

# Foreigners in the Ancient Near East

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*Jeder Mensch ist ein Aufländer—fast überall.*  
German anti-racism slogan

A survey of diverse aspects of the reception, attitudes toward, and activities of foreigners in the major cuneiform cultures of the third through first millennia B.C.E. While outsiders could play important roles in their new environments, they were generally soon assimilated into their host societies without effecting significant changes in them. Only toward the close of this period did the arrival of large groups of invaders convinced of the superiority of their own cultures, such as Persians and Greco-Macedonians, radically alter the age-old civilizations of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Anatolia.

The concept of foreigner is by its very nature a relative one, not only positionally—depending upon which community is the source of this characterization of another person or persons, but also in terms of scope—the breadth of the group beyond whose real or imagined genealogical and/or spatial boundaries an individual is to be considered an outsider. For example, in third-millennium B.C.E. Sumer, whose city-states shared a common language and religious system, the inhabitants of the city of Umma nonetheless held even the men of neighboring Lagash to be foreigners,<sup>1</sup> if not so alien as the people of the Zagros mountains to the east. In contrast, most of the residents of central Anatolia during the Late Bronze Age, although belonging to diverse ethnic groups and speaking several—sometimes unrelated—tongues, were “men of Hatti” (LÚ.MEŠ<sup>URU</sup> *Hatti*), the people we today call “Hittites.”<sup>2</sup>

I will discuss here the role of foreigners in the civilizations of ancient Western Asia, concentrating on the cuneiform cultures with which I am most familiar—Sumer and Akkad of the third millennium, Babylonia and Assyria of the second and first millennia, and the Hittites of the second millennium.

## TERMINOLOGY

Native terms for “foreigner” include Sumerian *lú.bar.ra*,<sup>3</sup> Akkadian *aḫûm*,<sup>4</sup> and Hittite *araḫzena-*,<sup>5</sup> the basic semantic notion in each instance being that of externality or peripheral location, rather than hostility, the words for which latter concept are *kûr*, *nakrum*, and *kurur*,<sup>6</sup> respectively.<sup>7</sup> But of course by their circumstances or from particular characteristics—

This paper was read in Boston during the “Plenary Session: Foreigners” at the 222nd Annual Meeting of the Society on March 18, 2012. Abbreviations are those of the *Chicago Hittite Dictionary* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1980–) and *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956–2010). Note also ETCSL: Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/>).

1. For an account of the struggles of these two cities over territory lying on their common border, see Cooper 1983.
2. See Güterbock 1959.
3. PSD B, 106–7.
4. CAD A/I, 210–11.
5. HW<sup>2</sup> I, 242–43.
6. See Neu 1979.
7. Klinger 1992: 194–95.

personal names, epithets, and so on—we may also detect in the texts the presence of foreigners who are not explicitly labeled as such.

#### FOREIGNERS AT HOME

To begin our survey with foreigners as groups located—as is only meet—within their own countries, we may observe that the Mesopotamians and the Hittites could find the ways of others somewhat distasteful. For instance, in a Sumerian myth set down in writing in the early second millennium a goddess contemplating marriage to Martu, the eponymous deity of the West Semitic Amorites, is cautioned by her companion concerning the nature of his people:

Now listen, their hands are destructive and their features are those of monkeys; (An Amorite) is one who eats what (the Moon-god) 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. (The Amorite) 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 (in prayer), 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?<sup>8</sup>

Centuries later, in the mid-fourteenth century, the Hittite Great King Šuppiluliuma I warns a vassal from an underdeveloped region with whom he has just concluded a marriage alliance:

Furthermore, this sister whom I, My Majesty, have given to you as your wife has many sisters from her own family as well as from her extended family. They (now) belong to your extended family because you have taken their sister. But for Hatti it is an important custom that a brother does not take his sister or female cousin (sexually). It is not permitted. In Hatti whoever commits such an act does not remain alive but is put to death here. Because your land is barbaric, it is in conflict (with these norms). There one quite regularly takes his sister and female cousins. But in Hatti it is not permitted.<sup>9</sup>

On a lighter note, the Neo-Assyrian monarch Assurnāširpal II (ninth century) remarks in his annals that the people of the town of Zipirmena in the eastern region of Zamua “chirp like women” in their speech,<sup>10</sup> and a Hittite writer mocks the neighboring Kaška people as “swineherds and weavers of linen,”<sup>11</sup> apparently occupations of low status.<sup>12</sup>

#### INVADERS

Bemused disapproval and contempt could give way to real rancor when large bodies of outsiders erupted into the territory of a culture, bent upon conquest or at least plunder. The marauding mountaineers whose raids brought an end to the Akkadian Sargonic dynasty a little after 2200 are depicted in a retrospective account as “those who do not resemble other people, who are not reckoned as part of the Land, the Gutians, an unbridled people, with human intelligence but canine instincts and monkeys' features.”<sup>13</sup> And in the Old Babylonian

8. The Marriage of Martu (ECTSL 1.7.1), ll. 127–39.

9. Hukkana Treaty (CTH 41) A iii 40'–49', translated by Beckman 1999: 31, §25.

10. Cited by Haas 1980: 40.

11. KUB 24.4 (CTH 376) i 26: *na-at* LÚ.MEŠSIPAD.ŠAḪ *e-še-er* Û LÚ.MEŠE-PÍ-IŠ GAD.ḪI.A *e-še-er*.

12. This interpretation of the phrase has now been challenged by Nebahat Ilgi Gerçek in her 2012 University of Michigan dissertation, “The Kaska and the Northern Frontier of Hatti.”

13. The Curse of Agade (ECTSL 2.1.5), ll. 153–57.

period (c. 1740), the upstart King Rim-Sin II of Larsa(?) describes an adversarial group as “the enemy, the evildoers, the Kassites from the mountains, who cannot be driven back to the mountains.”<sup>14</sup>

#### INFILTRATORS

Nonetheless, throughout the three thousand years of literate Mesopotamian civilization, individual foreigners and small groups continually infiltrated the land of high culture and assumed various roles within the native society, most frequently as common laborers, but occasionally appearing in rather lofty governmental positions. This wide spectrum of occupational trajectory is best observed during the Ur III period at the close of the third millennium, when Amorites are attested as harvest laborers on the one hand and as city governors and generals on the other.<sup>15</sup>

Since the previous life experience of these newcomers was in a society at a lower level of social and political organization than that which they encountered in Mesopotamia, they consequently tended to assimilate rather rapidly to Sumerian and later to Babylonian culture. Indeed, the monarchs of most of the minor states that sprang up on the ruins of the empire of Ur were Amorite princes, who combined the roles of urban king and tribal sheikh. The most famous of these rulers, in antiquity as now, was Hammurapi of Babylon. By the time they achieved dominance, these rulers and their kinsmen had abandoned their ancestral West Semitic tongue(s) in favor of the Akkadian of Babylonia and had otherwise fully assimilated into the Mesopotamian cultural environment.

It is difficult to identify individual immigrant foreigners in the textual record. Out of necessity, scholars have employed such criteria as onomastics, language use, and ethnic epithets to pick them out. But the very fact that a person with a good Akkadian name might be labeled as an Amorite, for example, demonstrates the inexactitude of this approach. And if due to the practice of *paḫponomy* a second-generation Babylonian was given the name of his immigrant Amorite grandfather, did this make him an outsider in the eyes of his neighbors? In any event, once a line of newcomers has become fully integrated into their new society, they disappear into the mass of the population as far as the modern historian is concerned.<sup>16</sup>

#### MERCHANTS

It may be assumed that in both Mesopotamia and Hatti the voluntary immigration of individuals or families was tolerated, while the incursion of armed groups was resisted, but the presence of certain classes of outsiders was actively encouraged by the leaders of society. Most prominent among welcome foreigners were merchants.<sup>17</sup> The security of their persons and merchandise was of special concern to rulers. Should they not be protected, long-distance trade would suffer if not collapse.<sup>18</sup> Therefore the Hittite Laws stipulate:

If anyone kills a merchant, he shall pay 100 minas of silver, and he shall hold his household responsible for the fine. If it is in the lands of Luwiya or Pala, he shall pay the 100 minas and also replace his goods. If it is in the land of Hatti, he himself shall also bring that merchant to burial.<sup>19</sup>

14. Year b: <sup>lú</sup>kúr <sup>lú</sup>ḫul-gál ka-šu-ú<sup>ki</sup> kur-ta kur-kur-šè gaba-ri nu-gi<sub>4</sub>-a.

15. See Michalowski 2011: 82–121.

16. Galter 1988: 279.

17. Leemans 1950 is still an excellent introduction to this topic.

18. See Yaron 1969: 71.

19. Hittite Law §5, translated by Hoffner 1997: 19 (adapted).

The penalties specified here are most substantial.

The well-being of foreign businessmen was indeed a source of concern at the highest levels. Thus we read in a letter from Hittite Great King Ḫattušili III of the mid-thirteenth century to his Babylonian counterpart Kadašman-Enlil II:

[Because] you wrote to me as follows: “My merchants are being killed in the land of Amurru, the land of Ugarit, [and the land of Subartu]”—they do not kill (as punishment) in Hatti . . . If the king hears about it, [they pursue] that matter. They apprehend the murderer [and deliver him] to the relatives of the dead man, [but they allow] the murderer [to live. The place] in which the murder occurred is purified . . . Would those who do not kill a malefactor kill a merchant? [But in regard to] the Subarians, how should I know if they are killing people? Now [send] me the relatives of the dead merchants so that I can investigate their lawsuit.<sup>20</sup>

At least during the third and second millennia, foreign merchants might even establish their own semi-autonomous residential quarters, usually just outside their host city in the *kārum*,<sup>21</sup> or commercial district.<sup>22</sup> We also read of a “Street of the Men of Isin” in Sippar-Jahrurum,<sup>23</sup> and of a Meluḫḫa village in Sumer, the latter probably originally a settlement of traders from the Indus Valley culture.<sup>24</sup>

By far our fullest documentation on this topic comes from the excavation of the *kārum* at Kanesh, modern Kültepe near Kayseri. This site has yielded the voluminous records of a network of trading colonies maintained by merchants from the city of Assur across northern Syro-Mesopotamia and throughout central Anatolia during the twentieth through eighteenth centuries.<sup>25</sup> Save for the presence of these cuneiform archives documenting the business activities of their owners, the remains of the houses here and their furnishings are archaeologically indistinguishable from those of the native Anatolians.<sup>26</sup> Reading the texts, we learn that in their spare time the merchants, who frequently remained for years in the commercial outposts, might contract marriages with local women<sup>27</sup> and sire children, who seem to have been fully integrated into the local society. These offspring normally remained behind—along with their mothers—when their fathers returned to Mesopotamia upon retirement from commerce.

But the presence of alien businessmen, who were frequently oppressive creditors of their native counterparts, could also become burdensome to the hosts. Hence this promulgation made by Ḫattušili III at the request of the vassal ruler of the Syrian coastal emporium of Ugarit concerning the conditions under which merchants from the Hittite city of Ura could operate there:

The men of Ura shall carry on their mercantile activities in the land of Ugarit during the summer, but they will be forced to leave Ugarit for their own land in the winter. The men of Ura shall not live in Ugarit during the winter. They shall not acquire houses or fields (in Ugarit) with their silver. . . . If men of Ugarit owe silver to the men of Ura and are not able to pay it off, the

20. KBo 1.10 + KUB 3.72 (CTH 172), translated by Beckman 1999: 142, §10 (slightly modified). Cf. also EA 8, as translated in Moran 1992: 16–17.

21. CAD K, 231–39.

22. The original meaning of *kāru* was “quay,” but via the extended sense of “harbor area,” the term eventually came to designate that part of a town where commerce was carried out, and could then be used even in connection with settlements not situated on a river, as was the case for many communities in Anatolia.

23. Cited in Harris 1975: 11 with n. 3. See also Harris 1976: 148.

24. Parpola et al. 1977.

25. For an introduction to this material, see Veenhof and Eidem 2008.

26. See Özgüç 2004.

27. See Veenhof 1982: 151–52.

king of Ugarit must turn over that man, together with his wife and his sons, to the men of Ura, the merchants. But the men of Ura, the merchants, shall not claim houses or fields of the king of Ugarit.<sup>28</sup>

The Great King's edict was intended to prevent the Anatolian tradesmen from acquiring total economic domination over Ugarit.

#### DIPLOMATS

Another type of foreigner present by invitation in the courts of the ancient Near East was the "messenger," a functionary whom we might more accurately term "ambassador,"<sup>29</sup> and whose activity was essential for the maintenance of relations between states and the resolution of international disputes. These officials could build close personal relations with the ruler to whom they were dispatched,<sup>30</sup> and might spend long periods in residence at foreign capitals.<sup>31</sup> Strict customs governed the proper respect and treatment of an envoy. Aššur-uballit I of Assyria (fourteenth century) complains to the pharaoh about the inappropriate reception of one of his messengers:

Why should messengers be made to stay constantly out in the sun and so die in the sun? If staying out in the sun means profit for the king, then let (the messenger) stay out and let him die right there in the sun, (but) for the king himself there must be a profit. Or other[wi]se, why should they [d]ie in the sun? . . . Do they keep my messengers alive? (No!)—They are made to die in the sun!<sup>32</sup>

#### TECHNICAL EXPERTS

In a spirit of brotherhood, and in anticipation of modern official development aid, an ancient monarch might send a physician, exorcist, builder, or other specialist to lend his skills to a royal colleague. Naturally such foreigners were warmly received abroad and usually very well rewarded by their hosts. However, diplomatic tensions arose when they refused to give up their comfortable circumstances abroad and go home. Another excerpt from the long letter of Ḫattušili III to Kadašman-Enlil II will illustrate:

Concerning the physician whom my brother dispatched here—when they received the physician he accomplished many [good] things. When illness befell him, I exerted myself constantly on his behalf. I performed many extispicies for him, but when his time came, he died. . . . In no way would I have detained the physician. . . . When during the reign of my brother Muwattalli they received an incantation priest and a physician and detained them in Hatti, I argued with him, saying: "Why are you detaining them? Detaining [a physician] is not right!" And would I now have detained the physician? [Concerning the first] experts whom they received here: Perhaps the incantation priest died, [but the physician] is alive and the proprietor of a fine household. The woman whom he married is a relative of mine. [If he says]: "I want to go back to my native land," he shall leave and go [to his native land]. Would I have detained the physician Raba-ša-Marduk?<sup>33</sup>

28. RS 17.130 and dupls. (CTH 93), translated by Beckman 1999: 177.

29. On this profession, see Lafont 1992, Oller 1995, and Hoffner 2009: 14–18.

30. EA 11 (translated by Moran 1992: 21–22) records the request by Burnaburiaš of Babylon that only Ḫaya be sent by pharaoh as the head of the mission to escort his daughter to her wedding in Egypt.

31. In EA 3 (translated by Moran 1992: 7), Kadašman-Enlil complains that the pharaoh has detained his envoy for six years.

32. EA 16 (translated by Moran 1992: 38–39) (slightly modified).

33. KBo 1.10 + KUB 3.72 (CTH 172), translated by Beckman 1999: 142–43, §§12–13; cf. Edel 1976.

## GUEST PROFESSORS

Hittite cuneiform scribal culture was originally borrowed from centers in Syro-Mesopotamia,<sup>34</sup> and Hittite bureaucrats were kept abreast of the latest intellectual developments there through the residencies of *Gastprofessoren* from Assyria and Babylonia. One of these visitors, Anu-šar-ilāni, established a line of scribes active for over two centuries at the Hittite capital.<sup>35</sup> In turn, it was probably Hittite experts who introduced the use of cuneiform and the diplomatic *lingua franca* of Akkadian to the Egyptian foreign office.<sup>36</sup>

## BRIDES AND GROOMS

Particularly during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, marriage alliances between royal courts were an important instrument of diplomacy, admittedly bringing only a few foreigners into an ancient state, but placing them very near the highest seats of power.<sup>37</sup> Negotiations over such nuptials were the subject of several pieces of the international correspondence recovered from el-Amarna in Egypt (fourteenth century).<sup>38</sup> Each participating culture in these exchanges—usually of women—had its own particular ideas concerning the prestige to be derived from the discourse.<sup>39</sup> Hittite and Mesopotamian rulers were more than happy to give away daughters and sisters as partners to their foreign counterparts, valuing what they considered to be the superior role of father-in-law (Akk. *emum*) to the recipient which thereby accrued to them. In contrast, the Egyptian pharaoh, while enthusiastic about receiving high-ranking foreign women into his harem,<sup>40</sup> was absolutely unwilling to send a daughter abroad. Note this extract from a letter sent by a king of Babylonia, probably Kadašman-Enlil II, to Pharaoh Amenophis III:

[Moreove]r, you my brother, when I wrote [to you] about marrying your daughter, in accordance with your practice of not gi[ving] (a daughter), [wrote to me], saying, “From time immemorial no daughter of the king of Egy[pt] is given to anyone.” Why n[o]t? You are a king; you d[o] as you please. Were you to give (a daughter), who would s[ay] anything? Since I was told of this message, I wrote as follows t[o my brother], saying, “[Someone’s] grown daughters, beautiful women, must be available. Send me a beautiful woman as if she were [you]r daughter. Who is going to say, ‘She is no daughter of the king!’” But holding to your decision, you have not sent anyone.<sup>41</sup>

Of course the pharaoh did not comply, for if anyone in Babylonia were actually to believe that some masquerading Egyptian bride was really his offspring, then in his own view, the dignity of himself and his nation would already have been injured.

Some of these partners in diplomatic marriage were doubtlessly totally powerless in their new and alien social environment, like the Babylonian princess in Egypt who was not even allowed to meet privately with the envoys of her royal brother,<sup>42</sup> or worse, like the Hittite

34. See most recently Wilhelm 2010.

35. Beckman 1983: 104–6.

36. Beckman 1983: 112–14.

37. On this vast subject, see Pintore 1978.

38. EA 2–4, 11, 13(?), 20–22, 24–25, 29, 31–32.

39. Liverani 1990: 274–82.

40. On the marriage of a daughter of Ḫattušili III to Pharaoh Ramses II, which was preceded by a long series of negotiations, see Klengel 2002: 121–44.

41. EA 4, translated by Moran 1992: 8–9.

42. The Babylonian monarch expresses his doubts as to whether the girl his men spied from afar was even his sister! EA 1, translated by Moran 1992: 1–3.

prince Zannanza,<sup>43</sup> who was apparently murdered on his way to take the hand of the widow of Akhenaten.<sup>44</sup> But others could exercise real influence: After the death of her husband, the Babylonian wife of Hittite Great King Šuppiluliuma I engaged in a power struggle with her step-son Muṣili II that was resolved only through her condemnation by a special court convened by the king.<sup>45</sup> Puduḫepa, wife of Ḫattušili III and daughter of a high religious functionary in Kizzuwatna/Cilicia, wielded considerable power during the chronic illness of her husband and the minority of her son Tudḫaliya III.<sup>46</sup> But perhaps Puduḫepa was not really a foreigner, since her homeland had been incorporated into Hatti several generations earlier.

#### MERCENARIES

Over the course of the second and first millennia, the kings of Assyria and Babylonia on occasion employed foreign mercenaries in their armies, as did the rulers of Twenty-Sixth Dynasty Egypt, particularly Greeks and Carians in the case of the latter.<sup>47</sup> And pharaohs had long engaged the services of Libyan troops<sup>48</sup> for warfare and of Nubians for internal police work.<sup>49</sup> The Dardany who aided the Hittites at the battle of Kadesh<sup>50</sup> might also have been hirelings, but there is no evidence for their later presence in the Anatolian homeland.

#### REFUGEES

A major concern of the diplomacy of the second millennium was the problem of refugees. In most Hittite vassal treaties the subordinate is sworn to return fugitives to the Great King. For example, in his treaty with Niqmepa of Ugarit, Muṣili II explains the following obligation:

If a fugitive flees from Hatti and comes to the land of Ugarit, Niqmepa shall seize him and return him to Hatti. If you do not return him, you will transgress the oath. If a fugitive flees from Ugarit and comes to Hatti, the King of Hatti will not seize him and return him. It is not permitted for the King of Hatti to return a fugitive. If a fugitive comes to Ugarit from Hanigalbat or from another land, Niqmepa shall not detain him, but shall allow him to go to Hatti. If you detain him, you will transgress the oath.<sup>51</sup>

The fugitives in question might be high-ranking political dissidents, skilled craftsmen, or simple farmers. No matter—if they had fled from Hatti, the Great King wanted them back, and if they had absconded from another country, he could exploit them in matters ranging from foreign policy to the production of luxury goods and the cultivation of fallow lands.<sup>52</sup> These foreigners would be more than welcome among the Hittites.

43. See van den Hout 1994.

44. On the identity of the queen's deceased husband, see Miller 2007.

45. See Hoffner 1983 and de Martino 1998.

46. On the remarkable career of this woman, see Otten 1975.

47. See Ray 1995: 1189–92.

48. See Spalinger 2005: 6–7, 256, 270–71.

49. See Fischer 1961.

50. See the Egyptian text quoted by Bryce 2005: 235.

51. CTH 66, §§12–13, translated by Beckman 1999: 67.

52. Šuppiluliuma I made use of fugitive princes from enemy lands, taking them in and giving them daughters in marriage, planning to install them later as puppet rulers. On Šattiwazza of Mittanni see Wilhelm 2009, and on Mašḫuiluwa of Mira/Kuwaliya, see Heinhold-Krahmer 1977: 179–99.

## CAPTIVES

Foreigners might also be introduced into a culture against their will. A major source of slaves in early Mesopotamia was the peoples of the eastern mountains. Tellingly, the cuneiform ideogram *géme*, ‘slave girl’, is a compound of the simpler signs *munus*, ‘woman’, and *kur*, ‘mountain; foreign land’.<sup>53</sup> While foreign slaves in the possession of individuals seem never to have been a major factor in the household economies of the ancient Near East,<sup>54</sup> institutional deportees were certainly very valuable in addressing the labor shortage prevalent in the Late Bronze Age, particularly in Hatti.<sup>55</sup> The narration of a campaign in the annals of a Hittite Great King typically concludes with an accounting of human booty, such as the following summary covering the third year of Muršili II: “The civilian captives whom I, My Majesty, brought to the royal establishment numbered 15,500. The captives whom the noblemen of Ḫattuša and the infantry and chariotry brought back were without number. I dispatched the captives to Ḫattuša, and they were led away.”<sup>56</sup> Those belonging to the monarch’s share of these people were assigned plots of vacant crown land, to work in exchange for the payment of taxes and the performance of corvée duties, including military service,<sup>57</sup> or in some cases donated as bound workers to state institutions, such as the mausolea of deceased members of the royal family.<sup>58</sup>

## MASS DEPORTATIONS

As is familiar from biblical accounts of the “Lost Tribes” of Israel (2 Kings 17:6, 23)<sup>59</sup> and the later “Babylonian Exile” of the Judeans (2 Kings 25:11, 21), the rulers of the Middle Assyrian and Neo-Assyrian empires made extensive use of *Massenverschleppungen*, or mass deportations. These measures, which entailed the uprooting of major portions of the populations of newly conquered or re-subjugated lands and their resettlement elsewhere, disoriented the subalterns and enabled the Assyrian authorities to control them more easily. A significant number of these deportees were brought directly to the imperial heartland, where they were put to work on the construction of new royal cities like Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta and Dūr-Sharrukin, or were used to replenish the ranks of the peasantry upon whose labor the central government relied for its sustenance.<sup>60</sup> As was undoubtedly the intention, over the course of a generation or two, such displaced and deracinated groups commonly shed their previous cultural identities and melded into the surrounding society.<sup>61</sup> That is, they ceased to be foreigners.

53. See Molina 2011: 562 on this sign (Borger, *Zeichenliste* no. 558).

54. Neumann 2011: 21.

55. See Bryce 2002: 77–78, 101–2.

56. KBo 3.4 (CTH 61.I) ii 41–45, ed. Grélois 1988: 61, 80.

57. Beal 1988.

58. KUB 13.8 (CTH 252), ed. Otten 1958: 106–7.

59. On the later career of the Lost Tribes, see Parfitt 2002.

60. Oded 1979.

61. A major exception to this rule was the body of exiled Judeans in Babylonia. Perhaps a factor in their survival as a community was the fact that many of them seem to have been settled together in a town that bore the name of their ethnic group, *āl Yehudu*, near Nippur; see Beaulieu 2010: 249–50. For a sketch of the history of those Judeans who did not avail themselves of the opportunity to return to Palestine under the Achaemenid Persians, see Herrmann and Ilan 2008.



## LEGAL AND SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS

We encounter no special provisions concerning foreigners in the Mesopotamian law codes,<sup>62</sup> although the Hittite Laws do present a few paragraphs dealing with the activities of men from neighboring countries.<sup>63</sup> Some restrictions applied to the participation of outsiders in the religious life of Hatti, but the class of foreigners designated by the Akkadian term *UBĀRU*<sup>64</sup>—possibly those present in the capital on official business<sup>65</sup>—were welcome at the communal meals that featured in some festivals.

## CONCLUSION

We have seen that the countries of the ancient Near East were hardly hermetically sealed units impervious to outside influence. Rather, their populations were constantly renewed by the arrival of immigrants, whether voluntary or coerced. Although the host civilizations generally absorbed the newcomers without themselves undergoing significant change, when large bodies of invaders belonging to cultures confident of their own superiority—the Persians, the Greco-Macedonians, and the Arabs—arrived in the region in later centuries, the age-old ways of life of Mesopotamia and Anatolia would be radically transformed.

62. Cardascia 1958.

63. §§19–21, 23. The best accessible translation of the Hittite Laws is Hoffner apud Roth 1995: 213–47.

64. CAD U–W, 10–12. For these “metics” in Hittite texts, see Neu 1970: 76–79.

65. See Klinger 1992: 199–204.

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\* In the interests of facilitating the reader's further inquiry into this topic, I have included here a number of relevant recent works not cited in my essay. Even then, I have by no means exhausted the available bibliography.

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