

THE HA-BI-RU -KIN OR FOE OF ISRAEL?

MEREDITH G. KLINE

FIGURING in near eastern history for something over a millennium of Old Testament times was an enigmatic entity called the *ha-BI-ru*.¹ Successful of old in capturing the spoil in biblical lands, they have in modern times been even more successful in capturing the attention of biblical scholars. More than half a century of general scholarly interest culminated in a united effort to identify the *ha-BI-ru* at the fourth Rencontre assyriologique internationale held in Paris in the summer of 1953. But that gathering did not succeed in altering the previous state of the question which has been described in the terms: *quot capita tot sententiae*.² The *ha-BI-ru*, therefore, continue an enigma, and the curiosity which has prompted the present study may be forgiven though its consequence be to confound yet worse the confusion with yet another conclusion.³

Of particular attraction to those concerned with biblical history and faith has been the apparent identity in name between the *ha-BI-ru* and the Hebrews.⁴ This has spawned a variety of theories sharing as a common nucleus the idea

¹ The syllabification of *ha-BI-ru* represents the cuneiform orthography and the capitalization of the second syllable designates a particular cuneiform sign without prejudice to the question of which of the two most common values of it, namely *bi* and *pi*, is to be adopted.

² J. Bottero, *Le Probleme des Habiru* (Paris, 1954) p. xxviii. This work presents a collection of the known *ha-BI-ru* texts and a compendium of notes contributed by various scholars in connection with the Paris meeting, along with Bottero's own interpretation of the problem.

³ This study was undertaken in the preparation of a doctoral dissertation under Cyrus H. Gordon at the Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning. In its present revised form it gives greater prominence to the biblical aspects of the problem in view of the particular interests of the majority of the readers of the *Westminster Theological Journal*.

⁴ The questions of the proper normalization of *ha-BI-ru* and of its supposed phonetic equivalence with עִבְרִי, "Hebrew", will be reserved in this study until *Ha-BI-ru*-Hebrew relations are under consideration.

that the biblical Hebrews originated as an offshoot of the *ha-BI-ru* of the extra-biblical texts. It is recognized by all that a complete identification of *ha-BI-ru* and Hebrews is impossible since their historical paths do not for the most part coincide.⁵ In the Amarna Age,⁶ however, their paths do converge in Canaan in a way that demands systematization and has further encouraged the theory that the Hebrews stemmed from the *ha-BI-ru*. This theory has moreover proved a dominant factor in shaping reconstructions in the vital area of the origins of Hebrew religion, when it has been adopted by scholars who, discarding the *prima facie* biblical account, would locate those religious origins as late as the Amarna Age.⁷

There are then two problems to be investigated. First, the identity of those denominated *ha-BI-ru*. Second, the relation of the *ha-BI-ru* to the Hebrews.

I. THE IDENTITY OF THE *Ha-BI-ru*

What is the identifying mark of the *ha-BI-ru*--the specific quality which distinguishes them among the manifold elements of ancient near eastern life? Is it racial or ethnic or national? Or does *ha-BI-ru* denote membership in a particular socio-economic class or professional guild, either inter-ethnic or super-ethnic' in composition?

⁵ The *ha-BI-ru* are mentioned in texts originating everywhere from Asia Minor to Babylon and from Assyria to Egypt throughout the course of roughly the 2nd millennium B. C.

⁶ This term denotes the period of the 15th and 14th centuries B. C. when Amenophis III and IV ruled in Egypt. It is derived from Tell el Amarna in Egypt where hundreds of tablets were discovered containing the official diplomatic correspondence of these pharaohs with Asiatic rulers. They are of great importance for the present study because of their frequent references to the disturbing activities of the *ha-BI-ru* in Canaan. It was, indeed, the discovery of these tablets beginning in 1887 that first introduced the *ha-BI-ru* to modern historians.

⁷ Cf., e. g., the elaborate hypothesis of H. H. Rowley in *From Joseph to Joshua* (London, 1950).

⁸ I. e., within several ethnic groups (as e. g., mercenaries, dependents, fugitives or *hupsu*) or composed of several ethnic units (as e. g., the general category of nomadic tribes).

A. The Word *Ha-BI-ru*.

A clue to the identification of the individuals designated as *ha-BI-ru* has naturally been sought in the word itself. There are three avenues by which the signification of the term *ha-BI-ru* can be approached: its etymology, its ideographic equivalent (SA-GAZ), and its morphology.

1. *The Etymology of Ha-BI-ru*. On the assumption that the word is Semitic the following etymological explanations have been ventured:⁹ The root is the verb *'br* in the sense of "pass (from place to place)", *i. e.*, a nomad¹⁰ or in the sense of "cross (the frontier)", *i. e.*, a foreigner.¹¹ The meaning "one from the other side (of the river)" is obtained if *ha-BI-ru* is derived from the preposition *'br*.¹² The root *'apar*, "dust", has been cited with the supposed secondary meanings "man of the steppe lard"¹³ or "dusty traveller".¹⁴ Also suggested is a hypothetical Semitic **'pr*, "provide", with verbal-adjective, *epirum*, "one provided with food".¹⁵

⁹ Since it is now certain that the first radical is 'Ayin (see below) early explanations based on a root *hbr* may be ignored.

¹⁰ So e. g., E. A. Speiser, *Ethnic Movements in the Near East in Second Millennium B. C.* (1933), p. 41. W. F. Albright, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (hereafter, *JAOS*) 48, 1928, pp. 183 ff., held it was an intransitive participle meaning "nomad" originally, though it was later used in the sense, "mercenary."

¹¹ So J. Lewy, *Hebrew Union College Annual* (hereafter, *HUCA*) XIV, 1939, p. 604; *cf.* his note in Bottero, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

¹² So Kraeling, *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* (hereafter, *AJSL*) 58, 1941, pp. 248 ff.

¹³ R. DeVaux, *Revue biblique* (hereafter, *RB*) 55, 1948, p. 341, n. 2: "Cependant R. DeLanghe juge certain son rattachement a עִבְרָא 'poussibre' (*Les Texts de Ras Shamra-Ugarit II*, p. 465). On pout en etre moms assure mais s'il avait raison, les Habiri-Apiri seraient les 'hommes de la steppe' comme Enkidu, le saggasu, le SA-GAZ".

¹⁴ E. Dhorne, *Revue historique* CCXI, avril-juin, 1954, pp. 256-264. The *ha-BI-ru* were "des 'poussiereux', autrement dit: ceux qu'on appelait jadis les 'peregrins' et qu'on appelle aujourd'hui ... les personnes 'deplacées'. Ce sont des emigrants que se refugient a l'etranger". For criticism of this approach see Greenberg, *The Hab/piru* (New Haven, 1955), p. 91, n. 25.

¹⁵ So Goetze in Bottero *op. cit.*, pp. 161-163. It appears from Akk. *eperu*, "provide" and Eg. *'pr*, "equip", that *'pr* is Hamito-Semitic. The

There is the further possibility that the root of *ha-BI-ru* is non-Semitic.¹⁶ Landsberger now holds that the word is Hurrian or belongs to some other substratum of the languages of our documents¹⁷ and in meaning is a synonym of *munnabtu*, "fugitive".¹⁸ The Egyptian '*pr*, "equip"¹⁹ and the Sumerian *IBIRA*, "merchant",²⁰ have also been noted.

2. SA-GAZ, *The Ideographic Equivalent of Ha-BI-ru*.²¹ In some passages SA-GAZ is to be read *habbatum*,²² but that this

lack of a West Semitic equivalent need not surprise for it is not uncommon for Akkadian to stand alone among the Semitic languages in matching Egyptian.

¹⁶ That *ha-BI-ru* is not Akkadian has been maintained on these grounds: It begins with an 'Ayin; there are no Akkadian roots *hpr* or *hbr* that yield a suitable sense; and the word is preceded in one Amarna letter, J. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (hereafter, *EA*) 290:24, by the diagonal mark used to designate glosses and non-Akkadian words. That *ha-BI-ru* is not West Semitic has been argued on the grounds that no West Semitic root '*pr* (assuming the certainty of the *p*) provides a plausible meaning and that the verb *hab/paru* (regarded as a denominative from *ha-BI-ru*) is found at Kultepe where a loan from West Semitic was not possible. On this last text see Bottero, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 11.

¹⁷ Agreeable to a Hurrian derivation would be the Nuzu personal names *ha-BI-ra* and *ha-BI-ir-til-la*, if these represent the same word as our *ha-BI-ru* and if Purves, in *Nuzu Personal Names* (1943), p. 214, is correct in his assumption of a Hurrian base (*hapir*) for them.

¹⁸ Thus, in Bottero, *op. cit.*, pp. 160, 161.

¹⁹ So Albright, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (hereafter, *BASOR*) 125, 1952, p. 32, n. 39.

²⁰ Bottero mentions this view of E. Forrer in the article "Assyrien", *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* (Berlin, 1930), I, p. 235.

²¹ The cuneiform orthography of many Sumerian words was carried over with the cuneiform system of writing into Akkadian texts to represent (ideographically) the corresponding Akkadian words.

²² For the texts see Deimel, *Sumerisches Lexikon* 11:1, 260; Greenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 55, nos. 145-154; Bottero, *op. cit.*, nos. 157, 168-180. In the lexical texts the consistent equation with *habbatu* is obvious, while in the omen texts the reading *habbatu* is required by phonetic gloss (as in Bottero, *ibid.*, nos. 173, 175) or by play on words (as in *ibid.*, no. 168, cf. 170). Landsberger (in *ibid.*, p. 159) states that though *habbatu* is the proper reading in these Akkadian texts and is normally so in Sumerian legal and literary texts, everywhere SA-GAZ appears in Old Babylonian, Hittite or Syro-Palestinian texts it is to be read "*hapiru*". This conclusion is rendered dubious by certain Amarna data: *EA* 318:11-13 reads
^{LU.MES}SA-GA-A[Z^{MJES} LU.MES ha-ba-ti u^{LU.MES} Su-ti-i and the gram-

ideogram is frequently to be read as *ha-BI-ru* is no longer seriously questioned.²³ If then *ha-BI-ru* is a proper name, its

matical relation of the first two is apparently epexegetical apposition; cf. the parallel in *EA* 195:27. *EA* 299:26 reads ^{LU}SA-GAZ^{MES.tum} (c f. *EA* 207:21, [i-na ^{LJU}GAZ^{MES}\ha ...). The phonetic determinative, *tum*, almost certainly requires the reading *habbatu* (or plural, *habbatutum*). Bottero, *op. cit.*, p. 110, n. 2, suggests the possibility of reading a plural "*habirutum*" but it is most unlikely.

²³ This is so even though Akkadian lexicographers, so far as known, never use *ha-BI-ru* as an equivalent of SA-GAZ. The equation first became apparent in the alternating use of the terms in the god lists of the Hittite treaties and in the Amarna letters. In line with it was the appearance in the administrative texts of SA-GAZ and *ha-BI-ru* in the same role at Larsa during the reigns of Warad-Sin and his successor Rim-Sin. More recently confirmation has been found at Ugarit in the equation of ^{al}*Hal-bi* ^{LU.MES}SA-GAZ with *Hlb* 'prm and in the use of the phonetic determinative ru (?) after ^{LU.MES}SA-GAZ twice in the unpublished no. 1603 of the Collection of tablets found at Ras Shamra (hereafter, *RS*) (cf. Bottero, *ibid.*, no. 158). The interchange of the terms in the Alalah tablets is further proof. Even where *habbatu* is to be read, the *ha-BI-ru* may be in view. This is illustrated by the appearance of "*ha-bi-ri-is-as*" in the Hittite text, *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazkoi* (hereafter, *KUB*) VIII, 83:9. For this text is the Hittite version of an Akkadian *summa izbu* text where it is clear, as observed in the preceding note, that *habbatu* is the proper rendering of SA-GAZ, and *ha-bi-ri-ia-as* occurs in precisely the place where SA-GAZ is usually found in the formula. The Hittite text, moreover, is earlier than the Akkadian omen texts. That the *ha-BI-ru* are in view everywhere that SA-GAZ might be used does not follow necessarily, though it may be the case in all the texts at our disposal, even the earliest Sumerian texts, leaving out of view the lexical texts. Greenberg (*op. cit.*, p. 86, n. 1) argues that the *ha-BI-ru* are in view wherever SA-GAZ is used (even if *habbatu* be read) but he falsely shifts the burden of proof to those who would dissociate the two. The very existence of a general term like *habbatu* (whichever meaning be in view) as an alternate reading to the specific *ha-BI-ru*, and especially its exclusive employment as a lexical equivalent of SA-GAZ would put the burden of proof on Greenberg's position. Beyond this the existence of homonyms of *habatum*, the equivalence of SA-GAZ with more than one of these (which some dispute but Greenberg accepts), and the extreme improbability that any other reading of SA-GAZ like *ha-BI-ru* (either as appellative or proper name) covered exactly the same semantic range makes it almost certain that SA-GAZ was used at times without the *ha-BI-ru* being in view. It is, therefore, a question whether the SA-GAZ of a given text, like one of the Ur III texts or the Sumerian literary and legal texts of the Isin-Larsa age, are the *ha-BI-ru*. That the *ha-BI-ru* may be in view in some or all of these is suggested by the reference to the *ha-BI-ru* in the 19th century Cappadocian

ideographic equivalent, SA-GAZ, will provide a significant characterization of the *ha-BI-ru* people or possibly (if the ideogram was originally applied to them by enemies) a calumnious caricature. If *ha-BI-ru* is an appellative, it might, but not necessarily, be equivalent in meaning to SA-GAZ. The Sumerian SA means "cord, tendon" and GAZ means "strike, kill". The meaning "strangler" or "murderer", therefore, is suggested for the combination SA-GAZ.²⁴ Or if SA is a variant here for SAG the meaning will be "strike the head" or simply "smite".²⁵

Possibly, SA-GAZ is a pseudo-ideogram. Such was formerly the position of Landsberger who said it was formed from *saggasum* as RA-GAB from *rakkabum*.²⁶ It has been argued

texts. Some support could be found for reading SA-GAZ as *ha-BI-ru* if SA-GAZ should turn up even in Dynasty of Akkad texts since the Old Hittite translation of the Naram Sin epic may accurately reflect the original situation in its mention of *ha-BI-ru* either as prisoners or guards, and the proper name *ha-bi-ra-am* is found on a text from Tell Brak (*F* 1159, *cf.* Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 1) contemporary with the dynasty of Akkad.

²⁴ So Albright in *Journal of Biblical Literature* (hereafter, *JBL*) 43, 1924, pp. 389 ff. Commenting on the Hittite translation of the Naram-Sin inscription, he then held that SA-GAZ is the ordinary Hittite equivalent for "Semitic nomad". Ungnad, *Kulturfragen*, I, 1923, pp. 15 ff., interpreted SA-GAZ as "slinger".

²⁵ Landsberger (in Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 160) has now adopted this view suggested long ago by Langdon (see note 30). He would render it as a substantive, "frappeur de tete" and regard this as equivalent to simply "brigand". SAG-GAZ is indeed found twice at Ugarit (see Bottero, *ibid.*, nos. 154 and 157), once certainly as the designation of the *ha-BI-ru*. Moreover, in an astrological omen text (*ibid.*, no. 170) one of the woes predicted is: ^{LU}SA-GAZ *qaqqada inakkis*^{is}, "the SA-GAZ will cut off the head". This is surely a pun, but whether on the sound or on the sense (whether partially or wholly) is the question. Landsberger's approach is uncertain for as Bottero observes (*ibid.*, p. 148), "le SAG-GAZ qu'enregistrent les vocabulaires connus paraissant marquer d'abord un verbe *mahasu*, 'frapper', dont la specification nous echappe". The common spelling GAZ is understandable then for GAZ=*daku* which is broadly synonymous with *mahasu*=SAG-GAZ. The reading SA-GA-AZ (found, however, only once) would be problematic since it divides the essential element.

²⁶ *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts* (hereafter, *KAV*) 1, 1930, pp. 321 ff. So also Goetze, *BASOR* 79, p. 34, n. 14 (*cf.* less certainly in Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 163) ; and DeVaux, *RB* 55, 1948, p. 340. In rejecting this view now, Landsberger cogently observes (in Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 199,

that the variant spellings like SA-GA-AZ and, especially, SAG-GAZ confirm this view,²⁷ while the objection has been leveled against it that the Amarna spelling of GAZ alone would then be inexplicable.²⁸ If SA-GAZ is a pseudo-ideogram formed from *saggasu* it would probably mean "murderer".²⁹ Further light may be sought from the other equivalent of SA-GAZ, *habbatum*. The *qattal* form from the root *habatu*, "plunder", would mean "robber".³⁰ There are, however, homonyms of *habatu* which require attention.³¹ From *habatu*, "borrow, obtain, receive", Goetze suggests a *nomen professio-*

cf. 147, 159 ff.), "Ware SA-GAZ=*saggasu/u* musste dieses auch in der akkad. Kolumne der Vokabularien erscheinen".

²⁷ So Goetze, *op. cit.*, and De Vaux, *op. cit.* Cf. Deimel, *op. cit.*, p. 115, no. 42. In the spelling SA-GAZ-ZA (found once at Ugarit and once at Amarna) the ZA would be a sort of phonetic complement.

²⁸ So Dhorme, *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 118, 1938, p. 173, n. 3, while Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 149, says, "il faut tenir GAZ pour une licence graphique".

²⁹ Another possibility lies in the fact that in the Gilgamesh Epic (1:4:7) *saggasum* is used for Enkidu, describing him as an uncivilized native of the wild steppe-lands. It has also been suggested that *saggasu* may have been colored with the connotation of West Semitic *sgs and so meant "disturber" or "one who is restive". (So Greenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 89, 90).

³⁰ Such a pejorative meaning clearly attaches to SA-GAZ in the early Sumerian literary and legal texts and this is preserved in the later Akkadian omen texts, as we might expect in this conservative genre of literature. The meaning "brigand" is required in a Ras Shamra word list (Bottero, *ibid.*, no. 157) where it appears between IM-ZU "thief" and LUGAN.ES, "malefactor", and in the unpublished RS 17341 (cf. Bottero, *ibid.*, no. 162), and elsewhere. Indeed, Landsberger, in *ibid.*, p. 199 insists that "LU(SA-GAZ) signifie partout et toujours 'Rauber'".

S. H. Langdon, *Expository Times* 31, 1919-20, pp. 326-7, reasoned that *habatu* meant originally "smite with violence" (cf. Code of Hammurapi, Law 196) and was used exclusively with a military signification and, therefore, the idea of plundering was a natural nuance (since Asiatic armies customarily plundered defeated foes). *Habbatu* then meant "fighting man" and this was translated into Sumerian correctly as SA-GAZ = SAG-GAZ, "smite the head, slay".

It is perhaps significant that *habtu* in this sense is conjoined with the *ha-BI-ru* in EA 286:56: ^{LU.MES}*ha-BI-ru ha-bat gab-bi matat*^{HA} *sarri*.

³¹ Stamm, "Die akkadische Namengebung", in *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-ägyptischen Gesellschaft* 44, 1939, pp. 318 ff. ; cf. Goetze, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* I, 1947. p. 256, n. 21; von Soden, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 49, 1949, p. 174 and in Bottero, *op. cit.*, p. 143, n. 1; *The Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago, 1956) under *habatu*.

nis meaning "one who obtains his livelihood from somebody else, works for his livelihood, i. e., without wages, merely for board and keep";³² and Albright, "mercenaries".³³ *Habatu*, "move across, make a razzia into enemy territory", would yield a gattal meaning "raider" or "migrant".³⁴

How did SA-GAZ become an ideographic equivalent for *ha-BI-ru*? The simplest explanation, if both terms are not proper names, would lie in a semantic equation of the two. Such would be the case, for example, if SA-GAZ signified *habbatu* in the sense of "one who receives support" and *ha-BI-ru* meant "one provided for". A less direct semantic relation might also account for the interchange, as, for example, if SA-GAZ be understood as "thug" and *ha-BI-ru* as "nomad".³⁵ Or, the usage might be explained on historical grounds quite apart from semantic considerations. If, for

³² So in Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 162; cf. Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 89. For the root cf. *The Assyrian Dictionary*, *habatu* B. From this root apparently derives the *habbatum* found in association with *ag-ru*, "hired laborer", and *e-si-du*, "harvester", in the lexical occupation lists (Univ. of Pa., *Publications of the Babylonian Section* V, no. 132; *Tablets found at Kouyoundjik*, British Museum (hereafter, K) 4395; cf. Bottero, *ibid.*, nos. 177 and 180; Greenberg, *ibid.*, nos. 150-152). The Akkadian legal text, *Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of J. B. Nies* VII, no. 93, also mentions two *ha-ab-ba-ti-i* who appear to be engaged in peaceful employment.

³³ Cf. Deimel, *Sumerisches Lexikon*, III, 2, for *habatum*, "interest-free loan, loot"; and *hubtu*, "tax exempt". Albright (*JAOS* 48, 1928, pp. 183-185) deduced from *hubutati* and *hubuttu*, which he translated "tax-free property" and "the condition of being tax-free", respectively, that the *habbatu* received *hubutati* in return for their services and were thus mercenaries who were rewarded with a grant of rent-free land, i. e., *condottieri*. He also suggested that when the Aramean nomads, the "Habiru", became known throughout Mesopotamia as such mercenaries, their name replaced the original *habbatu* as the term for "mercenary".

³⁴ See *habatu* D, in *The Assyrian Dictionary*. Note the lexical datum (*ha-ba-tu*) *sa a-la-ki* (K 2055) and cf. Greenberg's remarks, *op. cit.* p. 89. Lewy (in Bottero, *op. cit.* p. 163) identifies *habatu* with Arabic *habata*, "to wander about".

³⁵ Albright (*JBL* 43, 1924, pp. 389-393) supports this combination on the grounds that there was no clear distinction between bands of robbers and bands of Bedouin, the same word meaning "Bedawi" in Egyptian (*sose*) and "robber" in Hebrew (*soseh*). Cf. Bohl, *Kanaander and Hebraer*, 1911, p. 89, n. 2. Albright adds that the similarity in sound between *habbatum* and *ha-BI-ru* as pronounced by the Akkadians likely suggested the use of SA-GAZ for *ha-BI-ru*.

example, the SA-GAZ were of mixed character but were predominantly *ha-BI-ru*, a secondary equivalence of the terms might arise.³⁶ Or, if the *ha-BI-ru* were generally disliked, they might have received as a name of opprobrium, SA-GAZ, "thugs".³⁷

3. *Morphology of Ha-BI-ru*. Is *ha-BI-ru* an appellative or a proper name?³⁸ The spelling *ha-BI-ru* could be the gentilic shortened from *ii-um* to *u*.³⁹ But the fact that the feminine is found at Nuzu as *ha-BI-ra-tu*⁴⁰ rather than the feminine gentilic *ha-BI-ri-i-tu* would suggest that the ambiguous *ha-BI-ru* is also non-gentilic. The situation is, however, complicated by several instances of both earlier and later varieties of the gentilic forms, i. e., *ha-BI-ru-u*⁴¹ and *ha-BIR-a-a*⁴²

³⁶ So Albright. See note 33.

³⁷ So J. Lewy, *HUCA* 14, p. 605, n. 90, who argues that in the early 2nd millennium the *ha-BI-ru* "constituted troops of soldiers--comparable to the French *legion estrangere*--in the service of governments". Similarly, Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 196, maintains that some of the *ha-BI-ru* fugitives, organized outlaw, marauding bands and so *ha-BI-ru* fugitives came to be called SA-GAZ, "brigands". Goetze (in Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 163) cites the possibility that SA-GAZ (taken as a pseudo-ideogram for *habbatum*, "robber") was extended to cover "one who works for board and keep", adding, "It might have been difficult to distinguish between the two".

³⁸ They miss the point who dismiss the question of whether *ha-BI-ru* is a proper name or an appellative with the observation that all proper names were once appellative. So Jirku, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (hereafter, *ZAW*) N. F. 5, 1928, p. 211; and Gustavs, *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 1, 1925, col. 603. For the issue here is not that of ultimate etymological origin, but of usage in the literature at our disposal. On the other hand, whether *ha-BI-ru* is gentilic or not is not decisive for that usage, for a gentilic need not be a proper name and a non-gentilic might be a proper name.

³⁹ Cf. A. Ungnad, *Grammatik des Akkadischen* (1949), p. 42, (27b, 38); S. Smith, *Isaiah, Chapters 40-55* (London, 1944), p. 137.

⁴⁰ This form is used for the masculine plural (*Harvard Semitic Series* (hereafter, *HSS*) XIV 53:18 and 93:6) and the feminine plural (*Joint Expedition with the Iraq Museum at Nuzi* (hereafter, *JEN*) V 453:11).

⁴¹ *JEN* V 452:1; 456:24; 459:2; 463:2; *Collection of Nuzu Tablets at the Semitic Museum of Harvard University* (hereafter, *SMN*) 2145:2. Cf. Chiera, *AJSL* 47, 285 and 49, 115 ff.; A. Saarisalo, *Studia Orientalia*, V 3, 1934, pp. 61 ff.

⁴² Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of W. Asia* IV, pl. 34, 2, 5; Hilprecht, *Old Babylonian Inscriptions* I, II, no. 149, obv. 22. Cf. Ungnad,

respectively. The form *ha-BI-ru-u* seems to be a stereotyped gentilic, for it is used as masculine and feminine and in the singular and plural of each gender.⁴³ Moreover, the *awil babili* type of gentilic formation is found in *awilat ha-BI-ri*⁴⁴ and *awil ha-BI-ri*.⁴⁵

This variety of forms is paralleled in the forms used, for example, in the Old Testament for "Israelite". In addition to the rare gentilic יִשְׂרָאֵלִי common and בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, the simple יִשְׂרָאֵל, the simple יִשְׂרָאֵלִי may be used with the meaning "Israelite(s)".⁴⁶ It would seem possible then that the simple form *ha-BI-ru* (or for the feminine, *ha-BI-ra-tu*) is used interchangeably with the gentilic *ha-BI-ru-u* in an ethnic sense.⁴⁷

There is thus an adequate explanation of the variety of forms, i. e., if they are all understood as variations of a proper name denoting an ethnic group. But it is difficult to account for all the facts on the assumption that we are dealing with an appellative. While it is true that the gentilic is simply the adjectivalized form of the noun and is not necessarily ethnic,

op. cit., 27b, 39; Langdon, *The Expository Times* 31, pp. 324-326; Kraeling, *AJSL* 58, 237 ff.

⁴³ Cf. Chiera, *op. cit.* Due to the Nuzu scribes' lack of regard for case endings *ha-BI-ru-u* is used once for the genitive (*SMN* 2145).

⁴⁴ *JEN* V, 465:2.

⁴⁵ D. Wiseman, *Alalakh Tablets* (London, 1953) (hereafter, *AT*) 164. It occurs here twice between *awil biti* and *mar sarri* (given as *mar sar-ru* in Bottero, *ibid.*, no. 39). Cf. Wiseman, *AT*, p. 69. Possibly *EA* 289:24 should be read: *a-na awiluti ha-BI-ri*^{KI}.

⁴⁶ E. g., Ex. 9:7; I Sam. 2:14; 13:20; 14:21; etc.

⁴⁷ Landsberger (*KAF* I, 331) cites certain difficulties in the gentilic view: (1) When ideograms render gentilics they are regularly followed by the place-determinative *KI*. (But ethnic-gentilics usually refer to a people which may be identified with a particular place and that was not the case with the *ha-BI-ru*. Moreover, for Amarna Age Syria, the most settled situation enjoyed by the *ha-BI-ru*, there are one or two instances of SA-GAZ^{KI}: (a) *a-na* ^{LU}SA-GAZ^{KI}, or perhaps, *a-na awil* SA-GAZ^{KI} (*EA* 298:27); (b) *EA* 215:15. Cf. *ha-BI-ri*^{KI}, *Memoires de la delegation en Perse* (hereafter, *MDP*) XXVIII, 511:2; *EA* 289:24. *KI* is used also, however, with the nomadic *Sutu*, *Idri-mi Inscription*, line 15.) (2) There is lack of analogy for an ideogram being equated with both an appellative and a gentilic, as would be the case if SA-GAZ=*habbatu*, an appellative, and SA-GAZ=*ha-BI-ru*, regarded as a gentilic. (But the fact is that the gentilic forms of *ha-BI-ru* occur at times, and one type is clearly ethnic - see below.)

the gentile forms of *ha-BI-ru* can hardly be disposed of with that observation. For the question would remain as to why, if *ha-BI-ru* were already an aptly descriptive appellative, it would ever have been adjectivalized.⁴⁸ Moreover, the *ha-BIR-a-a* type formation is used to adjectivalize the names of nations only.⁴⁹

The hope of discovering in their name some incontrovertible clue to the identity of the *ha-BI-ru* seems to be disappointed by the complexity of the possibilities. Of the data just examined the morphological affords the most direction. But the whole matter of the *ha-BI-ru* name appears more illuminated by, than illuminative of, the other evidence in the case. To the investigation of this broader contextual evidence our study, therefore, proceeds, in connection with a critical survey of past and current theories of the *ha-BI-ru* and the attempt to formulate a satisfactory interpretation. The relevance of the *ha-BI-ru* and SA-GAZ designations to the various theories will be noted en route.

B. Critical Survey of Theories.

1. *Nomadism*.⁵⁰ Early proposed and still advocated is the theory which defines the *ha-BI-ru* in terms of nomadism.⁵¹ This interpretation was suggested by the assumed root '*br*,

⁴⁸ Lewy (*HUCA* 14, 1939, p. 587, n. 1) suggests that at Nuzu the preference for the *nisbe* form may reflect the influence of the Hurrian language there, since "there was in the Hurrian languages a strong tendency to replace nouns (particularly proper names) by enlarged (adjectival) forms" of the same stem. If anything, this favors the view that *ha-BI-ru* is a proper name, not appellative. Moreover, it does not explain all the variants.

⁴⁹ Bottero, *op. cit.*, p. 133, says that in this case, in order to designate the persons as descendants of *ha-BI-ru*, an adjectival form was coined after the type which was ordinarily ethnic. But Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 78, finds this point quite awkward and can only hope that eventually the *ha-BIR-a-a* forms may prove unconnected with our *ha-BI-ru*.

⁵⁰ Among the earlier suggestions were the views that the *ha-BI-ru* were prisoners of war or foreign enemies or bound exiles. The failure of these concepts to do justice to the rapidly accumulating texts was soon recognized.

⁵¹ So Winckler in 1897; Bohl, *Kanaander and Hebraer* (1911); E. Speiser, *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 13, 1933, pp. 34 ff.;

"pass (from place to place)"; the large-scale migration of *ha-BI-ru* into Canaan (according to some interpretations of the Amarna letters); their wide dispersal; and occasional references to them in association with the nomadic Sutu.⁵² More recently support has been seen in the migration of individual *ha-BI-ru* to Nuzu⁵³ and the impression in the Mari texts of their being roving raiders.⁵⁴

Conflicting evidence, however, emerges which identifies *ha-BI-ru* either as to origin or present residence with particular localities and depicts them as an integrated element in settled communities. The presence of a specific SA-GAZ territory in the realm of the Hittite king is revealed by a 13th century Hittite-Ugaritic treaty;⁵⁵ agreeably, a particular *ha-BI-ri* settlement is mentioned in a Hittite text dealing with a temple and its property.⁵⁶ Evidence of *ha-BI-ru* settlements in Palestine-Syria is found in the reference to the town (or quarter of) Halab of the SAG-GAZ in the tax-lists of Niqmad II, king of Ugarit in the 14th century;⁵⁷ in the 15th century Idri-mi inscription's account of the *ha-BI-ru* holding open country as a tribal unit near Ammia;⁵⁸ and in the identification of the SA-GAZ with permanent settlements all about Alalah in the SA-GAZ texts from Alalah's 15th century level.⁵⁹

Similar evidence comes from the eastern end of the Fertile Crescent. The 15th century Nuzu documents identify various

M. Noth, "Erwagungen zur Hebraerfrage" in *Festschrift Otto Procksch*, 1934, pp. 99-112; A. Guillaume, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (hereafter, *PEQ*) 1946, pp. 64-85; R. DeVaux, *RB* 1948, pp. 338 ff.

⁵² E. g., *EA* 195:27-29; 318:10-13.

⁵³ E. g., *JEN* 455:2, 8; 1023:3; SMN 3191:19.

⁵⁴ E. g., *Archives royales de Mari* (hereafter, *ARM*) II, 131; 13, 14.

⁵⁵ R.S 17238:7 (no. 161 in Bottero, *op. cit.*).

⁵⁶ *Collection of Tablets found at Boghazkoi* 4889:48 (no. 137 in Greenberg, *op. cit.*). The Alishar letter pictures *ha-BI-ru* in non-nomadic state in Asia Minor in the 19th century.

⁵⁷ R9 11790:7. Cf. *hbl* 'prm in RS 10045:1; 11724+11848:12.

⁵⁸ Thus S. Smith, *The Statue of Idri-mi* (London, 1949), p. 73; cf., however, Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 64, n. 16.

⁵⁹ AT 161, 180-182, 184, and 198. Possibly it is in terms of these *ha-BI-ru* settlements in Syria on the eve of the Amarna letter period that the forms ^{LU.MES}.SA-GAZ^{KI} (*EA* 215:15; 298:27) and ^{LU.MES}*ha-BI-ri*^{KI} (*EA* 289:24) are to be understood.

ha-BI-ru as "from Ashur", "from Akkad", and "from Zari-
mena".⁶⁰ Three centuries earlier the Mari texts possibly
reflect a more permanent association of *ha-BI-ru* with certain
towns than that of temporary military quarters. Additionally, it is probable that when the *ha-BI-ru* were engaged
as auxiliary troops by Hammurapi⁶² and earlier, in the Larsa
dynasty,⁶³ they had their own settlements. Relevant here is
an economic text from Susa during the first dynasty of
Babylon which mentions a *ha-BI-ri*^{K1} as one of the localities
where Amorite troops were quartered.⁶⁴

The accumulation of such evidence has led to the judgment
that we see the *ha-BI-ru* in our texts evolving from a semi-
nomadic life into a settled state.⁶⁵ But no such simple evolu-
tion can be traced through the course of the texts; the di-
vergent data are to be otherwise explained. For the term
ha-BI-ru, the significance of *ha-BI-ru* being found in both
semi-nomadic and settled states is that it renders unconvincing
an appellative meaning founded on either of these opposite
aspects of their chequered career. Moreover, such appellative

⁶⁰ *JEN* V 455, 458, 459; *JEN* 1023; *HSS* XIV 176; *SMN* 152. Their
servant status in the Nuzu area was also far from nomadic.

⁶¹ For example, the thirty Yamutbalite *ha-BI-ru* (Unpublished letters
from Mari (hereafter A) 2939) and the *ha-BI-ru* from Eshnunna (A 2886).
Cf. also the messenger named *Hapirum* from Eshnunna (A 2734) and the
Hapirum identified as an *awil su-h-i-ini* (A 2523). Of course, the mode
of life of many other *ha-BI-ru* in these texts seems similar to their status
in Amarna Age Palestine.

⁶² Collection of tablets of the British Museum 23136.

⁶³ Cf. the administrative texts of Warad-Sin and Rim-Sin. Nos. 9-16
in Bottero, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ MDP XXVIII, 511:2. It is apparently on the Elamite-Babylonian
boundaries. Perhaps *ha-BI-ru* had founded the village or were currently
quartered there.

⁶⁵ R. DeLanghe, *Les textes de Ras Shamra- Ugarit*, etc. 1945, II, pp. 458 ff.
and R. Vaux, *op. cit.* Noth's view (*op. cit.* pp. 110 ff.) was that *ha-BI-ru*
was the self-designation of nomads who had entered a settled area and
tented there without property rights. Still further removed from the idea
of pure desert nomadism was Speiser's view that the *ha-BI-ru* "were
nomads not in the same sense as the Bedouin, but in so far as they were
not settled permanently in any definite locality; as such they were naturally
foreigners to all with whom they came in contact so that the name would
come to denote both nomads and foreigners of a certain type" (*op. cit.*
p. 41).

ideas would be too general to be distinctive of only those known as *ha-BI-ru*. Not all the desert roamers along the fringe of the Fertile Crescent were *ha-BI-ru* but they all had the same type of relationship with the inhabitants of the Sown as did the *ha-BI-ru* in their semi-nomadic moments.⁶⁶ And certainly the settled *ha-BI-ru* held no monopoly on that condition.

2. *Dependency*. In diametrical opposition to the nomadic theory is the view adopted by Moshe Greenberg in his excellent recent treatment of the question.⁶⁷ He concludes that the majority of the *ha-BI-ru* were of urban origin and were dependents of states, cities, or individuals. They had in common only their generally inferior social status which was due to their being as a rule foreigners where they are found and to the presence among them of vagrant elements. As for the word *ha-BI-ru*, "just as the socio-legal classifications *hupsu* and *muskenu* became international currency for similar classes in distinct cultures, so, apparently, was the case of *saggasu/apiru*".⁶⁸

Social inferiority was, indeed, the *ha-BI-ru* lot in some situations as witness their servitude contracts at Nuzu, their slave labor in Egypt, and their position in the Hittite social scale as that is delineated in a Hittite ritual.⁶⁹ And undeniably the *ha-BI-ru* were at times dependents, as witness, for example, the Old Babylonian administrative texts and some more recently noticed Nuzu ration lists.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the

⁶⁶ As a concrete example, it is found in the Mari texts that the Benilaminu and the Beni-Simal play essentially the same role as the *ha-BI-ru* along the Middle Euphrates and in northern Mesopotamia, while still other groups of similar character are active east of the Tigris and elsewhere on the Euphrates. Cf. Dossin, *Syria* 19, 1938, p. 116. Any appellative meaning suggested for the *ha-BI-ru* such as nomads or mercenaries would be equally applicable to these other groups and, therefore, cannot serve as the distinctive appellation of the *ha-BI-ru*.

⁶⁷ Moshe Greenberg, *The Hab/piru* (New Haven, 1955). He reproduces almost all the known *ha-BI-ru* texts and provides much valuable information in his analyses of the sources.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 91. He favors Goetze's derivation of *ha-BI-ru* from Semitic **pr* with verbal adjective '*apir* meaning "one provided for".

⁶⁹ *KUB IX*, 34 with its duplicates (no. 91 in Bottero, *op. cit.*).

⁷⁰ *HSS XIV*, 46, 53, 93, and 176. Greenberg regards as comparable the

common denominator Greenberg suggests as an appellative value for *ha-BI-ru* is inadequate for there is evidence of *ha-BI-ru*, both individually and collectively, who were not in a dependent status or even a socially inferior status.

There are several instances in the Syrian area. A 14th century record⁷¹ of Mursilis II's arbitration of a dispute between his vassal cities of Barga and Carchemish discloses that a SA-GAZ named Tette is the head of Barga (as well as of Nuhassi)⁷² and that the city of Iyaruwatas had been given to his grandfather by the Hurrian king. At Ugarit SA-GAZ men apparently function as government officials; for among other privileges a certain grantee receives immunity from serving as royal messenger and from having either an *ubru* or ^{LU.MES}SA-GAZ-ZA enter his house.⁷³ The meaning "stranger" is attested for *ubru* elsewhere,⁷⁴ but the *ubru* seems to function as a government collector in another text from Ugarit in which immunity from the entry of the *ubru* into the house is accompanied by the declaration that the grantee's possessions will not enter the palace.⁷⁵ The SA-GAZ associ-

Alalah situation as indicated in AT 350:6, 7, a sheep census. (Cf. AT 292:9, a list in which the name *ha-BI-ru* is found for one of sixteen persons receiving barley rations.) As for the sheep census, it is doubtful if the 240 sheep of the SA-GAZ are state rations since the same list mentions besides these and 268 of the *sanannu* soldiers, 115 of Alalah and 402 of Mukish (?). Greenberg argues (*op. cit.*, p. 65, n. 19) that military groups would not be "required to shepherd their rations while they were still on the hoof". This objection, however, seems to overlook the whole situation at Alalah and vicinity where the SA-GAZ were an element in the normal peace time societal structure with their own settled dwellings (whether scattered among the rest of the population or separate and tribal) and their own shepherds (AT 198:39, 48; cf. Wiseman in Bottero, *ibid.*, pp. 38, 39), and where they were regarded as a population unit in all government administration.

⁷¹ *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazkoi* III, 3, I, 6 and 7 and duplicates.

⁷² If this Tette is the same Tette as Suppiluliuma, father of Marsilis II, had made king of Nuhassi (cf. E. Weidner, *Boghazkoi-Studien* 8, pp. 58 ff.).

⁷³ J. Nougayrol, *Le Palais royal d' Ugarit* III, 1955, 15:109; 16:296:53.

⁷⁴ Cf. J. Lewy's note in Bottero, *op. cit.*, p. 202; H. Gazelles' review of Bottero, in *Vetus Testamentum* V, 1955, p. 442. Gazelles suggests that *wabrum*, *wabirum*, *ubru(m)*, *ubaru*, *habiru*, *hapiru*, and 'apiru represent varying pronunciations of the same term.

⁷⁵ J. Nougayrol, *op. cit.*, 16:132:20-24.

ated with the *ubru* would likely also be agents of the government, possibly occupied in conscripting men or materiel for military enterprises. This interpretation is supported by the usage of ^{LU}*ha-BI-ri* in an Alalah name list which cites the professions of those listed.⁷⁶ That ^{LU}*ha-BI-ri* indicates there a high government position is most probable since two persons thus designated appear between an *awil biti*, "officer of the palace", and a *mar sar-ru*, "prince".⁷⁷ Other superior positions held by SA-GAZ in the Alalah sphere were *hazannu*-official,⁷⁸ *baru*-priest,⁷⁹ and chariot-owning *maryannu*.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ AT 164:3-7.

⁷⁷ Or "official representative of the king". Cf. Speiser in *JBL* LXXIV, 1955, p. 253, n. 5.

⁷⁸ AT 182:13. According to Wiseman the heading of such a list: *sabu*^{MES LU} SA-GAZ, is to be translated, "The troops of the SA-GAZ-man", so that the names which follow would not necessarily be all SA-GAZ, as is the case if the rendering "SA-GAZ troops" is accepted. The evidence of a SA-GAZ/H. official could be used to support Wiseman's view. The specific designation of one man in a similar list (AT 181) as LUGAZ (1.19) might imply the others were not (SA)-GAZ. But on Wiseman's view this man would also be a GAZ-officer and why then would he be listed among the ordinary troops? The translation "SA-GAZ troops" is favored by the parallel appearance of the *sabu*^{MES} *sa-na-nu* in some texts (e. g., AT 183, 226, and 350), the usage in the contemporary Idri-mi inscription, Amarna letters and elsewhere, the quantities of pasture-sheep assigned to the SA-GAZ, comparable to those for a town (AT 350), and the large number of those who have ^{LU}SA-GAZ holdings (AT 183:4-5, 1 *li-im* 4 ME 36 bit ^{LU}SA-GAZ, "1436 having SA-GAZ holdings"). The singular bit is a collective and corresponds to the singular found elsewhere with large groups (e. g., AT 226:7, 8; 213 *bit ha-ni-a-hu* 33 *bit e-lai-el-e*) though the plural, *bitatu*, is also used (e. g., AT 185). This bit apparently means "property" rather than "family" (though the presence of families would be implied) for parallel with *bitatu*^{MES} *ehelena* and *bitatu*^{MES} *haniahena* is found *bitatu*^{MES} *sa narkabati*^{MES}, "chariot sheds" (AT 189). Finally, the singular LUSA-GAZ may signify a plurality as in AT 184:5, [*an*]-*nu-tumn* ^{LU}SA-GAZ, "these are SA-GAZ".

⁷⁹ AT 180:20; 182:16.

⁸⁰ AT 198: rev. 42. (See comments of Wiseman in Bottero, *op. cit.*, pp. 38, 39.) This list mentions also an *awil gassi* and a herdsman (rev. 38, 39) among the SA-GAZ. It is relevant to note here the close association of the *ha-BI-ru* with the *maryannu* class, an aristocratic status which was hereditary but also obtainable by royal release. Numerous charioteers (who were probably *maryannu*) are listed among the SA-GAZ troops of Alalah. Observe also that some *ha-BI-ru* at Nuzu are owners of horses (*HSS* XIV 46:18, 19: 53:17, 18: cf. 93:4-6; 176:8, 9. Cf. C. H. Gordon in

In the latest strata of the extant *ha-BI-ru* register are found Harbisipak, influential in the court of Mutakkil-Nusku of Assyria (and even the power behind the throne according to the remarks of Ninurta-nadin-sumati of the second dynasty of Isin);⁸¹ and Kudurra, friend of the Babylonian king Marduk-ahhe-eriba from whom he receives a royal grant of land.⁸²

There are also those general historical situations where the *ha-BI-ru* collectively are found operating as independently organized bodies. According to the Mari texts the *ha-BI-ru* at times conducted independent razzias in the region of Upper Mesopotamia in the manner of nomads and semi-nomads.⁸³ That their autonomous activities in the 18th century were not confined to this area appears from the date formula on an Alalah document reading, "the year king Irkabtum made peace with Shemuba and the *ha-BI-ru* warriors".⁸⁴ Peace treaties are not formulated between kings and dependent social classes. A similar role is played by the *ha-BI-ru* in Palestine in the Amarna age, for their service, whether in the employ of native chieftains or of the Egyptians, was also on a free-booting basis. Moreover, if the SA-GAZ of the Akkadian omen texts may be equated with *ha-BI-ru* groups, the *ha-BI-ru* were notorious for their incursions into

Orientalia, 21, 1952, p. 380). In certain Egyptian texts the *ha-BI-ru* and *maryannu* are in close association also (cf. Papyrus Harris and Papyrus Harris 500).

⁸¹ Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of W. Asia*, IV, 34, 2, 5 and duplicate (Bottero, *ibid.*, nos. 165 and 165').

⁸² As described on a *kudurru* stele (H. Hilprecht, *Old Babylonian Inscriptions* 149:20-22). Another possible example are the *ha-BI-ru* found in Asia Minor in the 19th century B. C. (Gelb, *Inscriptions from Alishar*, no. 5) who were, according to a plausible interpretation, men of wealth capable of paying a high ransom and operating in the service of a prince. So J. Lewy in *Archives de l'Histoire du Droit oriental* II, 1938, pp. 128 ff. and in Bottero, *ibid.*, pp. 9, 10. For other interpretations see Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 193.

⁸³ See A 49, 109, 566 (nos. 20, 25, and 28 in Bottero, *op. cit.*). Even in cases where the *ha-BI-ru* are seen supporting the cause of local princes (e. g., ARM II, 131 and A 3004, 3056; nos. 18, 19, and 21 in Bottero, *ibid.*) they appear to be independent tribes voluntarily serving as mercenaries.

⁸⁴ AT 58:28 ff.

settled communities. For the standard prognostication attending unfavorable omens is "the SA-GAZ will appear in the land".⁸⁵

In addition to these cases where the idea of inferior dependent status is inappropriate, there are others where, though not awkward, such is not the compelling significance of the *ha-BI-ru* or SA-GAZ designation. It is difficult to regard these with Greenberg as "few exceptions" or not characteristic of "the core of the SA-GAZ/H."⁸⁶ What forbids one's regarding the free-booting episodes as typical and the instances of dependency as atypical?⁸⁷ And whichever way the scale might tilt on that, the discovery of *ha-BI-ru* in both states makes precarious if not impossible the view that the term *ha-BI-ru* is an appellation for either one. Moreover, even if it could more successfully be shown that the *ha-BI-ru* were characteristically dependent it could not be shown that all dependents were *ha-BI-ru* or, in other words, that *ha-BI-ru* was a class designation, like *hupsu* or *muskenu*, applicable to all of inferior dependent status.⁸⁸ The precise identifying trait of an *ha-BI-ru* would still be elusive.

3. *Foreignness*. A characteristic which would be compatible with any of the contrasting theories already surveyed and was, indeed, explicitly mentioned as a subordinate element by some of their advocates, is that of foreignness.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ See in Bottero, *op. cit.*, nos. 168-174 for this formula, ^{LU}SA-GAZ *ina mati ibassi*, and for variants like ^{LU}SA-GAZ *ibassu*^{MES} and ^{LU}SA-GAZ *innadaru*, "the SA-GAZ will wreak havoc".

⁸⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁸⁷ Greenberg (*ibid.*, p. 88), for example, makes a quite unfounded assumption in suggesting that the Mari and Amarna freebooters had been under masters but had seized an opportunity to break away.

⁸⁸ For example, if the Akkadian and Alalah ration texts prove the *ha-BI-ru* were dependents, they equally prove to be dependents other groups mentioned in them, yet distinguished from the *ha-BI-ru*.

⁸⁹ Undeniably it is often plain that the *ha-BI-ru* are not part of the indigenous population. Thus in Egyptian texts the use of the throw-stick determinative with *'pr-w* (and according to Albright's reading, the use of the foreign warrior determinative on the Beisan stele) shows that the *ha-BI-ru* are foreigners in Egypt. The practice of the *ha-BI-ru* in Amarna Age Palestine of serving with equal enthusiasm the loyalists and the rebels reveals that it was not in the peace of this land that they looked for their

By itself, however, foreignness is too broad a characteristic to provide the solution to our common denominator riddle. No matter how successfully it might be shown that all the *ha-BI-ru* were foreigners where they are found, it could always be shown that there were in those same places other foreigners, not identified with the *ha-BI-ru*. But what if the concept of foreignness be more specifically circumscribed? Might it not then have the qualities of comprehensiveness and specificity both of which are necessary for an appellative? There are enough scholars who believe it might, to make this approach in one variety or another the most popular answer abroad today for the *ha-BI-ru* question.

The position of J. Lewy has consistently been that the *ha-BI-ru* were immigrant foreigners or resident aliens, who, having left their native lands, found their living elsewhere in the service of governments or, less frequently, in the service of private citizens.⁹⁰ E. Dhorme now believes that the *ha-BI-ru* were emigrants who fled to a strange country for one reason or another; in short, displaced persons.⁹¹ A. Alt has long held that the *ha-BI-ru* were a congeries of rootless characters whose former fortunes and social position had suffered shipwreck in the turmoil of changing orders and who, thus torn loose from former tribal connections, found themselves without standing, means, or rights in a new order.⁹²

peace. In Hittite texts (as Goetz points out, in Bottero, *op. cit.*, p. 82) the close connection of the *ha-BI-ru* with the Lulahu, who are clearly foreigners, argues a foreign (and Goetz feels eastern) origin for the *ha-BI-ru*. Similar evidence is available that the *ha-BI-ru* did not belong to the indigenous population in other regions. But, as will be maintained more fully below, the *ha-BI-ru* seem, in the Syrian area at least, to be so well and long integrated on a respectable level that it would be altogether unreasonable to suggest that their essential appellative quality in that situation was foreignness.

⁹⁰ Especially *HUCA* 14, 1939, pp. 587-623 and in Bottero, *ibid.*, pp. 163-164. He normalizes *habiru* which he identifies as "the Akkadianized form of the active participle of the West Semitic root 'BR to the singular of which we may ascribe the meaning 'he who came over' ".

⁹¹ *Revue historique* CCXI, avril-juin 1954, pp. 256-264.

⁹² See his article "Erwagungen uber die Landnahme der Israeliten" as brought up to date in his *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israels*, 1953, I, esp. pp. 168 ff. Alt's view is adopted as a subordinate element by Greenberg who describes the core of the SA-GAZ/H. as "composed of

B. Landsberger even earlier presented and still maintains a similar view: the *ha-BI-ru* are ethnically mixed bands of family-less, tribe-less, isolated fugitives in foreign lands.⁹³

J. Bottero, finally, aligns himself with the Lewy-Landsberger-Alt approaches which he deems complementary and, taken together, a comprehensive enough framework for all the *ha-BI-ru* texts. In developing this, Bottero's chief emphasis falls on flight from original environment as the *ha-BI-ru* common denominator.⁹⁴

In these variations of the view that the *ha-BI-ru* are those who have crossed the boundaries into foreign territory there are two elements: the present condition of the one who has crossed the frontier and the cause or manner of his doing so. It will be our first concern to indicate that those varieties of this approach which emphasize the fugitive's present condition are unsuccessful in their effort to discover the definitive feature of the *ha-BI-ru*.

Lewy emphasizes the resident, servile character of the *ha-BI-ru* immigrant. In that respect his position is about identical with Greenberg's definition in terms of settled, dependent status and it is open to the same criticisms. Even if Lewy's definition were more adequately comprehensive it would not be sufficiently specific. For example, the *ha-BI-ru* do appear to be alien servants as they are seen in the realm of the Hittites but what then is the distinction between the *ha-BI-ru* and the Lulahu, who were also foreign servants there? Or did not the Sutu play the same role of foreign mercenaries in Amarna Age Palestine as did the *ha-BI-ru* from whom they are nevertheless distinguished?⁹⁵ And while the *ha-BI-ru* at Nuzu had only recently entered the Mitannian area and were servants to the state and to private individuals,

uprooted, propertyless persons" or as a group which "served as a magnet to attract all sorts of fugitive and footloose persons who were impelled by misdeed or misfortune to leave their homes" (*op. cit.*, pp. 87, 88).

⁹³ "Habiru and Lulahu" in *KAF* I, 1929, pp. 321-334. Cf. *Archiv für Orientforschung* 10, 1935, pp. 140 ff. See now in Bottero, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-161.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 187 ff.

⁹⁵ *EA* 195:24 ff.; 318:10 ff. Cf. also S. Smith, *The Statue of Idri-mi* (London, 1949), pp. 14 ff.; esp. lines 15 and 27.

other foreign servants not identifiable as *ha-BI-ru* worked side by side with them there.⁹⁶

Landsberger, Alt, and Dhorme accent the negative in describing the condition of the *ha-BI-ru* subsequent to his crossing the frontier of his native land. He is family-less, tribe-less, property-less, right-less, rootless.⁹⁷ This evaluation of the *ha-BI-ru* does not, however, satisfy all the evidence. J. Lewy correctly insists that the Nuzu evidence refutes Landsberger's assertion that the *ha-BI-ru* were "heimatlos" and without "Familienzugehörigkeit".⁹⁸ And it is quite impossible to take account of the status of the *ha-BI-ru* in Syria from about the 13th to 15th centuries B. C. (and possibly for a considerable while earlier) as revealed in the Ugarit and Alalah material and to conclude that it was of the essence of the *ha-BI-ru* status to be property-less, right-less and rootless. For in that situation is found a large *ha-BI-ru* population with its own property holdings and cattle, with its share of government officials, aristocracy, military officers, and cultic functionaries along with its contributions to the lower ranks of *wardum*, *sarraqu* and shepherd.⁹⁹

Bottero shifts the emphasis to the nature of the act of emigration in order to discover the identifying trait of an *ha-BI-ru*. He suggests that all the antinomies can be resolved by the supposition that the *ha-BI-ru* were refugees, men who had fled their native lands. This would explain why they appear as strangers, why they are found well-nigh everywhere,

⁹⁶ Figuring in servant contracts similar to those of the *ha-BI-ru* but not labeled *ha-BI-ru* are individuals identified as "Assyrian" (*JEN VI*, 613:2; cf. *JEN V*, 456:9 ff.) and as "from the land of Izalla" (*JEN V*, 462:3). And there were, of course, the highly prized Lullian slaves.

⁹⁷ According to Landsberger, the individuals gave their name to the bands in which they organized themselves. The relation of these to the more settled population blocks depended on the condition of the latter. If the local authority was strong, the *ha-BI-ru* were content to be dependents in the state employ; if things were anarchic, the *ha-BI-ru* played the independent opportunists.

⁹⁸ *HUCA* 14, 1939, p. 606. The text *JEN V*, 464 concerns a "*ha-BI-ru* along with the people of his household". For family ties among the *ha-BI-ru* see also *JEN* 1023 and *JEN V*, 455.

⁹⁹ See above for the evidence and cf. *AT* 182:14; 180:16; 198:39. It may be added that no solid basis appears for the view of Alt (*op. cit.*) that the *ha-BI-ru* of the Amarna letters are a social class in revolt.

and why they have such a variety of names. It would account for the fact that some settled down in assigned places subject to the local authorities, while others organized into independent, outlaw bands. It would account, too, for the fact that while some may have been absorbed into the new culture, others preserved some of their native traditions and thus are found, for example, to have their own gods. It would also explain why the term *ha-BI-ru* sometimes denotes a social class (i. e., fugitives) and yet is used as the equivalent of an ethnic term (i. e., they were all men of foreign origin who had renounced their place of origin). What fortune, from kingship to slavery, might not befall the fugitive *ha-BI-ru*?¹⁰⁰

In support of this *ha-BI-ru*-- fugitive equation, Bottero appeals to the general fact that flight into strange countries was a common phenomenon in the Near East, especially in the 2nd millennium B. C.¹⁰¹ He appeals also to certain specific items in *ha-BI-ru* texts: In a treaty of Hattusilis III with the king of Ugarit, the Hittite monarch pledges himself to the extradition of all subjects of the Ugaritic king, whether of high or low social status, who revolt against their king and flee into the territory of the SA-GAZ of the Hittite king.¹⁰²

That SA-GAZ is here to be read *ha-BI-ru* and not *habbatu* is clear from the fact that ordinary robbers would not be so available to the control of the Hittite king that he could engage himself to return refugees hiding among them. From the fact observable here that the territory of the *ha-BI-ru* among the Hittites was the natural haven for political refugees or runaway slaves heading in that direction from Ugarit, Bottero would draw the conclusion that the *ha-BI-ru* were those who had escaped from some former social environment into a new country.

While the just-mentioned treaty appears to Bottero the only text that offers the elements for a definition, he finds that other texts confirm that definition. A Cappadocian text dealing with one Shupiahshu who leaves Kanish for the

¹⁰⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 187-198.

¹⁰¹ *Cf. ibid.*, p. 127, n. 5, for the frequent references to the *munabtu*, "fugitive", in the legal, administrative, and historical documents of this period. A similar observation is made by Landsberger (in *ibid.*, p. 160).

¹⁰² RS 17238. In Bottero, *ibid.*, no. 161.

country of Ziluna in order to escape from his creditors, describes this action by means of the verbal form *ih-BI-ar-ma*.¹⁰³ According to Landsberger, this verb, "*haparum*", is a denominative from "*hapiru*";¹⁰⁴ according to J. Lewy, it is an Akkadianized form corresponding to West Semitic 'br, "pass over", and *ha-BI-ru* is derived from it.¹⁰⁵ In either case, if there is any etymological connection one way or another between this verb and *ha-BI-ru*, the meaning of the latter would be "fugitive" or "one who crosses over the frontier". But it is uncertain whether or not that is a condition which is contrary to fact.

In a letter written by Iasim-El to the court at Mari, the author mentions an *ha-BI-ru* who had fled from Eshunna and in search of whom he is engaged, perhaps for purposes of extradition.¹⁰⁶ Idri-mi, when he had to flee from Aleppo and failed to find satisfactory asylum elsewhere, came and abode among the *ha-BI-ru* warriors during the seven years of his political exile before his restoration to his throne.¹⁰⁷ Similar is the experience in Canaan of the king of Hazor who left his city and went over to the SA-GAZ.¹⁰⁸ So also did Amanhatbi, a lord of Hazi, when loyalist forces brought pressure to bear on him.¹⁰⁹ And Iapahi of Gezer laments that his younger brother having revolted against him had departed and given over his two hands to the SA-GAZ.¹¹⁰

In this connection may be recalled the observation of Landsberger that peoples who used Akkadian or "Accadogrammes" and in whose language *munnabtu* is frequent do not employ the word "*hapiru*" and vice versa.¹¹¹

This formulation of Bottero then is not committed to any specific traits as essential to the condition of an *ha-BI-ru*-

¹⁰³ Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of J. B. Nies VI, pl. 71, no. 226.

¹⁰⁴ In Bottero, *ibid.*, p. 160. ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁶ A 2886; no. 30 in Bottero, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Idri-mi Inscription, esp. lines 26-30. ¹⁰⁸ EA 148:41-43.

¹⁰⁹ EA 185: esp. 63 (in-na.-bi-[i]t-mi a-na^{LU}SA-GAZ^{MES}). Cf. EA 186:66.

¹¹⁰ EA 298:22-27. Bottero also suggests but with less force that the Nuzu contracts give the impression of dealing with fugitives in the case of the *ha-BI-ru* who are from Assyria or Akkad and who in some cases have arrived within the year. Still less cogent is his mention of the *ha-BI-ru* of the Alishar text who are held for ransom.

¹¹¹ In Bottero, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161.

immigrant in his new environment (other than the foreignness involved in his being an immigrant) but would rather discover the mark of the *ha-BI-ru* in the circumstances of his emigration. His view is, therefore, not as vulnerable as the others to direct contradiction by specific documentary evidence; for though there is considerable information concerning the area where Bottero is non-committal, the reconstruction of the phase of the *ha-BI-ru* career which he singles out as their hallmark is much more a matter of deduction from scattered hints. At the same time such an approach places the burden of proof heavily on Bottero's position and it is exceedingly doubtful that the supporting data are adequate to sustain the load. The argument for the meaning of "fugitive" from the term *ha-BI-ru* itself hangs from a thread. The one *ha-BI-ru* fugitive hounded by Iasim-El is after all the lone *ha-BI-ru* of all our documents caught in the act of flight. And while there is a strong case for the fact that an *ha-BI-ru* camp or settlement was, in some areas at least, about as good a place as any for a fugitive to find concealment or refuge beyond the reach of authorities, whether nearby or remote, that is certainly not proof that all or even a large percentage of the *ha-BI-ru* were themselves fugitives. Other explanations of the phenomenon are ready at hand. In the instances from the Amarna letters, for example, it is clearly a case of native leaders seeking refuge among independent bands of mercenary troops. Among the Hittites, the SA-GAZ were a foreign settlement and as such a more logical goal for a fugitive than a native Hittite center where extradition laws could be more readily enforced. Moreover it is most unlikely that an appellation that designated a man as having been a fugitive or even as the descendant of one who had been a fugitive would persist as the identifying epithet of men long after they or even their fathers had become an integrated and respected element in a given social structure. Such appears to have been the case with the *ha-BI-ru* at least in the Syrian area.¹¹² (to be continued)

¹¹² Compare also the prominent Harbisipak and Kudurra, the 12th-11th century *ha-BIR-a-a*.

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Westminster Theological Seminary
2960 W. Church Rd.
Glenside, PA 19038
www.wts.edu

Please report any errors to Ted Hildebrandt at: thildebrandt@gordon.edu