

Syllabus for The History of the Arameans from the Iron Age to Late Antiquity (ACABS 491/591) Fall 09  
Instructor: Eric Reymond (Office: Thayer 3155 / [ereymond@umich.edu](mailto:ereymond@umich.edu)) Off. Hrs.: Wed. 12-2pm  
Meeting Time: Tu/Th 4-5:30 MLB-B134

This course examines the history of the Arameans, a people who interacted with numerous groups and nations of the Ancient Near East, but whose presence in the historical texts of the Bible (especially their conflicts with Israelite kings) and whose connection to Abraham make them of particular interest to those interested in the early history of the Israelites and the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament. In addition, during the Second Temple Period, the Arameans were an important diaspora community living in pockets of the Persian and Hellenistic empires; how they interacted with the Judeans / Jews of this period is revealed in this course. The later history of the Arameans is important for those interested in Late Antiquity and Eastern Christianity, as the Arameans were prolific writers of Christian texts and poetry and occupied an important buffer region between the Romans / Byzantines and the Parthians / Sassanids.

The course is open to undergraduate and graduate students. **No prior language experience in Aramaic or Hebrew is necessary to take the course.** Student evaluation will be based on attendance, participation in class discussions, performance on a midterm and final exam and short presentation/paper.

The course is structured chronologically from early to late. It looks at both the Arameans' interactions with the great empires they lived within and their interactions with local populations.

#### Overview of Course

A. Origin, Background, Geography

B. Arameans and Assyrians (1200-600 BCE): (General influence of Arameans in the Assyrian empire; Aramaic kingdoms: Bet-Zammani)

C. Arameans and Neo-Hittites / Luwians (1200-400 BCE): (Bet-Adini, Bet-Agusi, Hamath)

D. Arameans and Israelites (1200-600 BCE): (Soba, Damascus)

E. Arameans and Babylon (600-500 BCE): (General influence of Arameans in Babylonian territory; Aramaic tribes in and around Babylon and Tigris; Chaldean tribes, kingdoms, and empire)

F. Arameans and Persian and Hellenistic Empires (500-300 BCE)

G. Arameans and Roman, Parthian, and Sassanid Empires (300 BCE – 300 CE): (Arab-Aramean States and Cultures: Edessa, Haran, Nabatea, Palmyra)

H. Later Aramaic speakers: Mandeans, Syriac Culture and History

### Week-by-Week Schedule

Week 0 (Sept. 8, 10): Origin, Background, Geography, Biblical Accounts

Week 1 (Sept. 15, 17): Origin + Arameans and Empires I: Assyrian (General influence of Arameans in the Assyrian empire; Aramaic kingdoms: Bet-Zammani)

Week 2 (Sept. 22, 24): Arameans and Empires I: Assyrian, (General influence of Arameans in the Assyrian empire; Aramaic kingdoms: Laqe/Bet-Halupe, Gozan/Bet-Bahiani)

Week 3 (Sept. 29, Oct. 1): Arameans and Their Other Neighbors I: Neo-Hittites / Luwians (Bet-Adini, Bet-Agusi, Hamath)

Week 4 (Oct. 6, 8): Neo-Hittites + Arameans and Their Other Neighbors II: Israelites (Soba, Damascus)

Week 5 (Oct. 13, 15): NO CLASS (Colloquium on Ben Sira in Metz, France)

Week 6 (Oct. 20, 22):

Oct. 20: NO CLASS (Fall Break)

Oct. 22: Arameans and Their Other Neighbors II: Israelites (Soba, Damascus)

Week 7 (Oct. 27, 29):

Oct. 27: IN CLASS REVIEW

Oct. 29: **Midterm**

Week 8 (Nov. 3, 5): Arameans and Empires II: Babylonian (General influence of Arameans in Babylonian territory; Aramaic tribes in and around Babylon and Tigris; Chaldean tribes, kingdoms, and empire)

Week 9 (Nov. 10, 12): Arameans and Empires III: Persian and Hellenistic

MAKEUP CLASSES: Week 10 (Nov. ???): Arameans and Empires IV: Roman, Parthian, and Sassanid (Arab-Aramean States and Cultures: Edessa, Haran, Nabatea, Palmyra)

Week 10 (Nov. 17, 19): Arameans and Empires IV: Roman, Parthian, and Sassanid (Arab-Aramean States and Cultures: Edessa, Haran, Nabatea, Palmyra)

Week 11 (Nov. 24, 26):

Nov. 24: Culture of Eastern Arameans: Mandeans

Nov. 26: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 12 (Dec. 1, 3): Legacy of Syriac Culture and History

Week 13 (Dec. 8, 10):

Dec. 8: Wrap up and Review

Dec. 10: Presentations

**Final will take place on Monday, Dec. 21, 8-10 am**

### Specific Topics Students Should Know About by the End of the Course

1. Relationship of Israelites to Arameans, Assyrians to Arameans, Neo-Hittites to Arameans, Arabians to Arameans, Chaldeans to Arameans.
2. The manner in which Aramean kingdoms emerged and how they interacted with their neighbors.
3. Characteristic artistic features of Iron Age Aramean temples/palaces and plastic arts, as well as those of the Arab-Aramean kingdoms of Hellenistic and Late Antique periods.
4. The perspective of biblical writers on the Arameans.
5. The common features that Iron Age Aramean kingdoms share.
6. The common features that Hellenistic and Late Antique Arab-Aramean kingdoms share, and what features distinguish them.
7. The history of specific kingdoms, including Damascus, Samal/Yaud, Osrhoene.
8. The cultural influence of Arameans, including the Aramaic literary tradition in Syriac and Mandaic.

9. What distinguishes “Arameans” from other groups in the Iron Age, and how these characteristics continue (or don’t continue) into the eras of the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman empires.
10. The problems with identifying an ethnicity or a culture from the ancient past.
11. The problems and pitfalls in reading, interpreting, and deriving history from ancient sources, including the Bible.

Presentation/Paper Topics

1. Close reading of a particular text (literary, historical, or personal text), describing what it reveals or does not reveal about the Arameans and their culture and history.
2. Comparison / contrast of the relationship between the Arameans and Israelites and the relationship between the Canaanites and the Israelites.
3. Comparison / contrast between Aramean religion in Iron age and in later times.
4. Something of your own choosing.

Helpful Bibliographical Abbreviations:

*CANE* = Jack M. Sasson (ed.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 4 volumes. New York: Scribner, 1995. In Hat. Ref. Rm.

*COS* = William W. Hallo (ed.). *Context of Scripture*. 3 volumes. Leiden: Brill, 1997-2002.

*RIMA* = A. Kirk Grayson. *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Assyrian Periods*. 3 volumes. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987-1991. In NE Seminar Room, Thayer.

*RLA* = *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie*. 11 volumes. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928-2006. In NE Seminar Room, Thayer.

*SAA* = *State Archives of Assyria*, a series of books which present (in accessible form) Akkadian texts and translations in NE Seminar Room, Thayer.

*SAAS* = State Archives of Assyria Studies, in Hat. and NE Sem. Room, Thayer.

## History of Arameans, Assignments

### **Week 0:**

#### For Sept. 10 **Origin, Background, Geography, Biblical Accounts**

#### Read:

Millard, A.R. "Arameans." In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Ed., D.N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992, volume 1, 345-350.

Dion, Paul E. "Arameans Tribes and Nations of First-Millennium Western Asia." In *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Ed. Jack M. Sasson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995, 1281-1294.

Sader, H. "The Aramaean Kingdoms of Syria: Origin and Formation Process." 2000, 61-76.

#### Questions:

- 1) Considering the first two articles, how do they differ in describing the manner in which the Aramean tribes emerged and came into control of northern Mesopotamia? Can you perceive any biases or assumptions lying behind their descriptions, especially in light of the third article, by Sader?
- 2) What do you associate with the Arameans or with Aramaic?

## **Week 1:**

### **For Sept. 15 Origin, Background, Geography, Biblical Accounts**

#### Read:

- \*Bible passages: Gen: 11:26-32; 24:1-67; 25:20; 27:46-32:3; Num 22:1-25:18; Deut 26:5. (Be familiar with the context of these passages---BRING TEXT TO CLASS.)
- \*Bible passages concerning genealogy: Gen 10:22-23; 11:26-32; 22:20-24

#### Questions:

- 1) Based on what you know already, what obstacles impede using the Bible as a source for historical events?
- 2) What do we learn about Aram and Arameans from these biblical passages, especially the relationship between the Israelites and the Arameans? What is the impression we get of the Arameans from these biblical passages?
- 3) Where does Abraham's servant go to find a wife for Isaac? Where does Jacob go to find a wife for himself? Notice how Isaac's wife's father is described in Gen 25:20 and how Laban is described in Gen 31:24.
- 4) Who is Balaam and what does he do? How does he pertain to the Arameans?

#### Supplementary Reading:

Axskjöld, Carl-Johan. *Aram as the Enemy Friend: The Ideological Role of Aram in the Composition of Genesis-2 Kings*, 1998, pp. 11-34.

### **For Sept. 17 Arameans and Empires I: Assyrians** (General influence of Arameans in the Assyrian empire; Aramaic kingdoms: Bet-Zammani)

#### Read:

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, chaps. 17-21, pp. 266-353.

#### Questions:

- 1) If you were emperor of the Assyrian empire, how would you distribute land among your various officials and generals in order to minimize corruption and the threat that one of them might try to claim a large chunk of land and rebel against you?
- 2) Consider the political give and take between the Assyrians and Arameans. What would the Arameans have gained by being conquered by the Assyrians? What would the Assyrians have gained by conquering the Arameans?
- 3) Based on your readings and the lecture for this class, how do you think Aramaic became such an important language for the Assyrian empire? Why would it eventually supercede Akkadian?

## Week 2

### For Sept. 22 Arameans and Empires I: Assyrians

#### Read:

\*RIMA 2, pp. 169-173 (Tukulti Ninurta II); 256-262 (Ashurnasirpal II); 219-220 (Ashurnasirpal II)

Lipinski, *The Arameans: Their Ancient History, Culture, and Religion*, 2000a, pp. 151-161.

#### Questions:

- 1) How does one read and derive historical information from a royal inscription? What are the pitfalls of this process?
- 2) How does this compare to deriving historical information from the Bible?

#### Supplementary Reading:

Grayson, A. Kirk. "Assyrian Rule in Conquered Territory in Ancient Western Asia." In *CANE*, pp. 959-968.

### For Sept. 24 Arameans and Empires I: Assyrians (Aramaic kingdoms: Laqe/Bet-Halupe, Gozan/Bet-Bahiani)

#### Read:

#### Laqe / Bet-Halupe

Ninurta-Kudurri-Usur – Suhu Annals: COS 2.115 B, C, D

\*RIMA 2 pp. 191-223 (Ashurnasirpal II), noting especially the Laqean campaign of 883 (pp. 198-200), the Laqean campaign of 878 (pp. 213-215), and the Bit-Adini campaign of 878 (pp. 216-217). Notice that there are two towns named Suru (or, Šur), one in Bit-Halupe, another in a region just south of Bit-Halupe called Suhu. Also, there are also two individuals named Azi-ili, one whom Ashurnasirpal II appoints as ruler of Suru/Šur (Bit-Halupe; on p. 199) and another who is called "the Laqu," i.e., the person from Laqe (on p. 214-215), who rules an unidentified town and is at enmity with Ashurnasirpal II.

Lipinski, *The Arameans: Their Ancient History, Culture, and Religion*, 2000a, pp. 98-108

#### Questions:

- 1) What two western kingdoms had their hands in the affairs of Laqe/Bit-Halupe, specifically in the affairs of the cities of Suru/Šur (Bit-Halupe) and Supru?
- 2) Why would the Assyrians favor a ruler of Suru/Šur (Bit-Halupe) who was not linked with the local population?
- 3) According to the Assyrian text, in whom does the Assyrian ruler trust and in what do his enemies trust? How does this relate to biblical passages like Isa 31:1, Jerm 5:17?

### Week 3:

For Sept 29 **Arameans and Their Other Neighbors I: Neo-Hittites** (Neo-Hittite and Luwian history and culture)

#### Read

##### Gozan/Bit-Bahiani

\*Hadad-Yith'i (Tell Fekheriye Inscription): COS 2.34  
Lipinski, 2000a, pp. 128-133.

##### Neo-Hittites

Hawkins, J.D. "The Neo-Hittite States in Syria and Anatolia." In *Cambridge Ancient History* 3.1. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1982, 372-441. (Also available in Hat. Ref. Room) NB: on page 436 "Späthethitisch" means "Late Hittite"

#### Question

- 1) Based on the Aramaic part of the Tell Fekheriye inscription, what do you learn about the relationship between the Arameans and their gods? What do you learn about the nature of kingship? For whom were inscriptions written, that is, who was the target audience of this text?

#### Supplementary Reading:

Hawkins, J.D. "Karkamish and Karatepe: Neo-Hittite City-States." In *CANE*, 1995, 1295-1307.

Pitard, Wayne T. "Arameans." In *Peoples of the Old Testament World*. Eds. Alfred J. Hoerth, et al. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1994, 207-230. **This is a good summary of Aramean history, if you are at all confused by the many names and Assyrian campaigns.**

For Oct. 1 **Arameans and Their Other Neighbors I: Neo-Hittites** (Aramaic kingdoms: Bit-Adini, Arpad [Bit-Agusi], Sam'al [Yu'addi/Bit-Gabbari/modern: Zincerli], and the Neo-Hittites)

#### Read:

Mazzoni, Stefania. Chart from her article "Syria and the Periodization of the Iron Age: A Cross-cultural Perspective." In *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age*. Ed. Guy Bunnens. ANE Studies Supp. 7. Louvain: Peeters, 2000, 56-57.

Hawkins, J.D. "The Syro-Hittite States." In *Cambridge Ancient History: Plates to Volume 3*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1984, 65-92.

##### Gurgum (Neo-Hittite/Luwian kingdom)

MARAŞ 4: COS 2.22A (Luwian)

##### Bit-Adini

\*RIMA 3, pp. 7-11 (Shalmaneser III 858 and 857), 11-24 (Shalmaneser III)  
Lipinski, 2000a, pp. 183-193 (optional)

##### Arpad (Bit-Agusi)

\*The Inscriptions of Bar-Ga'ya and Mati'el from Sefire (Sefire Inscription): COS 2.82  
(Old Aramaic)

Antakya Stele COS 1.114A (Akkadian)

\*Tomb Inscription of Si'gabbar, Priest of Sahar (Nerab Inscription): COS 2.59 (Imperial Aramaic)

Lipinski, 2000a, pp. 211-219

#### Questions:

- 1) How do the Aramaic inscriptions differ from and/or correspond to the structure and rhetoric of Assyrian and Luwian inscriptions?

2) What is revealed about the religion of the Arameans from each of these inscriptions? What role can you discern Hadad playing in Aramean mythology? What does the Tomb Inscription of Si'gabbar, Priest of Sahar (COS 2.59) reveal about the religion of the Arameans?



## Week 4

### For Oct. 6 Arameans and Their Other Neighbors I: Neo-Hittites

#### Read:

##### Sam'al (Bit-Gabbari)

- \*Kilamuwa Inscription (Kilamuwa Inscription): COS 2.30 (Phoenician)
  - \*Hadad Inscription (Panamuwa I, son of Qarli, Inscription): COS 2.36 (Sam'al-Aramaic)
  - \*Panamuwa Inscription (Panamuwa II, son of Bar Sur, Inscription): COS 2.37 (Sam'al-Aramaic)
  - \*Bar Rakib (Bar Rakkab) Inscription: COS 2.38 (Old/Imperial Aramaic)
- Lipinski, 2000a, pp. 238-245 (optional)

##### Hamath

- \*Zakkur Inscription: COS 2.35 (Old Aramaic)
- Lipinski, 2000a, pp. 299-318 (optional)

#### Questions:

- 1) What is the nature of Aramean kingship? What are the responsibilities of the Aramean kings? What problems do the Sam'alians face? What are the strategies used by the Sam'alians to solve them?
- 2) In relation to the Hadad Inscription of Panamuwa I, Panamuwa II, and Bar Rakkab inscriptions, what events have taken place that have inspired the inscriptions?
- 3) Concerning the Zakkur inscription, what are the similarities to the three separate biblical accounts of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem at the time of Hezekiah.  
Account 1: 2Kings 18:13-16  
Account 2: 2Kings 18:17-19:7 + 19:36-37  
Account 3: 2Kings 19:8-35

#### Supplementary Reading:

- Parker, Simon B. *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions: Comparative Studies on Narratives in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible*. New York: Oxford University, 1997, 76-89 (Kilamuwa and Bar Rakkib) 105-112 (Zakkur), 131-142 ("Conclusion: The Roles of the Stories and the Role of the Deity").
- Cathcart, Kevin J. "The Curses in Old Aramaic Inscriptions." In *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara*. JSOTSS 230. Ed. Kevin J. Cathcart and Michael Maher. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996, 140-152.

### For Oct. 8 Arameans and Their Other Neighbors II: Israelites (Soba, Damascus)

#### Read:

##### Soba or Zobah

Biblical Passages: 2Sam 8, 2Sam 10 and corresponding passages in Chronicles: 1Chr 18-19

##### Damascus

\*Bible: 1Kings 11 – 2Kings 16; Isaiah 7-12

**Notice that the Bible refers numerous times to a Damascene king named Ben-Hadad. Many of these references are anachronistic and inaccurate. Please follow the identifications in the following list, which is organized according to a chronology. Note also the incorrect reference to "Ahab" in 1K20 and 1K22; read instead "Joash".**

Pay particular attention to the following 10 passages:

- 880 BCE** 1K15:9-24 (Ben-Hadad of Damascus + Asa of Judah vs. Basha of Israel)  
“Ben-Hadad” = Bar-Hadad I
- No date** 1K19:11-18 (Elijah is commanded to anoint Hazael, Elisha, and Jehu)  
“Hazael” = Hazael
- No date** 2K5 (Naaman, commander of Damascus’s army, and Elisha)  
No named kings.
- No date** 2K6:8-23 (Battle at Dothan)  
No named kings.
- 844 BCE** 2K8:7-15 (“Ben-Hadad” of Damascus is killed by Hazael)  
“Ben-Hadad” = Hadad-ezer
- 815-775 BCE** 2K13:1-25 (“Hazael” and “Ben-Hadad” vs. Jehoahaz and Joash of Israel)-  
“Hazael” = Hazael  
“Ben-Hadad” = Bar-Hadad III
- NB: There’s probably no Ben-Hadad II.  
NB: Joash is also known as Jehoash.
- 815-775** **1K20:1-21; 22-34** and **1K22** (3 battles b/w “Ben-Hadad” vs. “Ahab” of Israel)  
“Ben-Hadad” = Bar-Hadad III  
“Ahab” = Joash, king of Israel
- NB: There are three battles, the first two of which Israel clearly wins. A different memory of the first battle, of 1K20:1-21, is preserved in 2K6:24-7:20.
- NB: Bible connects these wars w/ Ahab, but they’re better connected with Joash.
- 810 BCE?** **2K6:24-7:20** (Ben-Hadad of Damascus attacks Samaria, then flees:  
another version of 1K20:1-21)  
“Ben-Hadad” = Bar-Hadad III
- 732 BCE** 2K16:1-20 (Rezin of Damascus + Pekah of Israel versus Ahaz of Judah + Tiglath Pileser III = Syro-Ephraimite War)
- 732 BCE** Isaiah 7-12 (Syro-Ephraimite War)

Axskjöld, 112-124 (on Naaman, 2K5), 124-133 (on Battle at Dothan, 2K6), 157-158 (conclusion)

\*Tell Dan / Beyt-Dawid Inscription, COS 2.39  
Hazael’s Booty Inscription, COS 2.40

### Israel

Miller and Hayes chronology of Israelite and Judean kings

### Questions:

- 1) What are the challenges of deriving history from the Bible? How is this different from and/or similar to deriving historical information from the inscriptions?

- 2) What further evidence can you find in the biblical passages from Kings that illustrates a complicated perspective of the writers toward Aram and/or Arameans, that is a perspective that is not wholly positive or wholly negative?
- 3) If the Bible is considered as ideologically biased in favor of Yahwism and Judahites / Israelites, what purpose would this complex portrait of Aram / Arameans serve? (Paper topic anyone?)

Supplementary Reading:

Parker, Simon B. *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions: Comparative Studies on Narratives in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible*. New York: Oxford University, 1997, 58-59 (Tell Dan).

Pitard, W. *Ancient Damascus*, chapter 5, pp. 99-138.

----- *Ancient Damascus*, chapter 6, pp. 145-189.

Oded, Bustenay. "Observations on the Israelite/Judaeon Exiles in Mesopotamia during the Eighth-Sixth Centuries BCE." In *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski*. Eds. K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors. Leuven: Peeters, 1995, 205-212.

Kings of Damascus (adapted from Pitard, 1987, 144)

Rezon, ca. 950 BCE ??-----contemp. w/ Solomon

Hezion, ca. 910 BCE ??

Tab-Rimmon, ca. 890 BCE ??

Bar-Hadad I (Ben-Hadad of Bible), ca. 880 BCE-----w/ Omri(Is.) & Jehoshaphat (Jud.)

Hadad-Ezer, ca. 860-844 BCE (defends kingdom against Shalmaneser III at Qarqar in 853 with Ahab, king of Israel)

Hazael, ca. 844-800 BCE-----w/Jehu (Is.) and Jehu's son Jehoahaz

Bar-Hadad III (Ben-Hadad of Bible), ca. 800-780 BCE -----w/ Joash (Is.)

[NB: there's no Ben-Hadad II]

H[adianu, ca. 775 BCE

Rezin, ca. 750-732 BCE (defeated by Tiglath-Pileser III at Qarqar in 732)

--w/ Pekah (Is.) and Ahaz (Jud.)

**Week 5 (Oct. 13, 15): NO CLASS (Colloquium on Ben Sira in Metz, France)**

**Week 6 (Oct. 20, 22):**

**Oct. 20: NO CLASS (Fall Break)**

For Oct. 22: Arameans and Their Other Neighbors II: Israelites (Soba, Damascus)

Read

Deir Alla

\*Deir Alla Text, COS 2.27

\*Bible: Numbers 22-24

Questions:

- 1) How does the biblical Balaam compare to the Balaam of the Deir 'Alla text, in terms of behavior, attitude, characteristics? What other parallels can you find between the stories of Balaam in Numbers and in the Deir Alla text? What is the significance of these parallels? How does Balaam compare to the biblical Elijah, Elisha, and Micaiah?

Supplementary Reading:

Oded, Bustenay. "Observations on the Israelite/Judaeen Exiles in Mesopotamia during the Eighth-Sixth Centuries BCE." In *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski*. Eds. K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors. Leuven: Peeters, 1995, 205-212.

**Week 7 (Oct. 27, 29):**

**Oct. 27: IN CLASS REVIEW**

**Oct. 29: Midterm**

## Week 8. Arameans and Empires II: Babylonian

For Nov. 3

### Read

Brinkman, J. A. *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia*, 260-288.

Beaulieu, "King Nabonidus and the Neo-Babylonian Empire." In *CANE*, 1995, 969-979.

\*"Mother of Nabonidus" from Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 1969.

### Questions

1. How do the possible explanations for the emergence of Arameans in Babylonia resemble or differ from the explanations for the appearance of Arameans in northern Mesopotamia?
2. How are the Chaldeans distinguished from the Arameans?
3. What parallels exist between the "Mother of Nabonidus" text (written in Akkadian) and the other (Aramaic and Hebrew) texts that we've read?

For Nov. 5

### Read

Baigent, Michael. "Harran: City of Temples." In *From the Omens of Babylon: Astrology and Ancient Mesopotamia*. London: Penguin, 1994, 184-197.

\*"Nabonidus and His God" from Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 1969.

\*"Verse Account of Nabonidus" from Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 1969.

\*"The Sippar Cylinder of Nabonidus" COS 2.123A

\*"Nabonidus' Rebuilding of E-lugal-galga-sisa" COS 2.123B

\*From the Bible: Daniel 1-6

### Questions

1. Why, do you suppose, does Nabonidus favor Sin over and above other gods, including the traditional head of the Babylonian pantheon, Marduk?
2. The Bible confuses the personage of Nabonidus and Nebuchadnezzar II, both of whom were kings of Babylon in the middle part of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium. When the Book of Daniel mentions Nebuchadnezzar, it often means Nabonidus. Based on the texts from the Bible and Mesopotamia, what parallels exist between the biblical portrait and the mesopotamian portrait?
3. What possible explanations can you find for the modern associations of the Arameans / Aramaic with mystical and numinous powers?

### Supplementary Readings

Green, Tamara. *The City of the Moon God*, 19-43.

## Week 9. Arameans and Empires III: Persian and Hellenistic

For Nov. 10

### Read

- \*Aramaic Text in Demotic Script, COS 1.99
- \*Carpentras Stele, COS 2.64
- \*“Hermopolis Letters” and \*“Elephantine Ostraca,” in Lindenberger, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*, 25-40 and 41-59, listed as separate files on CTOOLS.
- Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 1992, 405-422.
- Porten, “Elephantine Papyri,” *ABD* 2, 1992, 445-455.

### Questions

1. What hypotheses about the Arameans that we’ve been forming over the last weeks does the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script, COS 1.99, seem to confirm? See especially the biblical Psalm 20 and col. XI, lines 11-19. How does this correlate with the passage from 2Kings quoted below?
2. What do the Hermopolis papyri imply about the life and religious belief of their writers?
3. How might you explain the origin of the Arameans at the city of Syene in southern Egypt, based on the primary texts read for this class, including that quoted below from 2Kings?

### Supplementary Reading

- †Porten, “Settlement of the Jews at Elephantine and the Arameans at Syene,” esp. pp. 461-466.
  - Musti, D. “Syria and the East.” In *CAH*, volume 7, second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1984, 175-220.
  - Sancisi-Weerdenburg, Heleen. “Darius I and the Persian Empire.” In *CANE*, 1995, 1035-1050.
  - Briant, “Persian Empire,” *ABD* 5, 1992, 236-244.
- †Available on CTOOLS. All other Supplementary Readings available in Hatcher Reading Room.

For Nov. 12

### Read

- Elephantine Ahiqar, listed in two files on CTOOLS: “Elephantine Ahiqar Intro, Lindenberger,” AND “Elephantine Ahiqar, Lindenberger”
- Syriac Ahiqar, in English translation, listed on CTOOLS: “Ahiqar in Syriac, English S1-S2”

### Questions

1. What parallels do you find between the Ahiqar story and biblical tales? What is the significance of these parallels? Which are your favorite proverbs? Are there any that actually seem like useful advice, or that are phrased in a persuasive way?
2. What are the differences between the Elephantine and Syriac versions?

(NRSV) 2Kings 17:24 The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria in place of the people of Israel; they took possession of Samaria, and settled in its cities.

25 When they first settled there, they did not worship the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them.

26 So the king of Assyria was told, "The nations that you have carried away and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of the land; therefore he has sent lions among them; they are killing them, because they do not know the law of the god of the land."

27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, "Send there one of the priests whom you carried away from there; let him go and live there, and teach them the law of the god of the land."

28 So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and lived in Bethel; he taught them how they should worship the LORD.

29 But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the shrines of the high places that the people of Samaria had made, every nation in the cities in which they lived;

30 the people of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the people of Cuth made Nergal, the people of Hamath made Ashima;

31 the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

32 They also worshiped the LORD and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places.

33 So they worshiped the LORD but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.

**Week 10. (Mar. 24). Arameans and Empires IV: Roman, Parthian, and Sassanid (Arab-Aramean States and Cultures: Edessa, Harran, Nabatea, Palmyra)**

For Nov. 17

Read

Lucian's *De Dea Syria* (ca. 200 CE) from the antiquated translation of Herbert A. Strong: *The Syrian Goddess: Being a Translation of Lucian's "De Dea Syria," with a Life of Lucian.*

Questions

1. What portions of Lucian's *De Dea Syria* perhaps inspired its other early 20<sup>th</sup>-century translator, A.M. Harmon, to translate Lucian's Greek text into Middle English, though he translated the rest of Lucian's many works into standard English?
2. How does Lucian portray the worship and history of the worship of "the Syrian Goddess"? How does he express his own opinions on matters? Do you completely trust what he describes? Is this accurate history?
3. Which elements of Lucian's *De Dea Syria* seem to have links with the other primary sources read for this class? Who is Semiramis?

Supplementary Reading:

Sartre, Maurice, "Chapter Nine: Hellenization and Indigenous Cultures," in *The Middle East under Rome*, 274-296.

Millar, Fergus, "Chapter 11: Arabia," in *The Roman Near East: 31 BC – AD 337*, 387-436, **especially pp. 400-408.**

For Nov. 19

Read

Millar, Fergus, "Chapter 7: The Tetrapolis and Northern Syria," in *The Roman Near East: 31 BC – AD 337*, 236-263, **especially pp. 242-256.**

Millar, Fergus, "Chapter 9: Eastern Syria Phoenice: Mountain, Oasis and Steppe," in *The Roman Near East: 31 BC – AD 337*, 296-336, **especially pp. 319-336.**

Stoneman, Richard, "Chapter 3: Of Temples, Tribes, and Taxes," in *Palmyra and its Empire*, 51-79.

Questions

1. What connections exist between Syrian cults and worship and those of the Luwians?
2. Of what "ethnicity" were the Palmyrenes?
3. What elements of "Aramean culture" are visible at Palmyre?



For Nov. 20

Catch-up

**Week 11-12. Arameans and Empires IV: Roman, Parthian, and Sassanid (Arab-Aramean States and Cultures: Edessa, Harran, Nabatea, Palmyra)**

For Nov. 24

Read

Millar, Fergus, "Chapter 12: The Euphrates and Mesopotamia," in *The Roman Near East: 31 BC – AD 337*, 437-488, **especially pp. 452-488**.

\**The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, pp. 102-119. (Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite. *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*. Translated Texts for Historians 32. Trans. Frank R. Trombley and John W. Watt. Liverpool: Liverpool University, 2000).

Ross, Steven K. "Chapter 5: A 'Golden Age'? The Culture of Pre-Christian Edessa," in *Roman Edessa*, 83-116.

Note that *Kulturgebiet* (p. 83) = "culture region"

Questions

1. What does the passage from *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite* reveal about the life of the Edessans during the years 505-507 CE? What hardships did they face?
2. Who were the "main" deities of Edessa? What do you make of the inscription on page 96 of Ross, Chapter 5? Do you agree with Segal that it reflects belief in an afterlife?

For Dec. 1

Read

Ross, Steven K. "Chapter 6: Early Christianity and Edessan Culture," in *Roman Edessa*, 117-138.

Ross, Steven K. "Chapter 7: Conclusion," in *Roman Edessa*, 139-144.

Questions

1. What form(s) did Christianity take at Edessa?
2. What myths are associated with Edessa and Christianity?
3. How would you characterize the relationship between the "pagans" and the Christians in Edessa and Osrhoene?

For Dec. 3-4

Read

Text 24 of the "Nabatean Agriculture," from *The Last Pagans of Iraq*. Note that the first part of the text is a translation of a work from ca. 500s CE and is translated by Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya from Syriac into Arabic. Then, in the second half of the text, Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya offers his own observations on pagan practices from his own time (ca. 900 CE).

Morony, Michael G. "Chapter 4: Aramaeans." In *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 1984, 169-180. This is NOT on CTOOLS, but is available as an e-book through Mirlyn. Go to Mirlyn, type in the title of the book: *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, then click on the electronic link.

Bowl C from McCullough's *Jewish and Mandaean Incantation Bowls*, 11-27. You should focus on just the translation.

Lupieri, Edmondo, *The Mandaeans: The Last Gnostics*, trans. C. Hindley, 1993/2002, pp. 3-54.

### Questions

1. Concerning Text 24 of the “Nabatean Agriculture,” from *The Last Pagans of Iraq*, how is Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya’s method of analyzing contemporaneous customs similar to our own methods of looking at cultures?
2. How is Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya’s representation of pagan practices and his expression of his own opinions different from that offered by Lucian in his *De Dea Syria*? For example, how is Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya’s representation of the Tammuz cult in his own day different from how Lucian describes the origin of the castrated priests in the temple in Hierapolis?
3. According to Morony, what was the relationship between Arameans and Arabs in Late Sasanian times?
4. How is Mandaicism similar to or different from the religion of the Gnostics and the religion of the Manicheans?

### Supplementary Reading:

Morony, Michael G. “Chapter 13: Pagans and Gnostics.” In *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 1984, 384-430. This is NOT on CTOOLS, but is available as an e-book through Mirlyn. Go to Mirlyn, type in the title of the book: *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, then click on the electronic link and go to Chapter 13.

## **Week 13**

Dec. 8

### Read

- \*Ephrem’s “Nisibis Hymn 53” (Text 15 from *Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems*, trans. Sebastian P. Brock and George A. Kiraz, 2006, 155-167).
- “History of Mar Qardagh” or “The History of the Heroic Deeds of Mar Qardagh the Victorious Martyr,” in *The Legend of Mar Qardagh* by Joel Thomas Walker, 2006, 19-70. This is in three parts on CTOOLS,.

### Questions

1. How does Mar Qardagh identify himself ethnically? How does this fit into the history we have been studying?
2. Where is the humor in Ephrem’s Nisibis Hymn 53?

### Supplementary Reading:

Brock, S. “Chapter 4: The Flowering of the Aramaic Literatures,” in *Hidden Pearl*, Part 2. This is in two parts on CTOOLS.

“Euphemia and the Goth” in Burkitt, *Euphemia and the Goth*, 1913.

“Merchant of Harran” in Burkitt, *Euphemia and the Goth*, 1913.

## **Week 12. Culture of Eastern Arameans: Mandeans**

### **Read**

Text 24 of the “Nabatean Agriculture,” from *The Last Pagans of Iraq*. Note that the first part of the text is a translation of a work from ca. 500s CE and is translated by Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya from Syriac into Arabic. Then, in the second half of the text, Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya offers his own observations on pagan practices from his own time (ca. 900 CE).

Morony, Michael G. “Chapter 4: Aramaeans.” In *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 1984, 169-180. This is NOT on CTOOLS, but is available as an e-book through Mirlyn. Go to Mirlyn, type in the title of the book: *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, then click on the electronic link.

Bowl C from McCullough’s *Jewish and Mandaean Incantation Bowls*, 11-27. You should focus on just the translation.

Lupieri, Edmondo, *The Mandaeans: The Last Gnostics*, trans. C. Hindley, 1993/2002, pp. 3-54.

### **Questions**

1. Concerning Text 24 of the “Nabatean Agriculture,” from *The Last Pagans of Iraq*, how is Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya’s method of analyzing contemporaneous customs similar to our own methods of looking at cultures?
2. How is Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya’s representation of pagan practices and his expression of his own opinions different from that offered by Lucian in his *De Dea Syria*? For example, how is Abu Bakr ibn Wahshiyya’s representation of the Tammuz cult in his own day different from how Lucian describes the origin of the castrated priests in the temple in Hierapolis?
3. According to Morony, what was the relationship between Arameans and Arabs in Late Sasanian times?
4. How is Mandaism similar to or different from the religion of the Gnostics and the religion of the Manicheans?

### **Supplementary Reading:**

Morony, Michael G. “Chapter 13: Pagans and Gnostics.” In *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 1984, 384-430. This is NOT on CTOOLS, but is available as an e-book through Mirlyn. Go to Mirlyn, type in the title of the book: *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, then click on the electronic link and go to Chapter 13.

## **Week 13. Legacy of Syriac Culture and History**

### **Read**

“Euphemia and the Goth” in Burkitt, *Euphemia and the Goth*, 1913.

“Merchant of Harran” in Burkitt, *Euphemia and the Goth*, 1913.

Ephrem’s “Nisibis Hymn 53” (Text 15 from *Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems*, trans. Sebastian P. Brock and George A. Kiraz, 2006, 155-167).

“History of Mar Qardagh” or “The History of the Heroic Deeds of Mar Qardagh the Victorious Martyr,” in *The Legend of Mar Qardagh* by Joel Thomas Walker, 2006, 19-70. This is in three parts on CTOOLS,.

### Questions

1. How does Mar Qardagh identify himself ethnically? How does this fit into the history we have been studying?
2. Where is the humor in Ephrem's Nisibis Hymn 53?
3. What seems odd about "The Merchant of Harran," if we assume that this text was written by a pious, chaste Christian?
4. In the story "Euphemia and the Goth," what is the social back drop of the story? How is the writer's / story-teller's craft revealed in this story?

### Supplementary Reading:

Brock, S. "Chapter 4: The Flowering of the Aramaic Literatures," in *Hidden Pearl*, Part 2. This is in two parts on CTOOLS.

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