Next Year in Jerusalem
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Exilic experiences epitomize life-changing moments for both individuals and larger communities, as they radically disturb the collective consciousness of displaced populations and represent major historical junctures that introduce extensive sociocultural adjustments. Precarious economic conditions and a minority status impel exilic communities to become more inclusive and to integrate into the host culture in order to survive. While this greatly facilitates their survival, it also exposes their culture and identity to foreign influences, as both will gradually begin to change. Jewish history provides a wealth of material for investigating the effects of exilic experiences. Although its course is punctuated by numerous such events from which to choose, none had more impact than the Babylonian exile (ca. 597 and 586 BCE). The beginning of the era of Babylonian captivity brought the curtain down on the First Temple period (ca. 1200–586 BCE) and triggered reflections and adjustments that led to the creation and/or growing importance of several constitutive aspects of modern-day Judaism (e.g., diasporas, Sabbath, synagogue, circumcision). For D. Smith-Christopher, “the specific Babylonian exile must be appreciated as both a historical human disaster and a disaster that gave rise to a variety of social and religious responses with significant social and religious consequences.”

The effects of the Babylonian exile are far-reaching and considerably reconfigured the prevailing social order. New figures of authority (i.e., prophets, elders, priests) superseded former traditional leadership, while kinship became an important social structural anchor that contributed to the safeguarding of religious and cultural traditions. Contacts with foreigners were intensified and predisposed the exilic community to assimilation, even though deportees now consciously felt that they belonged to a distinctive group (i.e., Judean) and explicitly manifested their belonging. The Babylonian exile thus established the necessary conditions that triggered extensive reforms, especially in regard to social, cultural, and religious traditions.

Scholarly discussion of this period continues to focus on its consequences and often neglects other areas of investigation. The available sources rarely
offer insights into other subjects, which significantly restrict the orientation of academic research. Some of these sources are also of doubtful historical reliability (i.e., the books of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah), while others postdate by more than a hundred years the beginning of the exilic period (e.g., Murašu texts, ca. 454–404 BCE). In sum, scholarly reconstructions exclusively rely on biblical evidence of debatable accuracy and on a generalization of conditions prevailing later in Jewish history.

The recent publication of the Āl-Yāḫūdu texts directly answers to these shortcomings by allowing research into the daily reality of Judean deportees as well as by reducing the chronological gap between the beginning of the exilic period in 597 BCE and our first textual witness to about twenty-five years. The evidence gathered from this new corpus contradicts previous assertions concerning the conditions under which the Babylonian exilic community lived and compels us to readjust our vision of this crucial period. Deportees were in fact able to live a quiet and undisturbed life in southern Babylonia, while Judean identity thrived and prospered. Three facts explain why and how the Babylonian exilic community was able to retain its ties with previous forms of identity as well as to perpetuate them over time. First, Babylonian deportation and economic policies favored the survival of small ethnic communities. Second, the names of the small settlements created for the sole purpose of accommodating deported communities acted as mementos of their respective histories and contributed to the survival of their former identity. Third, personal names/onomastic evidence demonstrate that the site of Āl-Yāḫūdu was inhabited mostly by Judean individuals and that Judean culture was flourishing in southern Babylonia.

THE ARCHIVE

The Āl-Yāḫūdu texts are part of a group of unprovenanced cuneiform tablets belonging to the private collection of David Sofer, published in 2014 by Laurie E. Pearce and Cornelia Wunsch. This group of cuneiform tablets comprises three distinct private archives that amount to a total of 103 economic texts dated to the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods (ca. 572–477 BCE). The three private archives are that of Ahīqām of Āl-Yāḫūdu (52.4%, 54 tablets), Ahīqār of Bīt- Naṣar (45.6%, 47 tablets), and the royal official Zababa-šarru-ūṣur from Bīt-Abī-rām (2%, 2 tablets).

The precise location of these three settlements remains unknown, but circumstantial evidence favors the region of Nippur, east and southeast of Babylon.
between the Tigris and the southern marshlands (Figure 4.1). Nippur served as an Assyrian outpost in Babylonia during the last years of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and was one of the last southern cities to submit to Nabopolassar (ca. 622–620 BCE), the first Chaldean king. There ensued a voluntary negligence of this area, especially in the early years of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. This may have led to a state of decrepitude, which Chaldean kings eventually tried to counter with the settlement of foreigners/exiles in the countryside and their inclusion into the land-for-service/bow fief system [bit azannil/bit qašti].
The profusion of agricultural real estate in the Nippur countryside, which resulted from the above-discussed historic conditions, did encourage Babylonians to use Judean and other deportees as agricultural workers, especially for grain and date palm cultivation. Texts from CUSAS 28 reflect this reality and often mention agricultural activities and other related subjects, such as business ventures, rental of agricultural equipment, rental of fields, and ilku payments. Some families were even able to increase their patrimonial wealth by means of the intensification of cereal production, showing that some deportees benefited from their new environment. The participation of foreigners in the local economy resulted in their gradual integration into the local administration. The case of Bēl-šarru-ūṣur/Yāhû-šarru-ūṣur, who was in charge of a bow land in Āl-Yāḥūdu during the Neo-Babylonian period, and that of the three Judean individuals who acted as tax collectors [dēkû], one of whom was assigned to the settlement of Āl-Yāḥūdu, demonstrate that the local economy facilitated the integration of Judean deportees.

The attraction exerted by the Babylonian environment was also felt in other areas. The three private archives of CUSAS 28 are all written in good Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian, which highlights the fact that Judean deportees adopted the Babylonian language to record, if not to conduct, their business transactions. The sole exception to this rule is found in CUSAS 28: 10, where the name of Šalam-Yāhû [šlmḥy] appears on the left edge of the tablet written in Paleo-Hebrew letters (Figure 4.2). To date, this is the only evidence for the use of this script outside of the Land of Israel. Babylonian laws and customs also integrated the legal practices of deported communities. Two tablets composed in Āl-Yāḥūdu and published separately from CUSAS 28 display a rigid adherence to the Babylonian model. The inheritance division between the sons of Aḥīqam and the marriage contract of Nanaya-kānat.

Figure 4.2 Paleo-Hebrew Script on CUSAS 28: 10. Credit Laurie E. Pearce.
are both couched in and respect local Babylonian legal customs for their respective matter.\(^{17}\)

The attraction wielded by Babylonian culture on the Judean exilic community was indeed strong and unconscious. Despite evidence of early integration, especially in the economic realm, the inhabitants of Āl-Yāḥūdu were able to maintain their own identity and strengthen their attachment to their distinctive culture. As curious as it may sound, Babylonian deportation policies were directly responsible for establishing the necessary conditions for the survival of Judean identity in southern Babylonia.

DEPORTATION POLICIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE FATE OF THE JUDEAN EXILIC COMMUNITY

The deportation of conquered populations has a long history in the ancient Near East. This practice started to gain in popularity over the course of the Neo-Assyrian period, especially under the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BCE), Sargon II (721–705 BCE), and Sennacherib (704–681 BCE).\(^{18}\) Assyrians were particularly fond of two-way deportations, which became one of the hallmarks of this period. Two-way deportation entails the removal of a group from its homeland while another group is simultaneously brought in to ensure that newly acquired territories remain loyal, seamlessly integrate into the Assyrian provincial system, and contribute to the economic prosperity of the empire. Deported populations were relocated either in major urban centers of the Assyrian heartland (Aššur, Calaḫ, Nineveh, Dur-Šarrukin), in peripheral regions, or along the frontier.\(^{19}\) Assyrians never built new settlements to accommodate the arrival of foreigners, even though these groups may have contributed and been used to revitalize devastated and abandoned areas.\(^{20}\)

Neo-Assyrian administration used deportations as a tool to meet the following goals: (1) to punish rebellion, (2) to weaken centers of resistance, (3) to ensure the loyalty of deportees, (4) for military conscription, (5) as a source of craftsmen and laborers, (6) to populate urban centers and strategic sites, and (7) to help repopulate abandoned and devastated regions.\(^{21}\) Deportees represented an abundant workforce free of any charge, and the vast majority were used either for agricultural work to meet the increasing demands of a fast-growing empire or as forced manual labor in the numerous colossal building projects of Assyrian kings.\(^{22}\) Only a select few served in the military or acted as royal officials.

In 720 BCE Assyrian forces captured Samaria, the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, and deported a large portion of its population.\(^{23}\) If the numbers
preserved in the inscriptions of Sargon II are accurate, about 27,290 individuals were taken away. 2 Kings 17:6 and 18:11 state that Israelites made the journey to Assyria, where they were resettled in Halah, on the Habor—the river of Gozan—and in the cities of Media. 2 Kings 17:24 adds that people of Babylon, Cutha, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim made the reverse journey to Samaria. Biblical evidence thus confirms the aims and nature of Assyrian deportation policies, since Israelites were relocated in major urban centers (Calah), in the periphery (Habor and Gozan), and in frontier zones (Media), while diverse foreign populations were brought in to pacify the region (Figure 4.3). Israelite deportees were employed as agricultural workers or forced laborers, with limited integration into the military and the royal court. With the passing of time, Israelites gradually assimilated to Assyrian culture and eventually vanished by the end of the Neo-Assyrian period.

Neo-Babylonian deportation policies adopted the same rationale as the Assyrians, albeit with one key difference: two-way deportation was never enforced. Babylonians were never interested in investing in newly conquered territories or in the elaboration of a vast provincial system. The complete destruction of Ashkelon on the Philistine coast by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar II
in 603 BCE should be interpreted as concrete evidence of their lack of interest in the southern Levant. Deportees therefore exclusively took the direction of Babylonia, where they were settled in specific enclaves, especially in the region south of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar II’s ambition to transform Babylon into the capital of the world may perhaps explain this new orientation.

Exiles were therefore brought to Babylonia principally to be employed as agricultural workers to stimulate the local economy. The former status of the region of Nippur (i.e., relative abandonment) rendered the area most attractive, as it became one of the main recipients of the influx of deportees. Evidence for the presence of Judean exiles does locate them in Babylonia, as they appear in texts from Babylon, Uruk, Sippar, Borsippa, and in the vicinity of Nippur (i.e., Āl-Ŷāḥūdu). The names of several toponyms in the latter region confirm the existence and the presence of deported communities, as they are composed either of foreign idioms (e.g., Āl-Ŷāḥūdu, Bīt-Našar), the words galû/galūtu [exiles or exile], or ethnic names of deported communities (e.g., Arbāya, Ṣurrāya [Arabs, Tyrians]).

The establishment of these villages as an answer to the poor state of the local economy had as an indirect result the creation of isolated ethnic enclaves, which in turn encouraged the survival of foreign cultural hubs in southern Babylonia. The example of the village of Āl-Ŷāḥūdu illustrates the impact of Babylonian economic policies for the survival of foreign communities in Babylonia. Not only did the names of these settlements echo a past of political and cultural independence, they also reflected the origins and cultures of their respective inhabitants.

ĀL-YAḤŪDU AS AN ANCIENT “LIEU DE MÉMOIRE”

Numerous villages located in the environs of Nippur owed their existence to Neo-Babylonian deportation and economic policies. The sites of Ālu ša Arbāya, Ālu ša Nērabāya, Bīt-Šurāya, Bīt-Tabalāya, Āl-Miṣirāya, and Ḥazatu represent, respectively, communities of Arab, Neirabite, Tyrian, Tabalite, Egyptian, and Gazaite deportees. Their appearances in Neo-Babylonian documents postdate the conquest of their respective homelands, which confirms that they are indeed new settlements located in southern Babylonia and not in their country of origin. For instance, the settlement of Āl-Yaḥūdu is first mentioned in a document dated to 572 BCE, which is fourteen years after the second large deportation that followed the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in 586 BCE.
While the names of these settlements seem rather trivial at first glance, especially when investigating the impact of the exilic period upon the various deported communities, they in fact conceal invaluable information for understanding the dynamics of identity in imperial context. These names fit into two distinct categories: (1) geographical designations based on the name of the country or the city of origin of the deported communities (e.g., ʿḤazatu = Gaza) and (2) ethnic designations that added the gentilic ending (-āya) to the geographical name (e.g., Āl-Miṣirāya = City of the Egyptians). Knowing who is responsible for the nomenclature of these sites has important implications for the question at hand. Ethnic designations make sense only from the perspective of the Babylonian administration, as they simply sought to identify the inhabitants for taxation purposes. On the other hand, geographical designations reflect the traditions of deported communities. The reference to their country/city of origin established a tangible link with their homeland while inhabiting a foreign country and confirms that they were able to maintain some form of autonomy, which allowed them to preserve their respective traditions.

The original ethnic name of a handful of sites was converted to a geographical designation, as exemplified by the village of Āl-Yāḥūdu. Its substitution by Āl-Yāḥūdu [town/city of Judah] was effective at the latest in the first year of Amēl-Marduk, 561 BCE (CUSAS 28: 6), the date of its first secure attestation. Every subsequent mention systematically uses the geographical designation. Yet this change may have been initiated some years earlier, as the orthography of Āl-Yāḥūdu also appears in CUSAS 28: 2, whose date is missing. Internal prosopographical evidence favors the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE), most probably between his thirty-third and forty-second years (ca. 572–563 BCE). The pledge clause of the contract in CUSAS 28: 2 may mention the second month of the year (Aiāru [April/May]), a favorable period for the settlement or renewal of debts since it coincides with the harvest of barley. If so, the first occurrence of Āl-Yāḥūdu would date to 563 BCE, the last complete year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II. The complete abandonment of Ālu ša Yāḥūḏāya and its systematic replacement by Āl-Yāḥūdu is highly unusual. The fragmentary nature of our sources does not allow definite answers to this historical problem, although some scenarios are more likely than others. One obvious proposition is that no precise reason stood behind this change, which could have been the result of scribal idiosyncrasies. The same movement from ethnic to geographical
designations is attested for other foreign toponyms of the region of Nippur. A settlement known as Ālu ša Nērabāya [town/city of the Nerabites] is first mentioned in ca. 540 BCE and soon after changed to Ālu Nēreb [town/city of Nerab], around 530 BCE. These changes were nevertheless far from being systematically applied to the villages inhabited by foreign communities in southern Babylonia. The town of Āl-Miširāya [city of the Egyptians] reveals the absence of any overarching logic that would explain the substitution of ethnic designations for geographical names. This settlement is continuously known through its ethnic label, and this from the time of its first attestation in the reign of Nabonidus (547 BCE) to that of its last under Darius I (510 BCE).

A consideration of the scribes responsible for the composition of the tablets of Āl-Ŷāḥūdu provides a different outlook on this question. CUSAS 28: 1 is written by Nabû-naʿid, son of Nabû-zēru-iqīša, who also wrote tablets Numbers 3, 4, and 10, albeit under the name of Nabû-nāšir. Nabû-naʿid/Nabû-nāšir is the only scribe who used both the ethnic and geographical names of Āl-Ŷāḥūdu. His writing was consistent, limiting the usage of Ālu ša Yāḥūdāya to the period before 563–561 BCE and only switching to Āl-Ŷāḥūdu for the period after. The sharp temporal delimitation separating both designations in local scribal conventions underlines a deliberate and intentional change in the name of this settlement, which at the same time negates the possibility for any unmotivated modification.

Therefore, Neo-Babylonian authorities could have altered the name of these settlements due to perceived similarities with other Levantine states that were incorporated into their empire. Several of these small political entities developed under the city-state model, which consists of a large urban center controlling its immediate vicinity. The Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon as well as the Philistine cities of Ashkelon and Gaza were conquered by Babylonian forces, and all functioned under the city-state model. Hence, Babylonian authorities could have imposed the name of Āl-Ŷāḥūdu to the settlement of Judean deportees in southern Babylonia simply by conceiving Judah and Jerusalem as a single reality. The reference to Jerusalem as Āl-Ŷāḥūdu in a Babylonian chronicle that describes the Babylonian invasion of 597 BCE has led André Lemaire and Francis Joannès to claim that the Babylonian settlement of Āl-Ŷāḥūdu represents a “new Jerusalem.” However, the growing evidence for the composition of this chronicle in the Persian period should caution us against the equation Āl-Ŷāḥūdu = Jerusalem. The direction of the influence might have gone the other way; that is, the name of the Babylonian settlement might have influenced the one given to the Judean capital in the chronicle.
The release of Jehoiachin from captivity in the accession year of Amēl-Marduk (ca. 562 BCE), mentioned in 2 Kings 25:27, provides an additional context for the interpretation of the shift in the names of Āl-Yāḥūdu. The geographical designation first appears between 563 and 561 BCE, which coincides with his release. Ration lists uncovered in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II in Babylon indicate that Jehoiachin retained his official title of king of Judah [LUGAL ša KUR ya-hu-du] in captivity and that he was still considered its legitimate ruler in the eyes of the Babylonians. Thus, once he was freed, the political term of Judah could be reinstated. His release was an event of great importance for Judean deportees, and the change to Āl-Yāḥūdu could symbolize the emergent hopes for a national revival associated with his liberation.

There is one additional aspect to the names of these toponyms that must be briefly discussed, one that has greater implications than the responsibility for naming these sites and the significance of the shift in designations. These toponyms were far from meaningless, as they acted as mementos to their inhabitants and were instrumental in the conservation of their collective memory as well as their identity away from their homeland. The name of Āl-Yāḥūdu directly points back to an era of national and political independence prior to the events of 597 and 586 BCE, symbolizing Judean history and its landscape. This association could have easily lost its value for the exiles with the succession of generations as well as with the growing desire and need to assimilate. Individuals born in Babylonia had no attachments whatsoever to Judah, but the name of their village reminded them of their origin. Perhaps originally unintentional, the name of Āl-Yāḥūdu contributed to the survival of their collective memory and was one of the repositories of their history, an ancient lieu de mémoire [site/place of memory].

PERSONAL NAMES AND JUDEAN IDENTITY IN EXILE

Onomastic evidence is among the most underestimated and neglected aspects of historical research on ancient societies. In regard to the Āl-Yāḥūdu texts, it offers the most profitable avenue of investigation, as it offers the basis for identifying individuals as Judeans as well as for reconstructing the sociocultural dynamics that prevailed within this settlement. Ran Zadok has proposed three criteria to establish the Judean origin of an individual based on onomastic evidence: 1) Yahwistic theophoric names, 2) other non-Yahwistic Jewish names (e.g., Šabbātay, Ḥaggay), and 3) probable Jewish names based on genealogy or historical circumstances. Yahwistic theophoric names are
The Āl-Yāḥūdu Texts (ca. 572–477 BCE)

an exclusive feature of Judean/Israelite onomastica and are the sole criterion by which we can undoubtedly establish the Judean/Israelite background of an individual, as they are the sole populations to have worshipped Yāhweh. These names comprise two elements: a verbal predicate and the name of the Judean deity, Yāhweh. For example, the name Rapā-Yāma is made up of the verb רפא [to heal] followed by the Yāhwistic theophoric element, -Yāma, and translates as “Yāhweh healed.” The verb and the theophoric element can stand at either the beginning or end of the name, although the position of the latter will influence its orthography in Neo-Babylonian texts. “Yāhû-” is usually found in initial position, while “-Yāma” appears predominantly at the end.

The onomastic evidence of the CUSAS 28 corpus, both as a whole and within the archives of Āḥīqām of Āl-Yāḥūdu, Āḥīqar of Bīt-Našār, and Zababa-şarru-üşur from Bīt-Abī-rām, highlights the special character of the settlement of Āl-Yāḥūdu (Figure 4.4). Babylonian names account for the overwhelming majority of the onomastic evidence (57.9% to 60.6% of all individuals) in the CUSAS 28 corpus, which fits the pattern observed for other private archives from southern Babylonia. For instance, Babylonian names represent two-thirds of the evidence in the Murašu texts, dated to the second
half of the fifth century BCE. However, the proportion of Yahwistic names in the entire CUSAS 28 corpus is unusually high (20.5%, or 176 of 857 individuals) and does diverge from known patterns of onomastic representation of foreign communities in the various textual records of Babylonia, where they are at best marginally represented. In contrast, Yahwistic names barely appear in the Murašu texts (1.4%, or 36 of 2,500 names) as well as in the archive of Aḥīqar of Bit-Našar (6.1%, or 17 of 280 individuals, Table 1). Judean deportees are concentrated in the settlement of Āl-Ŷāhūdu, as more than 90% of the Yahwistic names found in the CUSAS 28 corpus appear in the archive of Aḥīqam (159 of 176 individuals). They represent more than a quarter of individuals mentioned in this archive (28.5%, or 159 of 557 individuals), while Babylonian names hardly account for more than half of the data (49.7–50.8%, or 277–283 of 557 individuals, Table 2).

The prevalence of Judean individuals at the site of Āl-Ŷāhūdu is essentially of greater intensity. Several texts from the archive of Aḥīqam specify that they were written in Āl-Ŷāhūdu, and an emphasis on these texts allows for an improved approximation of the sociocultural dynamics prevailing in this settlement (Table 3). The percentage of Yahwistic names now rises to about 38% of individuals (118 of 313), whereas Babylonian names considerably decrease (42.5–43.45%, or 133–136 of 313 individuals). Yahwistic theophoric names even came to surpass local onomastic forms over the course of the Achaemenid period (42.4%, or 56 of 132 individuals, vs. 39.4%, or 52 of 132 individuals). This phenomenon has never been observed for any other ethnic community living in Babylonia. Even Aramaic names never came to represent more than 25% of the onomastic evidence in any given corpus, although they did represent one of the dominant ethnic groups of Babylonia by the early sixth century BCE. The conclusion seems clear: the village of Āl-Ŷāhūdu was a thriving and prosperous center for Judean identity in Babylonia during the exilic and postexilic periods.

Almost every individual who appears in the CUSAS 28 corpus is identified with the name of his father (e.g., Šamā-Ŷāma, son of Naḥim-Yāma [CUSAS 28: 21 obv. 6–7]), composing specific name pairs. These offer a diachronic perspective of the composition of the population living in Āl-Ŷāhūdu as well as of the extent of the influence of Babylonian culture. For the sake of convenience, the son will be referred as the first member of name pairs, while the father stands for the second member. Yahwistic names are particularly popular for the first member of name pairs in texts written in Āl-Ŷāhūdu, representing 47.2% (17 of 36 individuals) and 42.4% (56 of 132 individuals) of individuals in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods, respectively.
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<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>198–215</td>
<td>30–43</td>
<td>9–11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>70.7–76.8%</td>
<td>10.7–15.3%</td>
<td>3.2–3.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Onomastic Evidence per Individual from the Archive of Aḥîqam of Āl-Ŷāḥūdu (CUSAS 28: 1–54)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Yahwistic</th>
<th>Akkadian</th>
<th>West Semitic</th>
<th>Aramaic</th>
<th>Semitic</th>
<th>Iranian</th>
<th>Egyptian</th>
<th>Arabian</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<td>Totals</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neo-Babylonian</td>
<td>Totals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yahwistic</td>
<td>Akkadian</td>
<td>West Semitic</td>
<td>Aramaic</td>
<td>Semitic</td>
<td>Iranian</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arabian</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
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<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Son/daughter</td>
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<td>20–22</td>
<td>3–5</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>6.5–10.8%</td>
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<td>2.2%</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotals</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43–45</td>
<td>8–10</td>
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<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>48.8–51.1%</td>
<td>9.1–11.4%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achaemenid</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yahwistic</td>
<td>Akkadian</td>
<td>West Semitic</td>
<td>Aramaic</td>
<td>Semitic</td>
<td>Iranian</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Arabian</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
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<td>109–113</td>
<td>32–36</td>
<td>9–10</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>213</td>
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<td>24.4%</td>
<td>51.2–53%</td>
<td>15–17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Son/daughter</td>
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<td>125</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>256</td>
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<td></td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>19–20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3–4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>469</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>49.9–50.7%</td>
<td>12.8–13.6%</td>
<td>2.1–4.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6–0.9%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
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<td>159</td>
<td>277–283</td>
<td>68–74</td>
<td>21–22</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>12.2–13.3%</td>
<td>3.8–3.9%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.5–0.7%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yahwistic</td>
<td>Akkadian</td>
<td>West Semitic</td>
<td>Aramaic</td>
<td>Semitic</td>
<td>Iranian</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
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<td><strong>Neo-Babylonian Period</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.6%</td>
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<td>11.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
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<td>2.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Son/Daughter</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16–17</td>
<td>2–3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>44.4–47.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotals</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35–36</td>
<td>6–7</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td>8.4–9.8%</td>
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<td>1.4%</td>
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<td>1.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Achaemenid Period</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46–48</td>
<td>18–20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>41.8–43.6%</td>
<td>16.4–18.2%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son/Daughter</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.4%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotals</strong></td>
<td>91</td>
<td>98–100</td>
<td>33–35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>40.5–41.3%</td>
<td>13.6–14.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>118</td>
<td>133–136</td>
<td>39–42</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>42.5–43.4%</td>
<td>12.5–13.4%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They are, however, considerably less common for the second member of name pairs, with 28.6% (10 of 35 individuals) and 31.8% (35 of 110 individuals) of the onomastic data for this assumed generation in both historical periods. The significant decline between the first member of name pairs in the Neo-Babylonian period (47.2%) and the second member of name pairs in the Achaemenid period (31.8%) may have been the result of the growing assimilation of Judean deportees. Nonetheless, the great discrepancy of texts between the two periods (Neo-Babylonian = 8 texts vs. Achaemenid = 26 texts) should call for caution.

On the whole, generational onomastic trends substantiate the impression of the growing popularity of Yahwistic names among the Judean exilic community (Figure 4.5). They steadily increase from the Neo-Babylonian period to the early Achaemenid period (552–532 BCE), that is, from 26.3% of individuals presumably born between 612 and 592 BCE to 43.7% of individuals born between 552 and 532 BCE. In contrast, Babylonian names considerably decline after the generation of 592–572 BCE (55.7% to 36.75%). The peak in popularity of Yahwistic names for the population of Āl-Yāhūdu is contemporaneous with the emergent movement of a national revival that promoted the return to the Land of Israel during the late Neo-Babylonian and early Achaemenid periods. Generational onomastic trends thus confirm the existence of a strong and flourishing Judean community in Babylonia, which was able to avoid assimilation by positioning Yahwism at the very center of its identity.

![Figure 4.5 Yahwistic Names per Generation in Texts Written in Āl-Yāhūdu.](image-url)
The family tree of Ahīqam of Āl-Yāhūdu concretely exemplifies the extent of the influence exerted by Babylonian culture and society upon successive generations of Judean deportees (Figure 4.6). Among the four generations that can be reconstructed from the texts in CUSAS 28, only the third (Ahīqam) generation and one member of the fourth (Ḥaggā) generation bear non-Yahwistic names of West Semitic origin. Ahīqam was probably born in the mid Neo-Babylonian period (ca. 572–552 BCE) and is part of the observable decrease of Yahwistic names for the second member of name pairs in the Achaemenid period. Their return in force in the fourth generation parallels their resurgence in popularity for the first member of name pairs during the same period or that of the generation of 552–532 BCE. The increasing number of Yahwistic names mirrors the growing importance of Yahwism for the identity of the exilic community, the more so as we move closer to the period of the return to the Land of Israel (530s BCE).

Despite this portrait of a thriving Judean community, instances of deliberate assimilation to Babylonian society do exist. Very few cases of a father with a Judean name whose son bears a non-Judean name are attested among the various name pairs from the Neo-Babylonian period in the settlement of Āl-Yāhūdu. They do, however, drastically increase during the Achaemenid period. Since the majority of these names are of West Semitic affiliation, they may not necessarily express a move away from Judean naming practices and culture but instead may convey a dissociation from Yahwism. The opposite situation, father with non-Judean name and son with Judean name, is well attested in both periods. Some of these fathers bore Akkadian names, which demonstrates that deliberate attempts to integrate
into the dominant culture did not hinder the perpetuation of Judean traditions over successive generations.

Whereas extensive assimilation never occurred, Babylonian culture did have a hold on a small portion of the population. The case of Bēl-šarru-ūṣur, son of Nubā, unveils the existence of cultural hybridity in Āl-Ŷāḥūdu. This individual appears in CUSAS 28: 2 and 3 under the *Beamtennamen* [courtier names] onomastic pattern, which likely exposes his integration into the local Babylonian administration. The same individual is also mentioned in CUSAS 28: 4 but this time under the name of Yāhū-šarru-ūṣur, son of Nubā. This phenomenon is called replacement orthography and occurs when the theophoric element varies in different instances of a single individual’s name. In the present case, the name of the Judean deity, Yahweh, replaced that of the head of the Babylonian pantheon, Bēl/Marduk. According to Laurie E. Pearce, this individual wished to integrate into the royal administration and thus adopted the appropriate Babylonian name pattern, while the Yahwistic form was reinstated in another context to respect the traditions of the exilic community.

Cultural hybridity is also reflected by hybrid names found in the corpus of Āl-Ŷāḥūdu. Hybrid names are composed of elements from two different languages and embody a form of bilateral cultural assimilation. For example, the name Išši-Ŷāma is composed of the Yahwistic theophoric element and an Akkadian verbal predicate, the verb *našû* [to elevate]. Whether this name should be interpreted as a calque translation [i.e., translation into the equivalent form of the host language] of the name Yařīm-Ŷāma/yrmyh(w) [Yahweh is exalted/elevated] or simply as an Akkadian phonetic representation of the Hebrew root ʿayin [to deliver, save] is difficult to determine. The evidence from the various renderings of this root in the names of Uššuh-Ŷāma, Amuš-Ŷāma, and Amušeh shows that Babylonian scribes usually rendered the Hebrew ʿayin with a *heth*, hence supporting the first scenario. In spite of the few cases of cultural hybridity encountered in the settlement of Āl-Ŷāḥūdu, assimilation was extremely limited and confined to individuals who deliberately tried to integrate Babylonian society.

**CONCLUSION**

Previous interpretations of the Babylonian exile usually convey the image of a devastating period in Jewish history. This event radically altered the life of thousands of Judeans and left marks of great depth in their collective
consciousness. The recent publication of the Āl-Yāḥūdu texts enhances our understanding of this period and calls for a revision of received historical reconstructions. These texts confirm that Judean exiles were in fact living a peaceful and quiet life in southern Babylonia, while some even integrated into the Babylonian and Persian administrations and/or increased their personal wealth and social positions.

Texts from Āl-Yāḥūdu offer valuable insights into the sociocultural dynamics that prevailed within the Babylonian exilic community. Judean culture and identity were maintained throughout this period, although they were substantially modified. The present study has demonstrated the quintessential role played by the Babylonians in establishing the necessary conditions for the survival of foreign collective identities in Babylonia. As opposed to the Assyrians, the Babylonians promoted the creation of small settlements for deported communities in the Nippur countryside in order to revitalize the local economy. This policy indirectly encouraged the formation of isolated ethnic hubs, which in turn favored the development and survival of various foreign cultures. The names given to these small villages concretely symbolized a past of political independence and contributed to the perpetuation of their collective consciousness. These toponyms represented real lieu de mémoire, which instituted an indelible bond between their inhabitants and their past.

Finally, onomastic evidence reveals the importance of Yahwism for Judean identity throughout the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods. Yahwistic theophoric names steadily increase over time and eventually account for the majority of individuals in the site of Āl-Yāḥūdu during the late Neo-Babylonian period, a phenomenon that is unattested in any other Babylonian archive (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). This upsurge coincides with the growing popularity of a movement that advocates a return of Judean deportees to their homeland toward the end of the Neo-Babylonian and the early Achaemenid periods. The weakening of Neo-Babylonian power and the rise of Cyrus late in the reign of Nabonidus led to the emergence of nationalist movements among the various Babylonian diasporas, particularly in the Judean Babylonian community. Yahwistic names became the primary identity marker due to their connection with a unique aspect of Judean culture: the worship of Yahweh. They also express nascent national sentiments in the settlement of Āl-Yāḥūdu. While “a rereading of the Babylonian period of exile can be shown to demonstrate the development of a new creative energy in a challenging, pluralistic context outside of the natal homeland,” this new vitality crystallized in a small village known as the city of Judah, Āl-Yāḥūdu.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Paul-Alain Beaulieu and Robert D. Holmstedt for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay. I would also like to thank Laurie E. Pearce, the Bible Land Museum, and Carta Jerusalem for providing images that significantly enhance the quality of this work. Finally, the vital work of Leonard J. Greenspoon cannot go unmentioned as well as that of the staff involved in the organization of the symposium and, evidently, the editorial staff of Purdue University Press.

NOTES


4. The earliest text from Āl-Yāḥūdu is dated to 572 BCE.

5. Laurie E. Pearce and Cornelia Wunsch, Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer, Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 28 (Bethesda, MA: CDL Press, 2014) [hereafter CUSAS 28]. Additional texts will be published by Cornelia Wunsch under the title Judeans by the Waters of Babylon: New Historical Evidence in Cuneiform Sources from Rural Babylonia in the Schoyen Collection, Babylonische Archive 6; with contributions by L. E. Pearce (Dresden: Islet, forthcoming) [hereafter BaAr 6].

6. For additional texts written in Āl-Yāḥūdu, see Kathleen Abraham, “West Semitic and Judean Brides in Cuneiform Sources from the Sixth Century BCE—New Evidence

7. See Joannès and Lemaire, “Trois tablettes cunéiformes à onomastique ouest-sémitique,” 27–30, for an additional text from Bit-Našar.


11. None of the many building projects mentioned in Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions refer to Nippur. See Rocío Da Riva, The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction, Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 4 (Ugarit-Verlag: Münster, 2008), 60n201; Laurie E. Pearce, “Continuity and Normality in Sources Relating to the Judean Exile,” Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel 3 (2014): 173nn34, 35.


14. Ilkum is a general term designating the obligations/taxes owed by the field tenant to the royal administration. These could take the form of either military services or agricultural taxes.

15. CUSAS 28: 2 obv. 6–8. This individual is also known as Yahû-šarru-ûsûr in CUSAS 28: 4 obv. 2. For the tax collectors, see CUSAS 28: 12 obv. 6–7, 83 obv. 5–6; and Joannès and Lemaire, “Contrats babyloniens d’époque achéménide du Bit-Abî-Râm avec épigraphie araméenne,” text no. 9. For a discussion on this issue, see Pearce, “Continuity and Normality in Sources Relating to the Judean Exile,” 175–76.


17. For the inheritance division, see Abraham, “An Inheritance Division among Judeans in Babylonia from the Early Persian Period,” 206–21; for the marriage contract, see Abraham, “West Semitic and Judean Brides in Cuneiform Sources from the Sixth Century BCE,” 198–219.


19. Ibid., 28–29.

20. According to Oded, Assyrians “tended to maintain the community framework of the deportees by transporting and resettling them in groups.” Although communities/families were often deported together, Assyrians never resettled them in specific enclaves created for their sole needs. Ibid., 22–24, 67–69.

21. Ibid., 44–69.


24. According to the royal inscriptions of Sargon II, between 27,290 people plus 50 chariots and 27,280 people plus 200 chariots were deported. For the variations between the versions, see Andreas Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad* (Göttingen: Cuvillier, 1994), Prunk no. 24, 197; Becking, *The Fall of Samaria*, 25–33.


32. For an outlook of the settlements in this region, see Zadok, “The Nippur Region.” See also Eph’al, “The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th–5th Centuries B.C.”; Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylonia in the Latter Prophets*, 111. For the toponyms URU galūtu and URU galiya, see Ran Zadok, *Geographical Names according to New-and Late-Babylonian Texts*, Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes 8 (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1985), 137 [hereafter RGTC 8].

33. Gentilics (i.e., ethnic names) are often attached to the pattern URU ša X [city of X] or É ša X [house of X], with the exception of the Egyptian example above. For the location of these settlements, see RGTC 8: pp. 9, 18, 104, 107, 158, 229–30; Zadok, “The Nippur Region.” For a discussion of this phenomenon, see M. A. Dandamayev, “Twin Towns and Ethnic Minorities in First-Millennium Babylonia,” in *Commerce and Monetary Systems in the Ancient World: Means of Transmission and Cultural Interaction; Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project Held in Innsbruck, Austria, October 3rd–8th 2002*, Melammu Symposia 5, Oriens et Occidens 6, ed. Robert Rollinger et al. (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004), 138–42; Eph’al, “The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th–5th Centuries B.C.,” 80–83.


The Āl- Yāhūdu Texts (ca. 572–477 BCE)


38. The name of the year or month is missing from the lower edge of CUSAS 28: 2. See CUSAS 28: p. 101.

39. For the attestations of this settlement, see RGTC 8: pp. 18, 238; Eph'al, “The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th–5th Centuries B.C.,” 84–87. The date of the earliest attestation of the orthography Ālu Nēreb is unknown, but the tablet was written during the reign of Nabonidus (555–539 BCE). See P. Dhorme, “Les tablettes babyloniennes de Neirab,” Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale 25 (1928): 53–82; for the earliest attestation of Ālu Nēreb, see text no. 19: 7.

40. CUSAS 28: 1 rev. 15, 3 rev. 12, 4 rev. 16, 10 rev. 15. This individual took the name of Nabû-na'id during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II and changed once his namesake (Nabû-na'id/Nabonidus) became king of Babylon in 555 BCE. For this practice, see CUSAS 28: p. 99n15.

41. The presence of both city and country determinatives in front of the names of Tyre, Sidon, and Ashkelon in Neo-Babylonian texts may show that Babylonians were indeed drawing such analogies. See RGTC 8: pp. 183, 279, 281.


45. That a coregency existed late in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II seems to be confirmed by the first datum for the reign of Amēl-Marduk (2nd day/9th month/562 BCE) and the last of Nebuchadnezzar II (8th day/10th month/562 BCE). See M. P. Streck, “Nebukadnezar II. A,” Reallexicon der Assyriologie 9 (1998): 199.


48. While the present case differs slightly from the concept developed by Pierre Nora in that it was not created for reasons of remembrance, the site of Āl-Yāḥūdu eventually became a vehicle for Judean memory. This was done in conjunction with other social projects, such as the exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic History. For the concept of the lieu de mémoire [site of memory], see Pierre Nora, “Entre mémoire et histoire: La problématique des lieux,” in Les lieux de mémoire, Vol. 1, La république, NRF, with the collaboration of Charles-Robert Ageron et al. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984-), XVII–XLII.

49. Ran Zadok, The Jews in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods, Vol. 3 (Israel: Haifa University Press, 1979), 7–34. The second and third criteria are problematic. Non-Yahwistic Jewish names can appear in other West Semitic dialects and could reflect a foreign origin, especially in the absence of genealogical or historical evidence to prove the contrary. On the other hand, genealogical history may not necessarily reflect the identity of the name bearer.


52. For the Murašu texts, see Zadok, The Jews in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods, 78.

53. The percentage expresses the frequency of onomastic forms per individual. For example, if an individual known as Bārīk-Yāma is mentioned five times in the corpus, these five attestations are counted as one instance of a Yahwistic name since they refer to the same individual.


55. Among native Babylonians and Chaldeans, which represented the majority. Stolper, “Archive of Murashû,” 928.

56. Paul-Alain Beaulieu has claimed that “Yahwism’ did not constitute the main referent of identity” for Judeans exiles, especially in light of the abundance of non-Yahwistic and foreign names among the deportees (“Yahwistic Names in Light of Late Babylonian Onomastics,” in Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period, 259). The situation encountered in Āl-Yāḥūdu nuances this impression, although several Judeans did adopt local Babylonian and West Semitic (Aramaic) names. For the influence exerted by the Aramaic language on the Judean community of Babylonia, see Ran Zadok, “Yamu-iziri

57. John J. Ahn has called for the integration of generational differences in research dealing with the exilic period (“Forced Migrations Guiding the Exile: Demarcating 597, 587, and 582 B.C.E.,” in *By the Irrigation Canals of Babylon*, 177–80), as there are important differences in coping with this event between generations.

58. The evidence from Sippar shows that royal merchants tended to assimilate to local culture after two generations, while foreign onomastic forms were preserved in the names of the courtiers of Susa (Bloch, “Judeans in Sippar and Susa during the First Century of the Babylonian Exile,” 127–41; Jursa, “Eine Familie von Königskaufleuten jüdischer Herkunft,” 23). Zadok also noted an increase in Yahwistic name for the second generation of Jewish individuals in the Murašu corpus (*The Jews in Babylonia*, 84).

59. Our method of investigation represented generations by a twenty-year range, beginning with the earliest text dated to 572 BCE (CUSAS 28: 1). Names are associated with four date ranges: 572–552 BCE, 552–532 BCE, 532–512 BCE, and 512–492 BCE. Fathers mentioned within one of these specific date ranges are presumed to have been born at least forty years earlier, while twenty years were assumed for the sons. The following generations are thus hypothesized: 612–592 BCE, 592–572 BCE, 572–552 BCE, 552–532 BCE, and 532–512 BCE.

60. Aḥiqam is first attested in CUSAS 28: 12, dated to 533 BCE.

61. The two cases are Bēl-šarru-uṣur, son of Nubā (CUSAS 28: 2, 3) and [Tā]b-šalam, son of Šalam-Yāma (CUSAS 28: 5).

62. The following are Aḥiqam, son of Yaḥû-šūrî (CUSAS 28: 13); Aḥiqam, son of Rapā-Yāma (CUSAS 28: 12, 13); [Badabarr]ā, son of Šapa-Yāma (CUSAS 28: 39); Ḫiqammu, son of Rapā-Yāma (CUSAS 28: 14, 17); Pakkā, son of Maqin-Yāma (CUSAS 28: 15); Ḥaggā, son of Mataniā (CUSAS 28: 37); Ḥanān, son of Azar-Yāma (CUSAS 28: 37); Šālāmān, son of Rapā-Yāma (CUSAS 28: 20); Maltēma, son of Zakar-Yāma (CUSAS 28: 23); Rimūt, son of Šamā-Yāma (CUSAS 28: 43); and Šullumu, son of Yaḥû-li-ia (CUSAS 28: 44).

63. Neo-Babylonian period: Šidqi-Yāma, son of Šillimu (CUSAS 28: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9); [. . .]-Yāma, son of Ḥubaba (CUSAS 28: 2); Gadāl-Yāma, son of Šallamu (CUSAS 28: 6); Šalam-Yāma, son of Ṭāb-šalām (CUSAS 28: 3); Ṭūb-Yāma, son of Mukkēa (CUSAS 28: 8); Dalā-Yāma, son of Ili-šu (CUSAS 28: 10); Šikin-Yāma, son of Ili-šu (CUSAS 28: 10); and Šikīn-Yāma, son of Ḫinnanu (CUSAS 28: 5). Achaemenid period: Yaḥû-e-DIR, son of Ṭāb-šalām (CUSAS 28: 12); Nir-Yāma, son of Aḥiqam (CUSAS 28: 24, 25, 26, 27, 32, 37, 45, 46); Rapā-Yāma, son of Iš-ē-il (CUSAS 28: 50); Šalām-Yāma, son of Agguru (CUSAS 28: 33); [Abdi]-Yaḥū, son of Nabaḥa (CUSAS 28: 14, 15); Abdi- Yaḥû, son of Šalam (CUSAS 28: 15); Abdi- Yaḥû, son of Kînā (CUSAS 28: 15); Iššūa, son of Nabû-ēṭir (CUSAS 28: 40); Šalām-Yāma, son of Mâlēšu (CUSAS 28: 16 A & B); Qad/tə- Yāma, son of Buluqā (CUSAS 28: 23); Banâ-Yāma, son of Il(u)-dū-šu (CUSAS 28: 29).
Matan-[Yāma], son of Malēšu (CUSAS 28: 35); Kīn-Yāma, son of Šili[... ] (CUSAS 28: 35); Yāhū-azar, son of Aḥīqam (CUSAS 28: 30); Azar-Yāma, son of Ilta-r[āma?] (CUSAS 28: 30); Šilim-Yāma, son of Malēšu (CUSAS 28: 30); Rupuni-Yāma, son of Qazizi (CUSAS 28: 44); Yāhū-azza, son of Aḥīqam (CUSAS 28: 45); Yāhū-izrī, son of Aḥīqam (CUSAS 28: 45); Yāhūšū, son of Aḥīqam (CUSAS 28: 45); and Mataniā, son of Šiltā (CUSAS 28: 52).

64. The name form DN-šarru-usur [DN = Divine Name] expressed loyalty to the ruler and was especially popular among individuals who occupied an administrative position or had social connections. For a discussion of this name pattern, see Bloch, “Judeans in Sippar and Susa during the First Century of the Babylonian Exile,” 135–36; CUSAS 28: p. 101.

65. The inclusion of foreign deities into Babylonian onomastic patterns is extremely rare. Arameans and other foreign groups often included Babylonian deities into their own onomastic pattern, while Babylonians never did the same. Rare cases of integration of foreign deities usually meant that they were integrated into the Babylonian pantheon. I would like to thank Professor Paul-Alain Beaulieu for bringing this to my attention.

66. Pearce, “Identifying Judeans and Judean Identity in the Babylonian Evidence,” 26–27. The present case might be similar to that of the scribe Nabû-na‘id/Nabû-nāšir. Here, the change was prompted by the emergence of the vice-regent and son of Nabonidus, Belshazzar (Bēl-šarru-usur), as the adjustment to Yāhū-šarru-usur took place early in the reign of Nabonidus (ca. 550 BCE).


68. For a discussion of these names, see CUSAS 28: 36 rev. 14 and BaAr 6: 10 rev. 20; CUSAS 28: 34 obv. 6 and BaAr 6: 3 obv. 4. See also CUSAS 28: pp. 39, 88.

69. Ran Zadok’s observation on Aramaic linguistic interference in the name of Yāhū-i/edir is another reflection of the exchanges taking place between various cultures present in southern Babylonia (“Yamu-iziri the Summoner of Yahūdu and Aramaic Linguistic Interference,” 142–43).


71. Ibid., 23.