Hamrin. The word lacks a convincing etymology.[6] The study of the Amorites goes back a long time because they are already mentioned in the Bible.[7]

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[4] For the lexical occurrences (and the 'lexical confusion' with the term Tidnum/Ditanu), see Marchesi 2006:8 n. 20,:9 n. 23, the *CAD* A/2:93-94 and most recently Hrůša 2010:471-472. See Streck 2000:26-29 for a discussion of the term MAR.TU, with the comments by Charpin 2005/2006:283-284. See Michalowski 2011:106 for proof from the Ur III period that MAR.TU = *a-mu-ru-um*.

[5] Despite this fact it is known that people with Amorite names lived in the area of the Persian Gulf thanks to the excavations at the island of Failaka of the coast of Kuwait. See Glassner 1983:31-32, Zarins 1986, Glassner 1990, Glassner 2000a, Glassner 2000b, and Glassner 2002.

[6] Durand (Durand 2002b:742 and Durand 2006:609) has proposed an etymology for *amurru(m)*. He suspects that the word *marratum* indicating 'bitter land' (the Levantine coast) and its stem MRR may have something to do with it. Dossin 1959:38 had considered the Sumerian word 'MAR.TU' as having the general meaning 'desert'.

[7] However, this study concerns itself only with the occurrences of Amorites until the OB period.

2.1.2 *The earliest occurrences of the word* MAR.TU

The first allusion to a person dubbed 'Amorite' comes from Fara/Šuruppak around 2600 BC.[8] Textual evidence for the Old Akkadian period (ca. 2350-2200 BC) is scarce, we only have a handful of references to the 'Amorites' in texts from this era. Persons designated as Amorites figure four times in Old Akkadian texts from Umma.[9] One reference to a group of sixteen Amorites is from Susa,[10] as is a disbursement to an Amorite.[11]

According to a royal inscription, Narām-Sîn did battle at Bašar, the 'Amorite mountain'.[12] This mountain is usually equated with the current Jebel Bišri.[13] A little bit further in the same inscription we see the names of two Amorites who were defeated by Narām-Sîn: Belili (*be-lí-lí*) and Kinūya (*kin-u₈-ú-a*), they are designated as MAR.TU MAR.TU. Right after this we see the terms *ra-bu* and *rabiānu* (*ra-bí-a-ni*), referring to the rank or status of these men.[14] The Amorites were again defeated by Narām-Sîn's son, Šar-kali-šarrī at that same mountain, as is attested in a year name.[15] The MAR.TU^{KI} land found in the Ebla texts has apparently confirmed the hypothesis of an Amorite land around the Jebel Bišri. Archi had assembled the attestations of the word MAR.TU in the Ebla texts,[16] they number about thirty (at that time). Pettinato also studied the land MAR.TU^{KI}.[17] It is the name of a region to the south-east of Ebla. The Eblaites attributed a king and council of elders to the Amorites.[18] In

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[8] Deimel 1924 78 X, *TSŠ* 648 II 4. For other textual references from this period until 1977: *RGTC* 1 (Edzard, Farber, Sollberger 1977):115-116.

[9] Foster 1982:113.

[10] *MDP* XIV 18:12.

[11] *MDP* XIV 9:19.

[12] Frayne 1993 E2.1.4.2 ii14-iii24, see also Gudea, St. B vi 5.

[13] For a recent archaeological survey of the Jebel Bišri see the studies by Lönnqvist 2010 and Lönnqvist et al 2011. According to her, there are archaeological remains pointing towards a tribal organization, but it is impossible to link them positively to the Amorites (Lönnqvist 2010:125). A different archaeological approach to the Amorites is by Porter 2007.

[14] Frayne 1993 E2.1.4.2 col vi 10-15.

[15] Frayne 1993:183.

[16] Though Archi himself prefers to read 'MAR.DÚ', Archi 1985:8 n.7.

[17] Pettinato 1995.

[18] Archi 1985:8. Sommerfeld 2000:428-436 reinterpreted MAR.TU^{KI} in the Ebla texts and in the Akkadian period, see also Verderame 2010 on Amorites in the Third Millennium.

a number of articles Buccellati tried to reappraise the whole problem of the origin of the Amorites.[19]

After the Sargonic Dynasty came a period of confusion. According to the Sumerian King List, two kings ruled over the town of Akkad, a certain Dudu and Šu-Turul. A servant of the latter carries what seems to be an Amorite name: La-Bahšum.[20]

In short: the Amorites were a peripheral people in the Old Akkadian sources, they do not seem to have settled in large numbers in the lands of Sumer and Akkad, yet small groups of people designated by the word MAR.TU seem to have been present.

2.1.3 *Amorites in Ur III times*

The numerous administrative documents from the Ur III period shed considerable light on the early Amorites.[21] The first to really study this topic was Buccellati who published his *The Amorites of the Ur III Period* in 1966. Buccellati believed that the Amorites came from the west around the Jebel Bišri. However, he does remark that Amorites are never connected with Western cities.[22] He presumes that the Amorites were nomads and that they had a tribal structure. Possible tribal names are Yahmutum, Yamutum,[23] Ahbutum, and Did(a)num. The Amorites were an ever growing presence and as a result of this the addition of the appellative MAR.TU to personal names was eventually abandoned completely, so that by the time of the Old Babylonian period practically no Amorite name is designated as such by the sources.[24]

After Buccellati's landmark study, the Ur III Amorites received more attention. Wilcke states that the sources are largely mute about an Amorite contribution to the Ur III empire's downfall. Important is his remark that no so-called *yaf*ᶜ*al* names are attested in Ur III texts. From a contribution of Lieber-

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[19] Buccellati 1990, 1992 and 2008, he often tries to explain things from the perspective of sedentarized people versus non-sedentarized people.

[20] Frayne 1993 E2.1.11.2003.

[21] Some of the problems and challenges of this impressive corpus are treated by Sallaberger 1999:200-237.

[22] Buccellati 1966:246-247.

[23] Written: *ià-a-ma-tu, ia-a-ma-ti, ia-a-ma-ti-um* or *ià-a-ma-ti*-[*um*], Buccellati 1966:242, Owen 1993a wrote an article in support of the thesis that this tribe represented the later attested Ahlamû.

[24] Buccellati 1966:355-362

man it has become clear that the Ur III armies themselves were able to raid the country of MAR.TU,[25] an area to the east and north of the Tigris. Owen revisits the question of 'Syrians' in Ur III sources.[26] He notices that we have few texts documenting connections between Syria and Sumer. In the Ur III texts some 23 names are associated with Mari, almost all of them are Akkadian.[27] Sallaberger suspects that the 'Amorites' we know from the Ur III texts onwards comprised originally two distinct populations: the first are nomads entering Mesopotamia from their 'original' homeland west of the Euphrates, the second are the remnants of the once flourishing urban culture in the Khabur triangle who adopted the latter's pastoral lifestyle and the Amorite language.[28]

Michalowski published in 2011 a new text edition of the correspondence of the kings of Ur III (CKU). He added a considerable chapter containing his most recent ideas on the Amorites.[29] He criticizes the current paradigm about the Amorites saying that it is essentially based on disparate references and the Mari material. This paradigm is tenacious despite the many new insights from other disciplines, let alone newly published texts.[30] Michalowski's main conclusions are:

- There is no evidence that the Ur III Amorites were nomads in the modern sense of the word.[31]
- Amorites did not come from the west (the Euphrates valley), but were rather present in 'the borderlands flanking the Diyala valley and perhaps in the Jebel Hamrin and in the valleys beyond, as well as further southeast along the Great Khorasan Road, where they raised equids, sheep, goats, and cattle in areas that the Drehem administrators thought of as the 'Amurrum borderlands'.[32]

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[25] Lieberman 1968.

[26] Owen 1992, see also Owen 1995.

[27] Michalowski 1995:185.

[28] Sallaberger 2007:446.

[29] Michaloswki 2011:82-121.

[30] Michalowski 2011:84-88.

[31] This was already noticed by Weeks 1986.

[32] Michalowski 2011:105, but also Marchesi 2006:13-16, who discusses Michalowski's ideas. Mention must be made of the Sumerian epistolary letter *SEpM* 2 (Kleinerman 2011:116-117) written by the commander Sîn-tillati to Iddin-Dagan (an Isin king) concerning an ambush by Amorites near Kakkulātum, a city in the Diyala region.

- It seems that at least some Ur III Amorites residing in Sumer were soldiers, perhaps even members of a royal bodyguard.[33]
- There is no evidence for a large Amorite infiltration of the Ur III empire.[34]
- The Amorites played only a minor role in the disintegration of the Ur III state.[35]
- The Amorites did not take power in all Mesopotamian cities directly after the Ur III collapse.[36]

Michalowski also gives an overview of the discussion surrounding the so-called Amorite wall.[37] He stresses the very scant evidence we have about this wall and that there is nothing about it in the tens of thousands of Ur III administrative documents.

In his 2012 Ph.D. dissertation Ahmed concentrated on the history of 'Ancient Kurdistan'.[38] His focus is not so much on the Amorites as a political factor in the Ur III empire's dealings, but rather on the Hurrian states in the Transtigridian lands and Simurrum.[39] Nevertheless: Iddin-Sîn, a king of Simurrum (ca. 2030-2000 BC)[40] explicitly tells us in the so-called Haladiny inscription that he defeated Amorites during his reign (see chapter 6).[41] This establishes without a doubt an Amorite presence in the upper Diyala region during the Ur III period. It also validates the argument that the KUR MAR.TU lay around the Jebel Hamrin. Two of the five defeated Amorite *rabiānum*'s in the inscription have Akkadian names.[42]

Marchesi distinguishes between two geographical entities: Pusala (alias Basar/Basalla), located around the Jebel Bišri and Tidnum located also at the Jebel Bišri and *another* Tidnum in the Transtigridian region.[43] Michalowski thinks that Tidnum lay only in the east, more specifically in the mountains

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[33] Michalowski 2011:108-110. On this point, see also Lafont 2008:37 and 39 n. 71.

[34] Michalowski 2011:110-111.

[35] Michalowski 2011:118. Also remarked by Weeks 1986:53-54.

[36] Michalowski 2011:118-119.

[37] Michalowski 2011:122-129. On the name of this wall, *Murīq-Tidnum* ('He-who-keeps-the-Tidnum-at-bay') see the bibliography in Marchesi 2006:11-12 n. 33.

[38] Ahmed 2012.

[39] Ahmed 2012:218 and 297-302, puts Simurrum and its country beyond the Jebel Hamrin mountain range.

[40] Ahmed 2012:244-245.

[41] Ahmed 2012:257-258.

[42] See Ahmed's comments on these names in Ahmed 2012:271-272.

[43] Marchesi 2006:14-17.

bordering the Diyala region; it was against them that the famous Amorite wall was intended. Michalowski believes that the Amorite polities Tidnum and Ya'madium came into being because these people were caught between the Zagros polities such as Anšan, Šimaški and Zabšali on the one hand and the Ur III empire on the Mesopotamian plains on the other.[44]

Much focus has been on the Sumerian literary compositions mentioning the Amorites and their traditions.[45] The most often quoted type-casting of the Amorites is found in the composition *The Marriage of Martu*. In the story, the god MAR.TU (Amurrum) wants to marry the daughter of the god Numušda.[46] A friend of the girl tries to persuade her not to marry MAR.TU, in doing so she tells:[47]

> The days have multiplied, no decision has yet been made. (Adgar-kidug's girlfriend speaks to her:) 'Now listen, their hands are destructive and their features are those of monkeys; he is one who eats what Nanna forbids and does not show reverence. They never stop roaming about ....., they are an abomination to the gods' dwellings. Their ideas are confused; they cause only disturbance. He is clothed in sack-leather ....., lives in a tent, exposed to wind and rain, and cannot properly recite prayers. He lives in the mountains and ignores the places of gods, digs up truffles in the foothills, does not know how to bend the knee, and eats raw flesh. He has no house during his life, and when he dies he will not be carried to a burial-place. My girlfriend, why would you marry Martu? Adgar-kidug replies to her girlfriend: 'I will marry Martu!'

Other references to MAR.TU in Sumerian compositions were gathered by Cooper who contrasts them with the Guti, a people from the Zagros mountains.[48] A Mesopotamian proverb states: '[A low] fellow/[An A]morite speaks [to] his wife, 'You be the man, [I] will be the woman'.[49] Geller found out that a similar stereotype persisted up until the time of the Babylonian Talmud.[50] Often cited are the passages in which Gudea, city-ruler of Lagaš states that he

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[44] Michalowski 2011:117.

[45] Sumerian compositions regarding 'MAR.TU' are often only known from copies made during the OB Period.

[46] Nobody has ever questioned why Martu would want to marry specifically the daughter of Numušda, Kazallu's patron god.

[47] Translation taken from the ETCSL website (http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/), lines 126-141. For a commentary of the text see Klein 1996.

[48] Cooper 1983:30-33.

[49] Taken from Lambert 1960:230.

[50] Geller 1995:320.

brought stones down from the Amorite mountain and from Ditanum[51] to use them as material for statues.[52] In a literary composition found at Kültepe concerning the feats of Sargon we read that he had destroyed the Amorites' penises instead of cutting of their noses.[53]

2.1.4 *Amorites in Old Assyrian sources*

The references to Amorites are few in the Old Assyrian texts. Lewy already found attestations of a geographical entity called ^{d}MAR.TU, he thought it meant people coming from 'the Western Land'.[54] Dercksen has shown that it was probably somewhere in Northern Syria and Veenhof in turn situated it more precisely as 'the area of the western bend of the Euphrates and the Balikh'.[55]

The frequently mentioned 'Amorite silver' (*kaspum amurrum*) in the Old Assyrian texts has nothing to do with Amorites. Sturm has demonstrated that it denotes a certain quality of the silver: '(im Feuer) geprüftes Silver'.[56]

People with Amorite names occur only sporadically in Old Assyrian texts.[57] The texts from Kültepe/Kaneš do not seem to imply any Amorite minority in the city of Assur itself.[58]

2.1.5 *Amorites in (early) Old Babylonian sources*

Edzard's *Die zweite Zwischenzeit Babyloniens* (1957) was the first book detailing the history of Mesopotamia right after the fall of the Ur III empire around 2004 BC.[59]

The more than 900 texts from the Isin-Craft Archive are dated from Išbi-Erra 4 (ca. 2014 BC) to Šu-ilīšu 3 (ca. 1982 BC) and come from Isin, the capital

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[51] This tribal/ancestral name has generated its own body of literature; see Marchesi 2006:7-19 for an overview, with Michalowski 2011:111-118.

[52] See most recently the notes made by Streck 1999:34-36 and Michalowski 2011:112-113.

[53] In lines 55-56, *editio princeps* by Günbattı 1997 (in Turkish), most recent edition by Dercksen 2005.

[54] Lewy 1961:71. Lewy thought also that there was a strong Amorite influence on Old Assyrian culture, this is now refuted by most scholars, see Veenhof 2008:22.

[55] Dercksen 1992:792, Veenhof 2008:97f.

[56] Sturm 1995:503.

[57] Lewy 1961:35 gives some examples: Bini-ma-ahum, Ilī-madar, and Paki-ila.

[58] Veenhof 2008:22-23.

[59] Reviews: Kupper 1958, M. Lambert 1958, Hallo 1959, W.G. Lambert 1959, Bottéro 1960, and Gelb 1961b.

of Ur III's main successor state. The texts form part of the archive of a workshop engaged in manufacturing a number of products like containers, footwear, furniture, musical instruments, vehicles, doors, mats, cloth, etc.[60] The archive gives us many examples of Amorite personal names written in an orthography different from later OB sources and it mentions contacts with several persons and groups designated as Amorites.

Isin's first king Išbi-Erra is called 'the man from Mari' in a letter from the 'Correspondence of the Kings of Ur'.[61] This has led to the widespread belief that he was an Amorite from Mari.[62] Part of a hymn to glorify Išbi-Erra (IE G) was published by Michalowski in 2005 stating that he was indeed from Mari, however, this does not yet prove an Amorite background. Michalowski thinks that the political and dynastic connections between Mari and Ur had a much larger role in Ur III's demise than it was suspected up until now.[63]

The Oriental Institute in Chicago carried out excavations at Tell Asmar (ancient Ešnunna) between 1930 and 1936. In total more than 1550 texts were found which more than 80 years after their discovery have still not been published in its totality.[64] From the 1970's onwards Whiting started working on the texts.[65] In 1987 he finished his work on the Ešnunna texts with the publication of *Old Babylonian Letters from Tell Asmar*.[66] He published 55 Akkadian letters dating to the very early OB period (ca. 2000-1860 BC). The rulers of Ešnunna had turbulent relations with the Amorites living in the Diyala region.

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[60] Van de Mieroop 1987a:37-42. See also the article Van de Mieroop 1986c, which is a good introduction to the archive.

[61] The well known letter from Ibbi-Sîn to Puzur-Numušda. See a bibliography in Sjöberg 1993 :211 n.1 and most recently Michalowski 2011. Huber 2001 is much more critical and considers the Ur III royal correspondence as completely apocryphal, based on the Sumerian used in the letters.

[62] For example: Edzard 1957:59, Van de Mieroop 1987a:115, Sjöberg 1993 etc. In addition one often reads that Išbi-Erra is supposedly an Amorite name. In reality it is still uncertain what the name Išbi-Erra means.

[63] Michalowski 2005:204-205, but also Sharlach 2001:68-69. Michalowski takes a fresh look at Ur III's downfall in Michalowski 2011:170-215.

[64] Jacobsen 1940:116-200 published nonetheless a lot of information, but hardly any actual texts.

[65] Whiting 1972, 1976, 1977a, 1977b, 1979, 1981, 1985a, 1985b and 1987b.

[66] Book reviews by Stol 1988, Charpin 1989, Hirsch 1990 and Greengus 1991. Whiting stopped his work on the Ešnunna texts after his 1987 publications. Reichel is now charged with their publication, see Reichel 2001a, Reichel 2001b, Reichel 2003, and Reichel 2008.

Similar early OB letters had been found by Iraqi archeologists at Tell ed-Dēr (Sippar-Amnānum) in 1941:[67] the Ikūn-pîša letter archive. These letters were found together with an important group of economic-administrative texts. They deal with trade and administrative matters, but they also document contacts with Amorite rulers. Edzard was the first to study all of these texts.[68] Only twelve letters of the Ikūn-pîša letter archive were published in 1967 by Al-'Adami and one more by Leemans.[69] Surprisingly, they generated little interest until Whiting's 1987 book.[70] The first to use the many new early OB sources was Wu Yuhong 1994 in *The Political History of Eshnunna, Mari and Assyria*. Goddeeris 2002 also gave a lot of attention to these texts from Tell ed-Dēr.[71]

In OB Sippar texts we have many references to an 'A.GÀR MAR.TU' (Amorite field),[72] and an 'Amorite road' (KASKAL MAR.TU).[73] Roads with the same name were found in other places as well.[74] These fields or roads do not refer to the Amorite people, but rather to the god Amurrum, because in some instances the divine determinative is added.[75] It is equally possible that the KASKAL MAR.TU designates in some cases the road towards the west.

Some miscellaneous geographical references: year names 8 and 9 of Išbi-Erra of Isin refer to him as having destroyed an 'Amorite city' (URU^{KI}

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[67] Baqir and Mustafa 1945.

[68] He only published the economic-administrative texts in Edzard 1970a, copies of these texts appeared in *TIM* 7, with the reviews Kraus 1973 and Leemans 1978.

[69] Al-'Adami 1967 and Leemans 1960 :106-107 (see also Edzard's additional comments on this text in Edzard 1970a:15 n.15).

[70] See for example Simmons 1978:7 (*YOS* 14) and Leemans 1978. Harris did not take the texts into account in her 1975 synthesis of Sippar (partly because Tell ed-Dēr had not yet been identified as Sippar-Amnānum).

[71] Goddeeris 2002:167-216. Reviews: Richardson 2003, very critical is De Meyer 2003 (see also the commentary on this review by Van Lerberghe, Stol and Yoffee 2003), furthermore; Charpin 2005 and Van de Mieroop 2005.

[72] Unpublished in the British Museum: Bu 88-5-12 632 and Bu 89-4-25 476 (courtesy F. van Koppen). Elsewhere: *BAP* 42:1, *BAP* 74:2, *PBS* 8/2 253:2, *PBS* 8/2 262:1, *BBVOT* 1 107:7, 9, *CBS* 1796:3, *CBS* 1592:12, *CBS* 7011:2 (courtesy M. Stol), *Scheil SFS* 10:12 (with 77:9), *Scheil SFS* 89:3.

[73] *BAP* 75:3 (*har-ra-an* ^{d}MAR.TU), *CT* 47 43:6, *CT* 47 60:7, *CTMMA* 1 60:5.

[74] In a text from Damrum: *R* 14:3, a text from Lagaba(?): *TLB* 1 181:3 and a text from Babylon: *VS* 22 26:3.

[75] *BAP* 75:3 and *PBS* 8/2 262:1. According to Tanret 1998:76 the A.GÀR Amurrum was located between the Euphrates and the Irnina canal.

MAR.TU).[76] An OB treaty from Tell Leilan between Apum and Assur lets the treaty partner swear by (amongst others) the god(s) of Amurrum and Šubartu.[77] Two irrigation ditches are named after the god Amurrum in Larsa.[78]

2.1.6 *Amorites in OB sources: Mari texts*

The discovery of the Mari archives by the French archaeologist André Parrot between 1934 and 1937 was one of the most important events in Assyriology. Over the years more than 20.000 texts were found. A full bibliography of all recent Mari-related articles is still lacking and beyond the scope of this chapter.[79]

Mari's first epigraphist, Dossin, was the first to remark that the OB Near East was a myriad of small kingdoms with an Amorite lineage.[80] Kupper's book *Les Nomades en Mésopotamie au temps des rois de Mari* had an enormous impact at the time, being one of the first large syntheses based on texts from the Mari archives.[81]

It was from the 1980's onwards that the image of the Ancient Near East under Amorite domination came more into focus. Durand insisted on the existence of a shared consciousness concerning a common heritage by the ruling Amorite kings during the OB period.[82] An important reference article was published by Durand in 2004.[83] Durand is the first to write an extensive article on the Bensimalites. In his public courses over the years at the Collège de

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[76] See the references in Sigrist 1988:13-14.

[77] Eidem 2011 L.T.-5:20-21, ˹DINGIR MAR˺-TU, *ù šu-ba-˹ri˺-im ta-˹ma˺*.

[78] *OECT* 15 1:27, PA$_5$ AN.AN.MAR.TU and *Riftin* 21:4, E.SÍR ^{d}MAR.TU.

[79] Special mention must be made of B. Lafont who was interested in diplomatic relations among the Amorites kingdoms in the OB period and published two articles on the subject: Lafont 2000 and Lafont 2001.

[80] Dossin 1939:996.

[81] Not only reflected by the endurance of some of its hypotheses, but also in the huge number of book reviews it received: Leemans 1957, Ryckmans 1957, Cazelles 1958, Dussaud 1958, Edzard 1958, Garelli 1958, Moran 1958, Pohl 1958, Tournay 1958, Donner 1959, Falkenstein 1959, Goetze 1959 and Gelb 1961. Many of Kupper's conclusions have not stood the test of time. Most notably his categorization of the nomads and in taking 'Hanean' as an ethnic denominator. Durand 1998:416 has made it very plausible that the term 'Hanean' (HA.NA or *hanûm*) can be explained etymologically as 'those living in tents'.

[82] Charpin and Durand 1991 (supplemented by Durand 1994), and Durand 1992.

[83] Durand 2004a and 2004b, see also Guichard 2011.

France (from 1999 onwards), Durand had already discussed a large number of topics relevant to the subject.[84]

Two very important works by Charpin are his synthesis of the political history of the Old Babylonian period as a whole and his and Ziegler's reconstruction of Mari's political history.[85] An interesting idea that he proposes in both books is the notion of three successive waves of Amorite migration:[86] one at the end of the third millennium (the Ur III period), the second around 1900 BC (the time of Sumu-la-El of Babylon), and a third wave represented by the appearance of Yahdun-Lim at Mari and Sumu-epuh at Aleppo around 1810 BC.

A geographical entity called Amurrum is referred to a few times in the Mari sources, it is perhaps an avatar of the Late Bronze Age state by the same name. A letter written by Ibal-El to Zimri-Lim reveals the sequence Yamhad, Qaṭna and Amurrum.[87] Messengers from Haṣor and four Amorite kings are mentioned in a text.[88] Amorite singers are also reputed to have come from the region of Haṣor (see above). The same country of Amurrum is possibly seen in late OB texts from Alalah.[89]

2.1.7 *Concluding remarks*

The studies into the Amorites are influenced mainly by two things: the availability of (new) textual sources and the work of certain key scholars. The 'story of the Amorites' has been essentially the same for the last fifty years and the consensus can be summarized in a few sentences:

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[84] Durand 2000b, Durand 2001, Durand 2002b, Durand 2003, Durand 2004c, Durand 2005b, Durand 2006, and Durand 2007.

[85] Charpin 2004a and Charpin and Ziegler 2003.

[86] Charpin 2004a:80 and Charpin and Ziegler 2003:29-30.

[87] A. 2730:33-35 *ki-ma ma-at ia-am-ha-ad*^{ki} *ma-at qa-ṭá-nim, ù ma-at a-mu-ri-im*^{ki} *ni-ig-hu-um, ša* DUMU.MEŠ *ia-mi-na*... 'And as the lands of Yamhad, Qaṭna and Amurrum are the *nighum* (≈ seasonal routes followed by nomads) of the Benjaminites, *f*irst cited by Dossin 1957. Lines 1-29 are cited by Charpin in *ARM* 26/2:33 and lines 30-50 by Durand 2004a:120-121. Commentary by Fleming 1998:61-62 and Sasson 1998:121.

[88] Bonechi 1992:10; A.2760(= *LAPO* 16 375):5-10 *a-nu-um-ma* DUMU.MEŠ *ši-ip-ri,* lú *ha-ṣú-ra-a-yi*^{ki}, *ù* DUMU.MEŠ *ši-ip-ri, ša* 4 LUGAL ˹*a*˺-[*m*]*u-*˹*ur*˺*-ri-i,* ^{l}*i-šar-li-im, ú-ša-ra-kum* 'Herewith Išar-Lim has brought to you messengers from Haṣor as well as messengers from four Amorite kings'. Commentary by Durand 1997a:574 n. b and Sasson 1998:121.

[89] Once: 'KUR MAR.TU^{KI}' in Zeeb 2001 text 35:28. It is often connected to horses (*ša* MAR.TU^{KI}) and grooms (LÚ.KUŠ$_7$) visiting Alalah, Zeeb 2001:388-291.

> The Amorites are a nomadic people organized in tribes, they have their origins in the Syrian steppe and speak a West-Semitic language different from Akkadian. They are found in early texts from Mesopotamia and Ebla, but in the Ur III period we see increasing numbers of them in southern Mesopotamia. The Ur III kings were afraid of the Amorites and built a wall to stop them. Eventually, the Amorites were able to help in toppling the Ur III state. As a consequence of their migrations, we see many small Amorite kingdoms appearing all over Mesopotamia right after the Ur III period. Babylon surfaced as the most powerful state. After the reigns of Hammurabi and Samsu-iluna the Babylonian state stagnated and the Amorites disappear from view.

The theories and their underlying presumptions regarding the above mentioned 'history' are anachronistic. The way in which Assyriologists regard migration (usually people acting as one homogenous, closed group going from A to B) or identity (which is in reality a very fluidic concept) could profit from a thorough reevaluation. Other domains in historical research have already greatly profited from such a fresh perspective.[90] Another useful approach to the Mesopotamian sources is the application of Comparative Historical Analysis. Especially the works by Rowton on nomadism have been pioneering in this respect.[91]

One can see a clear pattern: whenever new sources appear concerning Amorites, the 'story' is adapted a little, but it essentially remains the same. This is however not true for the Mari sources. New insights from the Mari texts usually take a long time to filter down into the rest of the Assyriological community. Two reasons are responsible for this: first of all, the last thirty years have seen an incredible increase in the number of Mari texts published, making it increasingly difficult for people to absorb the extensive Mari bibliography. Secondly, the fact that most of this bibliography is in French, has discouraged scholars (even specialists of the OB period) and made them leave the Mari texts aside altogether. On the other hand, (older) information from Mari has colored the current Amorite paradigm considerably.

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[90] For example: Heather's 2010 book *Empires and Barbarians*, in which he reassesses the migrations of the first millennium AD.

[91] See most importantly Rowton 1967a, 1967b, 1969a, 1969b, 1973a, 1973b, 1974, 1976a and 1976b. They form the larger part of a series of articles that were originally intended to be reedited in one book. The last article in the series was Rowton 1987.

2.2 On Amorite ethnicity

Before continuing, we must address the matter of 'Amorite' ethnicity. Was there really such a thing as a clear Amorite identity and ethnicity? Were the Amorites perceived as different and did they feel different from the indigenous Northern Babylonian and Diyala population? Or was something else the matter and is the label 'Amorite' a 19th-20th century Assyriological construct?

2.2.1 *Ethnicity in Assyriology (and Archaeology)*

The concepts of ethnicity in the Ancient Near East were first applied by archaeologists[92] and picked up by only a small group of Assyriologists and historians of the Ancient Near East.[93] A step forward was the ethnicity theme of the 48th RAI in Leiden (2002). Special mention must be made of Van Driel's introduction in the proceedings of this RAI. In his view, ethnicity in Mesopotamia was first and foremost a matter of sedentary people versus non-sedentary people. These people were struggling for the control of land, both for agriculture and pasture. Van Driel noted that ethnic change often went together with considerable social change.[94]

Archaeologist Wossink recently applied the concepts of ethnicity on the Amorites.[95] He suggested that Amorite identity was a fluid, social construct that one could manipulate, downplay or stress in order to further one's own political or economic goals.[96] He connects the climate change in Northern Mesopotamia at the end of the third millennium (when it became drier) with the popularity of an Amorite identity. In a drier climate, agriculture depending on rainfall became more difficult. In such a climate, pastoralists would have a more secure way of feeding themselves. Wossink connects these pastoralists with an Amorite identity. Rulers would have been attracted to this Amorite identity because this would associate them with a more stable way of life.

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[92] For example Jones 1997.
[93] Most notably Yoffee: Kamp and Yoffee 1980 and Emberling and Yoffee 1999.
[94] Van Driel 2005:3-9.
[95] Especially in his thesis Wossink 2009:129f, but also Wossink 2011.
[96] Wossink 2009.

2.2.2 *Ethnicity in the social sciences*

The term ethnicity with its current meaning entered the social sciences through Barth 1969. As is often the case in the social sciences, the debate about the semantics and meaning of the word is both long and tedious, with the inevitable conclusion that we cannot have one definition of 'ethnicity'.[97] Among the many descriptions found, perhaps the one by Cashmore covers the term best:[98]

> It describes a group possessing some degree of coherence and solidarity composed of people who are, at least latently, aware of having common origins and interests. So, an ethnic group is not a mere aggregate of people or a sector of a population, but a self-conscious collection of people united, or closely related, by shared experiences.

In the social sciences, there are two camps in the ethnicity debate: the 'primordialists', who believe that one is born into an ethnicity, that is: a given family, community, religion, language etc., bringing a complex of attitudes and cultural dispositions. These are to a large extent unchangeable and define a person's ethnicity.[99] Opposed to these 'primordialists' are a number of other schools of thought that all agree on a more flexible nature of ethnicity. The 'instrumentalists' believe that people accentuate or downplay certain characteristics to improve their political and economic situation. Closely connected to this point of view are the 'situationalists'. They claim that people invoke a certain ethnicity as a criterion for self-identification when this is useful in a given situation.[100] The 'constructionists' hold that ethnicities are the result of historical forces, an idea that has played an important role in the discussion surrounding the modern concept of 'nation'. The 'nation' and its associated ethnicity is seen nowadays as the result of nineteenth century politics towards the political unification of countries such as Germany and Italy. Especially the works of Smith[101] and Anderson[102] have played a key role in this debate. How-

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[97] Fenton 2003:2.

[98] Cashmore 1996:119.

[99] See Fenton's discussion of this school of thought: Fenton 2003:73-90.

[100] Castles and Miller 2009:36.

[101] A discussion of 'nationalism', as well as a summary of Smith's scholarship and ideas is found in Smith 2010.

[102] Anderson 1991.

ever, most scholars take a stand somewhere between the 'primordialist' and 'instrumentalist/constructionist/situationalist' views of ethnicity.

2.2.3 *Ethnicity and migration*

Contemporary debate often deals with ethnicity's influence on nationalism, conflict and migration. Ethnic minorities are both a product of definition by others and of self-definition. Many authors have stressed that ethnicity takes on political and social meaning only when it is linked to drawing boundaries between dominant groups and (ethnic) minorities, or put differently, ethnicity becomes relevant when it becomes political.[103]

Apart from ethnicity, migration theories lead us to consider other aspects such as gender, age or class of migrants. In this respect it may be relevant to note that the early OB texts lack any women with a clear Amorite name. Moreover, the social class or age of most people with Amorite names is difficult or impossible to establish.

2.2.4 *Criticism on the ethnicity paradigm*

Even so, ethnicity has recently been criticized as an explaining tool. The critique derives mostly from the fact that ethnicity was studied too much as a field and concept of its own, instead of aiding us in explaining and describing the real world.[104] Another point is that ethnicity is widely considered as a 'fundamental and ascriptive' attribute of human populations.[105] A shift is promoted towards 'agency theory' in explaining human behavior: the analysis of people acting in concrete material situations and social structures.[106] The anthropologist Bretell states:[107]

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[103] Bretell 2003 and Castles and Miller 2009:35-37.

[104] Carter and Fenton 2009:2, with a more broad recent discussion on p. 2-8. It is interesting to note that this critique comes from Fenton, the author of a standard handbook on Ethnicity (Fenton 2003, 2nd edition from 2010).

[105] Carter and Fenton 2009:8.

[106] Archaeologists are again taking a leading role: a book with studies on the theme was recently published: *Agency and Identity in the Ancient Near East* (Steadman and Ross 2010). See also Carter and Fenton 2009:8-18.

[107] Bretell 2003:7.

> An anthropological approach to migration should emphasize both structure and agency; it should look at macro-level contextual issues, micro-level strategies and decision-making, and the meso-level relational structures within which individuals operate. It needs to articulate both people and process.

2.2.5 *Identity and ethnicity*

Identity and ethnicity are two different concepts that are easily confused. Without getting into a semantic discussion, 'identity' is understood here as somebody's *own* perception of himself. As such, identity is malleable: one can choose one's identity and modify it according to the situation. A good example is a second or third generation migrant who might use his 'migrant identity' among his family, but a 'native identity' in the host country. When these various identities converge they are called 'hybrid identities'.[108] When we apply these ideas to the early OB Amorites, we might speculate that somebody used his 'Amorite' identity among tribal kinsmen, but a more native 'Akkadian' identity with the settled urban elite. In fact we can see many examples of the usage of diverse identities and hybrid identities:

- King Zimri-Lim of Mari is an excellent example of somebody forced to have a hybrid identity in his royal titles: one tribal/pastoral and one sedentary/urban.
- Samsi-Addu used different identities in his conquered territories to appease the local populations.[109] One of Samsi-Addu's sons bore an Amorite name, Yasmah-Addu, but another had an Akkadian name, Išme-Dagan. These names (both meaning 'DN has heard') had an ethnic as well as a religious connotation: Dagan and Addu were among the most prominent gods in Northern Mesopotamia at the time.
- Some Babylonian kings had Akkadian names despite clear Amorite origins: Apil-Sîn and Sîn-muballiṭ.
- In general, kings with Amorite roots ruling in southern Mesopotamia, used 'classic' Sumerian-Akkadian concepts of kingship and religion in their inscriptions and year names. This classic royal ideology is in stark

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[108] Bolaffi et al 2003:141-143. Castles and Miller 2009:41.

[109] Samsi-Addu calls the city god of Mari, Itūr-Mêr, his 'lord' in the inscription in which he legitimizes the military conquest of Mari. However, in the same text he also calls himself 'governor' (*šaknum*) of Enlil and 'city-ruler' (ENSI$_2$) of Aššur. See Charpin 1984 no. 1 and the comments by Charpin 1991b:4-5.

> contrast to the ideals of the 'nomad warrior king' propagated in for example the 'Épopée de Zimri-Lim' and other sources.[110]

Most of these examples are royal, but we also have more mundane examples: the usage of the personal name Amurrum and people with an Akkadian name and a father with an Amorite name (and vice-versa).

The notion of ever-changing and constructed identities has its effects on the concepts of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic identities'. More specifically, on how these are imagined or reinvented through invented or shared traditions. However, identities are also characterized by the stability of some notions or factors.[111]

2.2.6 *Akkadians and Amorites mentioned together as 'ethnicities'*

There are a few sources documenting an actual dichotomy between 'Akkadians' and 'Amorites'. The first of them is the discourse of a Mari governor, Bahdi-Lim, reminding Zimri-Lim of the dual nature of his kingdom when he first entered the city around ca. 1776 BC:[112]

> I spoke thus to my lord: 'Today the land of the Benjaminites was given to you. Well, this land is clad in Akkadian clothes! My lord should honor the capital of his royalty (=Mari), as you are king of the nomads, you are also secondly the king of an Akkadian (speaking) territory. My lord should not mount a horse, he should ride a *nubālum* wagon and donkeys to honor his royal capital!' This is what I said to my lord.

This passage distinguishes between an Akkadian tradition and a nomadic (HA.NA) tradition.[113]

A second example, also from Mari is found in the treaty between Ešnunna's king Ibal-pi-El II and Zimri-Lim. The focus is on the ethnicity of troops,

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[110] The 'épopée de Zimri-Lim' is still unpublished, but quoted by Marello 1991 and Durand 1997. See also the letter by a Benjaminite king to another king about the ideal nomadic life: Marello 1991 (= *LAPO* 16 38).

[111] Calhoun 1994 and Castles and Miller 2009:35.

[112] *ARM* 6 76 (=*LAPO* 17 732):13-25.

[113] See Durand 1998:485-488 for a discussion, as well as Charpin 2005/2006:283. On the mixed character of the Mari kingdom, see most recently Durand 2010.

Zimri-Lim must swear not to send or instruct certain troops to hinder Ešnunna:[114]

> When the armies, of Ibal-pi-El, son of Dādūša, king of Ešnunna, my father (or the troops of Duhšum, having taken the lead of the armies of Ibal-pi-El, son of Dādūša, king of Ešnunna, my father), go on a campaign. I (swear that I) will not instruct or send troops of Mari, Hana, Suhum, king or leader, troops of Amurrum, Akkad, other foreign troops, auxiliary troops of his enemy or ally, troops of whatever king, present in the country.

Zimri-Lim is forbidden to instruct or send troops from:[115]

- Mari : soldiers from the sedentary population of the Mari kingdom.
- Hana : Bedouin (Bensimalite) troops loyal to Zimri-Lim.
- Suhum : troops from a region along the Euphrates south of Mari.
- 'Amorite': the exact connotation of Amorite in this treaty is unclear.
- 'Akkadian': troops from the kingdom of Babylon are perhaps meant here.[116]

A third passage that clearly distinguishes Amorites and Akkadians is far more interesting: it is found in the royal edicts of the kings of Babylon. In 1984 Kraus (re)published the then known edicts, the most important one is Ammiṣaduqa's edict (henceforth EA). Since Kraus' 1984 standard work, several new fragments of edicts have surfaced.[117]

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[114] The text (A.361) was published by Charpin 1991a and reedited by Durand 1997a (*LAPO* 16 292), lines 10'-17'.

[115] See also the comments by Charpin 1991a:146-147.

[116] Charpin 1991a:147 believes that 'Amorite' and 'Akkadian' refers here to the dual nature of Zimri-Lim's kingdom. In the Mari texts, 'Akkadians' often denote people from Ešnunna (Durand and Ziegler 2003:109) However, the land of Akkad was comprised of the kingdoms of Babylon and Ešnunna, something we learn from *ARM* 27 135:31-33.

[117] Hallo 1995 published a very small fragment of a Samsu-iluna edict. Furthermore, a letter in which an explicit allusion is made to a *mīšarum*, was published by Tammuz 1996:125-126 (*NBC* 6311 :15-20). There are several other OB texts which might be considered as containing royal acts, like the famous letter from Samsu-iluna on the 'hungry nadītums', published by Janssen 1991. Another related letter was written by Samsu-iluna at his accession to the throne, *TCL* 17 76 now published as *AbB* 14 130. See also *AbB* 8 23 and *CT* 48 71, which both allude to the raising of a torch by a king (for which see now: Charpin 2013). We have a petition to the king protesting a decision by an official concerning the application of a *mīšarum*-act, published by Finkelstein 1965 and republished as *AbB* 7 153. Charpin 2010b identified part of an edict of Ammi-ditana amongst the late OB texts from Harradum. Finally, De Boer 2012 published a small note on a *mīšarum* by the early OB Marad king Sumu-Yamutbal.

The edicts make an interesting distinction between Akkadians and Amorites, which is an anachronism in the late OB period.[118] Charpin has already noted the likelihood of the Ammi-ṣaduqa edict being based largely on a late-Hammurabi/early Samsu-iluna prototype.[119] Lieberman states that 'the path of literary development from one *mēšarum* decree to the next was cumulative'.[120] Could it be that this prototype itself was derived from an even earlier example, perhaps even from the time of Sumu-la-El? A time in which the distinction Amorite/Akkadian in Babylonia might have had more meaning than during the reign of Hammurabi and later on. The paragraphs distinguishing Amorites and Akkadians are all about private debts.[121]

The fourth example of Akkadians and Amorites being mentioned together comes from an Old Assyrian text found at Kültepe. It is a decree in which the city ruler of Assur regulates the trade of gold amongst Assyrians:[122]

> The tablet with the verdict of the city, which concerns gold, which we sent to you, that tablet is cancelled. We have not fixed any rule concerning gold. The earlier rule concerning gold still obtains: Assyrians may sell gold among each other, (but), in accordance with the words of the stela, no Assyrian whosoever shall give gold to any Akkadian, Amorite or Subarean. Who does so shall not stay alive!

The Assyrians were not allowed to trade with Akkadians, Amorites and Subareans, in short everybody who was not a native of Assur. Dercksen assumes that a large part of the non-Assyrian traders also present in Anatolia

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[118] Some however, like Hallo 2000:362 n.14 still maintain that they were still 'the two principal ethnic elements in Babylonia at the time.' Kraus 1984:318 writes: 'Begriffsinhalt etwa „Alteinheimische und Zugewanderte (ursprünglich) westsemitischer Zunge' Nach einziger Belegstelle nicht näher zu definieren'. On p. 326 he adds: 'In Ed. (Kraus 1958), S. 188f. a), habe ich mich damit begnügt, lú *amurrû* im Ausdrucke lú *akkadû u* LÚ *amurrû* usw., §3; 5; 6; ;8 ;9, nach dem von anderen gegebenen Beispiel als „Beduine' zu bezeichnen, was ich jetzt übrigens für die Zeit des Ed. A-ṣ in „Mann aus einem „Amurriter"-Stamme abändern möchte, seine Identifikation aber auf sich beruhen lassen.'

[119] Charpin 1987:44.

[120] Lieberman 1989:256.

[121] The clauses are: § 3 and §5-9. Clause §7 which covers the same subject does not contain the wording 'Akkadian or Amorite'.

[122] The text (Kt 79/k 101.11-25) was published by Sever 1990, the translation is taken from Veenhof 1994-1995:1733 (lines 9-25, comments on p. 1734-1735), see also Dercksen 1996:162.

were Amorites. He interprets the term 'Amorite' in this context as everybody living to the area west of the Euphrates.[123]

2.2.7 *The god* ^{d}*MAR.TU*

Closely connected to Amorite ethnicity is their supposedly titulary god Amurrum. In Babylonia, we encounter the logogram 'MAR.TU' mostly in personal names to denote the god ^{d}MAR.TU=Amurrum.[124] Significantly, he is (almost) never mentioned in Mari.[125] It has long been thought that Amurrum was the main god of the Amorites. Such a concept is almost certainly false. The fact that we have absolutely no Amorite names composed with the theophoric element ^{d}MAR.TU should have been a clue that he was not the Amorites' titulary god.[126] Recently, some authors have shown convincingly that the god Amurrum is in fact an intellectually constructed deity to reflect the presence of Amorites and a nomadic way of life in Mesopotamia.[127] Basing themselves mostly on personal names, some authors have studied 'Amorite religion'.[128]

2.2.8 *Concluding remarks*

People were usually identified as an inhabitant of a certain city in the early OB period.[129] However the distinction made in the above mentioned Old Assyrian text between 'a son of Assur' and an 'Akkadian', 'Amorite', and 'Subarean'

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[123] Dercksen 1996:163-164.

[124] Note also the often encountered synonym AN.AN.MAR.TU, which should be transliterated as *Il-Amurrim*: 'the god of Amurrum' (Stol 1979:178).

[125] One of the only references is a Mari letter (*FM* VIII 38) describing a stele of Yasmah-Addu featuring a representation of the god Amurrum, see Colbow 1997. For the god's iconography in general: Kupper 1961.

[126] Kobayashi 1980:71 had a different opinion: he thought that mostly Amorites had Amurrum as a theophoric element in their personal names.

[127] Most recently Beaulieu 2005 (with an extensive bibliography on p. 31 n.2), but also Streck 2000:68-69.

[128] Streck 2000:68-72, Streck 2004a, and Hutter 1996.

[129] Examples are: Puzur-Akšak from Šadlaš (*puzur*$_4$-ÚH^{ki}, LÚ *ša-ad-la-áš*^{ki}, *MHET* II/1 109:4-5), a trader from Sippar (DAM.GÀR DUMU *sí-pí-ir*, R 38:5), the traders Atanah-ili and Sîn-ide (*a-ta-na-ah-ì-lí* IGI ^{d}EN.ZU-*i-de,* DAM.G[À]R.MEŠ LÚ KIŠ(?)^{KI} *BE* 6/1 15:20-21), Ṣilli-Akšak from Baṣi (*ṣíl-lí*-ÚH^{KI} LÚ *ša /ba-a-ṣí*, *MHET* II/5 594:31), Imgur-Sîn from Halhalla (*im-gur*-30 LÚ *hal-hal-la*^{ki}, *CT* 47 78:24), the trader Nabi-Sîn s. Lu-Damu from Kazallu (*na-bi*-^{d}EN.ZU DAM.GÀR, DUMU LÚ-^{d}DA.MU, LÚ *ka-zal-lu*^{ki}, *CT* 48 63:3-5), Sîn-bēl-apli from Borsippa (^{d}EN.ZU-*be-el-ap-l*[*i*], LÚ *bar-sí-pa*$^{\ulcorner ki \urcorner}$, *JCS* 33:243, D:5-6).

seems more like a perceived difference in language.[130] That an Amorite 'identity' was also a constructed one, is clearly shown by the fabricated 'genealogy of the Hammurabi dynasty' from the late OB period.[131]

The early OB period gives us almost no clues concerning an Amorite people and a nomadic lifestyle,[132] even though Michalowski does think that the MAR.TU in the Ur III KUR MAR.TU did breed equids, sheep, goats, and cattle.[133] Nor do we find proof of a struggle for the control of land between a sedentary and non-sedentary population.[134] The terms 'Amorite' and 'Amorites' are in fact fluid concepts that changed over time and from place to place.

What about Amorite ethnicity? If we consider the definition of Cashmore, we can certainly apply this to the early OB kings carrying Amorite names: from the Ikūn-pîša letter archive we know that these kings had some degree of coherence, solidarity and mutual interests, and that they were likely aware of some common origin. This is exemplified by the *puhur amurrim* (Amorite assembly) and the role of Sumu-abum.[135]

In any case, what if we forget for a moment the term 'Amorite' for certain OB kings, and instead call them 'kings with tribal connections', as opposed to kings without such an explicit connection like those of Isin or Malgium.[136] Assyriologists interpret this tribal affiliation as 'Amorite', but this does not need to be the case: in the OB period, kings confessed their tribal allegiance,[137] but almost never an explicit *Amorite* allegiance.[138]

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[130] Veenhof 1995, see above section 2.2.6.

[131] Finkelstein 1966. This list contains the ancestors of the Babylonian kings up to the founder of the dynasty, Sumu-la-El. Beyond him, we have Sumu-abum, whose exact relation to Sumu-la-El is uncertain. Beyond Sumu-abum there is a list of mythological ancestors and 'reigns', see most recently Jacquet 2002 and Durand 2012a.

[132] The early OB Ešnunna letter *AS* 22 23 mentions king Bilalama visiting a 'pasture' or 'encampment' and sitting in an assembly : lines 12-16, *a-li ša na-wi-um,* ˹1˺ *ku-un-za-nam, i-ma-ah-ha-ṣú, i-na pu-úh-ri-šu-nu, ú-ši-ib*.

[133] Michalowski 2011:105.

[134] As Van Driel 2005 suggested.

[135] De Boer 2014.

[136] Interestingly, the non tribal kings of Isin and Malgium (as well as some kings of Dēr and Ešnunna) had the divine determinative added to their names, whereas 'tribal kings' usually did not.

[137] A well known example was Sîn-kāšid from Uruk, who called himself in numerous inscriptions 'king of Amnānum'.

[138] Except for the title *rabiān* MAR.TU and for Hammurabi (on his seal), nobody called himself LUGAL MAR.TU. In the Mari texts, the term HA.NA instead of MAR.TU/*amurrum* is preferred, see Durand 2012b:168-169.

Not everybody in the early OB period had a tribal affiliation and many people in the great urban centers probably did not, and it is from these people that we have most of the texts nowadays, hiding the tribal (countryside) elements in society from our view. The city dwellers called the tribal kings and their people sometimes 'Amorites', as is the case in the Ešnunna royal correspondence, but that refers perhaps to their place of origin: the KUR MAR.TU in the upper Diyala valley. The problem is that Assyriologists have dubbed almost every tribe or tribe-like gentilic from the OB period as 'Amorite', while it is doubtful if this was always the case.

So was there an Amorite ethnicity? Yes and no: it depends on the period. Yes: the tribal people coming from the KUR MAR.TU (see map 1 in chapter 6) were 'Amorites', and as such they are mentioned in the Ur III and early OB texts. This Amorite ethnicity existed until ca. 1850-1800 BC and includes the rulers like Sumu-abum, Sumu-la-El, Sumun-abi-yarim, Mašparum, and Halun-pi-umu. It also includes the offspring of the MAR.TU soldiers who were at the service of the Ur III kings in southern Mesopotamia like the Larsa and Uruk kings.

No: over time, tribal realities and affiliations certainly changed and by the time of the Mari archives, around 1770 BC, the 'original Amorite ethnicity' from a century earlier had disappeared. The tribal constellations were rearranged, a process visible in the big cleavage between Bensimalites and Benjaminites, but people were no longer explicitly referred to as being 'Amorite'.[139] Even though some echo of being Amorite must have existed in collective memory (in the official and military titles composed with MAR.TU for example), it was not referred to actively from the reign of Hammurabi onwards.[140]

A new term to replace the label 'Amorites' is not proposed here. We will continue to refer to the early OB kings and their main powerbase as 'Amorites', mainly because we can probably still speak about an Amorite ethnicity in the early OB period.

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[139] That is: except for people stemming from a land called Amurru located in the Levant, see chapter 2 section 1.7.

[140] But note Hammurabi's own cylinder seal: Charpin 2001a:28: x [...], [LU]GAL MAR.T[U], DUMU ^{d}EN.ZU-*mu-ba-lí-i*[*ṭ*], IBILA.NI, LUGAL KI.U[RI]: ... king of the Amorites (or: Amurrum), son of Sîn-muballiṭ, his heir, king of Akkad.