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# **Here ends the history of Elam: Toponymy, linguistics and cultural identity in Susa and south-western Iran, ca. 2400-1800 BC<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

**I)** The sign NIM, used with a topographic value, is first attested without any doubt through Eanatum inscriptions (KUR NIM<sup>ki</sup>), who ruled Lagaš around the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. It is proposed to consider as unsuitable the systematic translation of this sign by ‘Elam’, at least in 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC Mesopotamian texts.

The different meanings and values of this sign are reviewed here, in a strictly chronological way, and more particularly the changing topographic reality this sign encompassed.

**II)** Then the distribution area of the ‘Elamite’ language speakers will be examined, through an evaluation of the onomastic features (above all anthroponomy) available in the cuneiform texts.

Finally, hypotheses about Susa will be proposed, distinguishing three different and independent spheres of data: the material assemblage (archaeology), records of political control and indications of linguistic / cultural identity.

**Key-words: identity; Elam; Elamite language; Susa; linguistics**

## **I) The sign NIM**

The sign NIM is a logogram for which several phonetic values are known through the history of the cuneiform writing: nām, ni<sub>7</sub>, nim, nū, num, tu<sub>8</sub>, tum<sub>4</sub>.<sup>2</sup> Its phonetic pronunciation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, as a qualifier of persons or places, is theoretically unknown but it is systematically translated as ‘Elam’ according to anachronistic affirmations.<sup>3</sup> Indeed only Old Babylonian period

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<sup>1</sup> I want to thank here Gian Pietro Basello, Lorenzo Verderame and Palmiro Notizia for their important editing work as well as John Alden and John Flood for carefully correcting and softening this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Berger 2004: 400, no. 690.

<sup>3</sup> « it is clear that this phonetic value [Elam] of the sign NIM was read by the Sumerians in the name of the country which the Akkadians called Elamtu and Hebrews ‘Elām’ » (Poebel 1931-1932: 22).

lexicographic lists<sup>4</sup> clearly established the possible Sumerian pronunciation *elam* (*e-la-am* / *e-lam*) of the sign NIM, while bilingual lists associated this sign with the Akkadian words *elûm* ([to be] high, to go up) and *šaqûm* (to be high), giving one of its meanings. Moreover, in several texts of this period, a person could be qualified as king of *Elamtum* here, and king of NIM there; consequently, the sign NIM used in Akkadian texts has been considered as the logographic version of the toponym *Elamtum*, just as for the Sumerian *Elam* since the toponymic couple *Elam* / *Elamtum* probably represented the Sumerian and Akkadian variants of a same word<sup>5</sup> and related back to the same reality.

These equivalencies (NIM = Sumerian *Elam* = Akkadian *Elamtum*) date back to the Old Babylonian period, but it is generally accepted that they should be also operative for the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. This implicit extrapolation led to the quasi-systematic transcription *Elam* for the sign NIM in translations of pre-Old Babylonian texts, which is not supported by evidence except however for the following documents, implying that NIM was perhaps already read *Elam* in Sumerian Ur III period texts:

- the Kassite copy of a letter from Šulgi to Išbi-Erra ([http:// etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.3.1.13.2&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc#](http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.3.1.13.2&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc#)) found in Susa, bearing a ‘syllabic’ Sumerian version and its Akkadian translation, presented in the Sumerian text *é-nam* corresponding to the sign NIM in the Akkadian version. For Krebernik (2006 : 63-64), as Sumerian language may witness alternation between sounds *n* and *l*, the syllabic group *é-nam* should be there probably read *Elam*. This document is however problematic as to its date. Is the Sumerian text the exact copy of an Ur III original or a pedagogically modified version written with Kassite period dated concepts and state of the language<sup>6</sup> ? Michalowski (in Averbeck *et al.* 2006: 77), reminds that the exact composition date of the royal letters of the Ur III kings is not precisely known, swinging between Ur III and Old Babylonian periods.
- on an Ur III tablet from Girsu, a certain Ezišagal is ‘dumu NIM’ in the text, and ‘dumu *a-la-ma*’ in the sealing (*Alama* might be there the name of Ezišagal’s father however).
- an Ur III text from Umma mentions ‘20 *e la* NIM’, which Michalowski interprets as <sup>6</sup>*e*<sup>l</sup>NIM, the signs *e-la* being used here as phonetic determinatives for the pronunciation of the sign NIM (see for the last two arguments, Michalowski 2008: 109-110).
- and last but not least, in an Old Babylonian copy of a Sumerian inscription of Gudea (tablet MS 2814 in the Schøyen Collection, published in Wilcke 2011) was written phonetically *E-lam*, *Elam* (iii 08'a, without correspondence in the Akkadian translation). If we trust the accuracy of this copy (and its authenticity) with respect to the Sumerian original, this document is then the only attestation for a pre-Old Babylonian (at least since the reign of Gudea) Sumerian reading *Elam* of the sign NIM known up to now.

<sup>4</sup> Proto-Ea, Ea and Proto-Aa (Krebernik 2006: 64, fn. 12; e.g see Proto-Ea in [http://cdli.ucla.edu/tools/lexical/proto\\_ea.html](http://cdli.ucla.edu/tools/lexical/proto_ea.html), no. 706).

<sup>5</sup> The relation between these two variants could have been similar to the situation between the Sumerian *Subir* and the Akkadian *Subartu* (Michalowski 2008: 109).

<sup>6</sup> According to Michalowski (personal communication), this tablet was written by a scribe who used many games to write things in unorthodox way. Consequently, this document cannot be cited for the pronunciation of anything at any time.

To these Lagaš II / Ur III mentions, should finally be added two references in Akkadian period texts of Adab and Isin to persons qualified as *E-lam* (Schrakamp 2015: 225 and 231).

But why would *Elam* have been written phonetically so rarely during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC? In the present state of our knowledge and ignorance, «it may be preferable to refrain from translating *elam* [i.e. the sign NIM] as *Elam* before Old Babylonian times» as Michalowski (2008: 114 and 121) stated.

The sign NIM already had a long history at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, during which its semantic application field had evolved. Its meanings should not be deduced then anachronistically from the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC evidence but inferred from the various uses attested for each period. Such a chronological analysis is aimed at following the previous studies published by Michalowski 1986 and 2002, Glassner 1996 and Verderame 2009 and 2013 respectively for the toponyms ŠUBUR/*Subir*/*Subartu*, Dilmun and MAR-TU.

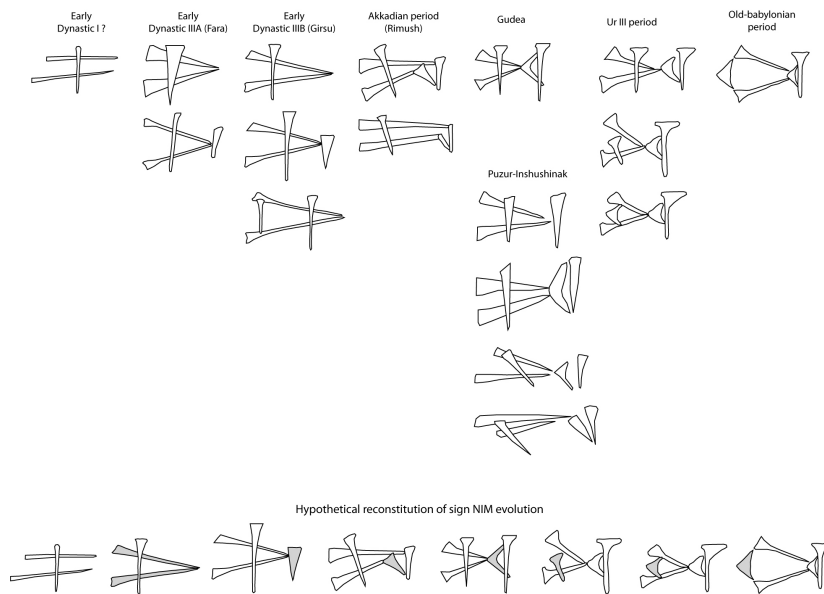


Fig. 1 Schematization of the sign NIM graphical evolution

Four periods seem to be distinguishable in the history of NIM (see fig. 1 for the hypothetical graphical evolution of this sign).<sup>7</sup>

### I)1 Jemdet Nasr and ED I-IIIa period

The first occurrences of the sign NIM date to around 3000 BC in Uruk (in a lexical list of functions names) and Jemdet Nasr,<sup>8</sup> where NIM was already associated to the topographic determinative KI, this logographic group being used to qualify (geographically?) women slaves. This usage as qualifier for individuals is also

<sup>7</sup> According to the results published in Sallaberger and Schrakamp 2015, the dates used here are based on the Middle Chronology.

<sup>8</sup> Potts D.T 1999: 84 and 87 and Sallaberger and Schrakamp 2015: 56.

attested later in Archaic texts from Ur<sup>9</sup> and in ED IIIa texts from Šuruppak/Fara, where most of the persons associated to this sign are anonymous (anyway, nobody qualified by this sign bore any ‘Elamite’ interpreted name<sup>10</sup>) and equipped with bread and beverages (beer notably).<sup>11</sup> The sign is also used in an ED IIIa theonyms list from Abu Salabikh, with a god called ‘*dlugal-NIM*’.<sup>12</sup>

### I)2 ED IIIb and Akkadian period<sup>13</sup>

During the later half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, NIM was still used to qualify (human or divine) persons, but also goods such as artefacts or animals, notably in texts from Adab, Ešnunna, Isin, Lagaš / Girsu, Nippur, Susa and Umma (Schrakamp 2015). For example, at the time of Ene(n)tarzi (or Enanatum II or Uruinimgina/Urukagina) of Lagaš (ED IIIb), Luena reported that he caught 600 NIM<sup>14</sup> while in ED IIIb / Early Sargonic texts from Umma-Zabalam,<sup>15</sup> NIM was associated with persons (trading yoke bulls and equids), such as Urni, as well as equids. As the geographic determinative KI was never mentioned in these contexts, NIM probably did not refer then to any place.

A new function appeared in the archives of Lagaš and first of all in the inscriptions of Eanatum,<sup>16</sup> combining the sign NIM with a territory, KUR (country / mountain), which it seemed to qualify (KUR NIM<sup>ki</sup>). This function continued to be observed until the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC (KUR / KALAM / *mada* / *matum* NIM<sup>ki</sup>).

NIM seemed to be linked to a topographical reality, which Mesopotamians created defining a territory up to then without any designation, unnamed, not thought, formless, by qualifying it with a sign traditionally associated with persons. The territory thus defined probably corresponded to a general concept: the eastern highlands.<sup>17</sup> At the time of Sargon, Rimuš and Naram-Sîn, this vague topical notion was probably specified: if Mesopotamian texts still did not describe what NIM included, they indicated at least what it did not. The territories/states of Marḥaši/Paraḥšum and Zahara were indeed clearly considered as different from and outside of NIM: Sargon and Rimuš are for example said to be conquerors of NIM and Paraḥšum, and Naram-Sîn to be the «commander of all the KALAM NIM<sup>ki</sup>, as far as Paraḥšum». <sup>18</sup> This distinction was probably a con-

<sup>9</sup> Sallaberger and Schrakamp 2015: 59.

<sup>10</sup> Zadok 1994: 37-38 and Potts D.T 1999: 87.

<sup>11</sup> Steible 2015: 160-161.

<sup>12</sup> Alberti 1985: 8, line 63 and Selz 1991: 31.

<sup>13</sup> The two Early Dynastic kings Enmebaragesi and Enna’il conquest/victory over ‘NIM’ are not considered here, since one is mentioned in the Sumerian King List (lines 83-86; see Marchesi 2010: 239, no. 2) written between the Ur III period and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, and the other in an Ur III copy («For Inana, Enna’il, son of A’anzu, who vanquished NIM, dedicated this»; Cooper 1986: 21).

<sup>14</sup> Sollberger and Kupper 1971: 76-77, Kienast and Volk 1995: 25-29 (asGir 1) and Frayne 2008: 38 (translation).

<sup>15</sup> Notizia and Visicato 2016. See notably the tablets n° 82, 102 and 296.

<sup>16</sup> Sollberger and Kupper 1971: 47-61, Cooper 1986: 33-47, Potts D.T 1999: 89 and Frayne 2008: E1.9.3.9, ii 4.

<sup>17</sup> Steve *et al.* 2002, col. 422 and Steinkeller 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Frayne 1993: 7-8, 22-31, 51-67 and 130.

sequence of Akkadian propaganda. By dissociating Marḥaši / Paraḥšum from NIM (the intervention / predation territory sphere claimed by the Mesopotamians on the Iranian plateau),<sup>19</sup> the presence of the first in the second became then illegitimate, what Rimuš expressed when he claimed to have torn out «the foundations of Paraḥšum from the KALAM NIM<sup>ki</sup>».<sup>20</sup> He nevertheless admitted by that a preceding Marhašean presence in this territory.

### I)3 Ur III period

With the Ur III dynasty, the sign NIM got another function. It could be placed before a toponym or a toponym-based ethnonym and seemed to have been used as a proposed semantic classifier (preposed determinative). While it was never written before toponyms located in Mesopotamia and rarely before toponyms located in Susiana (such as Susa, AdamDUM or Urua), it could precede,<sup>21</sup> notably in the Messengers texts of Lagaš / Girsu:<sup>22</sup> ANIgi (=Itnigi ?), Anšan, Barbara-HU-ba (or Parparrahupa), Bašime, BUgara, Daba, Danhili, Dudu(l), Duhdašuin / Duhduh(u)NI, GIR-kinam, Giša(-me), Gizili, Harši, Hub/pum, Huh(u)-nuri, Hulibar, Hurti, Hu'utum, Hušaumtum, Kimaš, Manhili, M/Barhaši, NE-dugune (NE.HU.NE), Sabum, Siri, Sitinrub/pum, Si'um, Šigriš, Tablala, Ulum, Urri, Yabrad/t, Za'ul and Zurba(tum). This new application was above all perceptible with the toponym Šimaški, which was preceded in almost half of its occurrences in the Mesopotamian texts by the sign NIM.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, Lulubum, LÚ.SU and Zabšali (even though the last two of these place names seem to be equivalent to or included in Šimaški<sup>24</sup>) were never determined in such a way.

NIM was still used to qualify persons, including individuals bearing Sumerian, Akkadian, 'Elamite' and indeterminable (some of them are perhaps Hurrian) names. What is the meaning of NIM in these cases? Is it an 'ethnic' designation indicating a geographic origin based on the toponymic value of the sign<sup>25</sup> or does it fit with social, legal or professional realities,<sup>26</sup> since numerous persons

<sup>19</sup> Marhašean leaders should probably consider differently the territory designed as 'NIM' by the Mesopotamians.

<sup>20</sup> Frayne 1993: 56. By defining there NIM as a KALAM, Rimuš and after him Naram-Sîn differed from Eanatum of Lagaš and probably wanted to express a conquered, pacified and controlled land (such as the KALAM KI.EN.GI, Sumer in Sumerian), KUR NIM<sup>ki</sup> implicating rather a still dangerous and threatening land (Ur-Nammu mentioned, for example, the gathering of enemy troops in KUR NIM<sup>ki</sup>; Frayne 1997: 65-66).

<sup>21</sup> See Edzard and Farber 1974, Vallat 1985: 49, Zadok 1991: 227-228 and Glassner 2005: 13.

<sup>22</sup> Notizia 2009: 37-41 and 295-321. See notably footnote 100 in p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> Vallat 1993 : CXVII and Potts T.F. 1994: 32.

<sup>24</sup> For LÚ.SU(.A)= Šimaški, see Steinkeller 1988. See as well Steve *et al.* 2002, col. 432-433.

<sup>25</sup> «NIM denoted eastern highland[er(s)] from the lower Mesopotamian point of view» (Zadok 1987: 3 and 1994: 34).

<sup>26</sup> According to Glassner (2005: 13), behind the sign NIM «se cache une population mêlée, faite d'Elamites de souche, dont certains sont acculturés et ont adopté des anthroponymes akkadiens ou sumériens, ainsi que d'individus ou de groupes d'origine diverse mais qui entretiennent, par leur métier ou leur fonction, des relations avec l'Est».



thus qualified occupied military or agriculture related functions in the Ur III period archives?<sup>27</sup> Michalowski observed (2008: 110-111 and 121) that most of the people designed as NIM appeared in Girsu ( $\approx$  800 instances) and Umma ( $\approx$  80 instances) tablets, generally in messengers texts in which these *lú* NIM could officiate as bodyguards accompanying messengers and ambassadors going to or coming from the Iranian plateau.

The precise meaning of the sign NIM, as a personal qualifier, seems to swing between these two main values, ‘ethnic-geographic’ and socio-professional ones. Perhaps there is also a genetic link between them, the second resulting from the first (such as the ethnonyms Slav, from which come the English and French slave and *esclave*, or Vandal, from which abbé Grégoire created in 1794 the neologisms vandalism and vandal to castigate some revolutionary behaviours in France) or conversely the first emanating from the second (as with the name Hebrew, probably derived from *ḥabiru*, originally meaning perhaps rebel, outlaw).

#### I)4 Old Babylonian period

During this period, the determinative use of NIM typically seen in Ur III texts seems to be abandoned, while the phonetically written toponyms *Elam*, *Elamtum*<sup>28</sup> and *Had/tamti*<sup>29</sup> appeared. NIM was still sometimes used in Mesopotamian texts<sup>30</sup> as well as in the inscriptions of the Šimaškean and Sukkalmah leaders mainly found in Susa.<sup>31</sup> In their titles, however, NIM was a fixed form probably devoid of any real geographic meaning.

<sup>27</sup> Jean 1922: 20-21, Stolper 1982: 52 and 1984: 18, Zadok 1994: 37 and Potts T.F 1994: 138-139. In that perspective, it is interesting to note that the term MAR-TU presents at the same period the same dilemma, between the ethno-linguistic and administrative / social / professional interpretations (Verderame 2009: 234 and 240 and 2013: 47 and 51-52).

<sup>28</sup> If *Elamtum* timeless represented the Akkadian toponym corresponding to the sign NIM (Elam being the Sumerian one), why do the Akkadian texts written during the Old Akkadian period not mention it, using only the sign NIM? Two reasons seem possible: either the Akkadian scribes respected, by tradition, a graphical norm, or the toponym *Elamtum* had not been created yet (even though at this time, a woman was called *E-la-mi-tum*; Edzard *et al.* 1977: 43, Zadok 1994: 39 and Krebernik 2006: 64).

<sup>29</sup> The most ancient attestations currently known of this toponym dates from Siwe-palar-huhpak (in a fragmentary tablet in Susa and a silver vessel; cf. Rutten 1949: 163 and Mahboubian 2004: 44-45) or perhaps his father Sirukduh (Farber 1974: 77), in the 18<sup>th</sup> century BC (Middle Chronology). This relatively late apparition is probably due to the very few inscriptions written in ‘Elamite’ found for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.

Hinz (Hinz 1967: 79 and 92 and Hinz and Koch 1987: 585) tried however to read this toponym at the beginning of the seventh column (VII, 3) of the Naram-Sin treaty, the most ancient ‘Elamite’ inscription known up to now (Quintana accepts this reading in his internet site <http://www.um.es/ipoa/cuneiforme/elamita/>). This reconstruction remains nevertheless uncertain (Scheil 1911: 8 and König 1965: 32 respectively proposed for this passage *ha-šal-[-?]* and *ha-rak-[-?]*).

<sup>30</sup> Groneberg 1980: 70-71.

<sup>31</sup> Vallat 1993: 91-92

When NIM is followed by the syllable *-tim*, the Akkadian toponym *Elamtum* is doubtlessly present behind this logographic facade (in the genitive form *Elamtim*). The most ancient adjunction of this phonetic suffix dates from an inscription on a mace-head of Ilum/Anum-muttabbil of Der (NIM-*tim*),<sup>32</sup> at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century BC in the Middle Chronology. With the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, the semantic application field of the sign NIM becomes more restricted and precise, referring to a new (?) Mesopotamian toponymic reality for the plain dwellers and the highlanders: *Elam / Elamtum*<sup>33</sup>.

The relation of the Mesopotamian designations (allotoponyms) NIM = *Elam / Elamtum* with the autotoponym Hatamti might be approached with the help of the titles borne by the ‘Iranian’ leaders Sirukduh and his son Siwe-palar-huhpak. The first is said to be «LUGAL ša NIM.MA-tim» in a text from Shemsharra and probably «men[ik Hatamtik]» in an ‘Elamite’ stele of unknown provenience,<sup>34</sup> while Siwe-palar-huhpak<sup>35</sup> presented himself as «meni of Hatamti» and «sukkal of Susa» in Susian texts and on a silver vessel, probably «Sukkalmah and sukkal of NIM.MA-tim (Elamtum) and Šimaški» in fragmentary bricks from Tal-i Malyan / Anšan, and was designated in Mari as «sukkal Elamtim/NIM(.MA)-tim» or «šar Anšan<sup>[ki]</sup>».<sup>36</sup> To several titles used in his own Akkadian texts (Sukkalmah, sukkal of Susa, sukkal of Elamtum [NIM.MA-tim] and Šimaški), there corresponds only one in ‘Elamite’ written inscriptions, ‘meni of Hatamti’ (König 1965: n° 3). Even though Siwe-palar-huhpak did not occupy all these functions in the same time, it seems that Hatamti exceeds the Mesopotamian topic concept of NIM / *Elam / Elamtum* and includes also Susa and Šimaški.

### I)5 Summary of the evolution of the semantic application field of the sign NIM:

#### Jemdet Nasr and ED I-IIIa period

- The sign NIM is already associated with sign KI. NIM might consequently, in occasional cases, present a toponymic value.
- NIM is used to qualify people. Most of them are anonymous, but when the name is known, it does not seem to be ‘Elamite’.

<sup>32</sup> Frayne 1990: 678.

<sup>33</sup> NIM «denoted ‘Elamite’ during the Old Babylonian period and later» (Zadok 1987: 4). It is interesting to notice here that the term MAR-TU also started to denote for sure *Amurrûm* only in the Old Babylonian period, when this toponym actually appeared in the Mesopotamian documents (Verderame 2009: 243 and 2013: 44 and 51). This really echoes the relation between NIM and *Elam / Elamtum*.

<sup>34</sup> Vallat 1990: 121 and Farber 1974.

<sup>35</sup> See Basello 2012: 166-167, fn. 93 for a possible alternative reading of this name (Siflarhupak); the Elamite word ruhupak (female version of ruhušak) is clearly recognizable in the name (Basello, personal communication).

<sup>36</sup> Rutten 1949: 163 ; Mahboubian 2004: 44-45; König 1965: n° 3; Vallat 1993: 268; Stolper 1982: 59-61; Jean 1941 (ARM II): texts n° 72, 29; 73, 28; 74, 5; Kupper 1953 (ARM VI): texts n° 51, 6; 52, 7; 52, 18; Dossin 1970: 97; Charpin 2004: 210.

### ED IIIb and Akkadian period

- The sign is used to qualify a KUR, a KALAM or a *matum* (Paraḫšum / Marḫaši and Zahara are not included in NIM). Its toponymic value is then unambiguous.
- The sign is still used to qualify people.

### Ur III period

- NIM is still used to qualify a KALAM or a *matum*, but it may also be used as a kind of determinative sometimes placed before several ‘Iranian’ toponyms such as Adamdun, Anšan, Huhnuri, Hurti, Kimaš, Marḫaši,<sup>37</sup> Susa (...) and above all Šimaški. Lulubum, LÚ.SU and Zabšali are never determined by NIM.
- The sign is used to qualify people bearing not necessarily ‘Elamite’ names.

Whether this designation depends of ethnic/geographic or socio-professional considerations remains an open question.

### Old Babylonian period

- The sign is still used to qualify a KUR, a KALAM or a *matum*, seemingly almost only in royal titles. NIM matches then doubtlessly to the Sumerian and Akkadian toponyms *Elam* and *Elamtum*.
- NIM is still used to qualify people bearing not necessarily ‘Elamite’ names. This use is however more restricted than before.

NIM must generally be considered as a Mesopotamian shortcut subject to evolution, reducing the political, cultural and linguistic complexity of the inhabitants of the Iranian plateau to a mere common geographic characteristic: those ‘others’ were living in the highlands, eastward,<sup>38</sup> in a territory Mesopotamians considered as a part of their intervention / predation / exploitation sphere.<sup>39</sup> According to this sense, the Mesopotamian NIM was not a toponym strictly speaking but rather a topical notion, such as *le Midi* or *la Province* in France, *the Frontier* in USA or *farang* / فرنگ in the Iranian culture.

For Iranian archaeology and history, it must be recalled here that *Elam* is, at the very worst, a 19<sup>th</sup> century AD creation, coming from biblical studies and at the best, a Mesopotamian topical concept only doubtlessly attested from the beginning

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<sup>37</sup> While Marḫaši was considered to be out of NIM in the Akkadian period.

<sup>38</sup> Michalowski (2008: 112-113) restricted the geographic application area of the sign NIM in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC only to the south-western Iranian plateau, the north-western part being known as ŠUBUR/*Subir*/*Subartu* in Mesopotamian texts.

<sup>39</sup> In parallel with these remote others, the term MAR-TU was referring in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, from a Mesopotamian urban point of view, to a closer non-urban / non-civilized ‘other’, belonging to a socio-economic group defined by the urban administrations as living out of the cities, in the countryside, but working for them, before being stuck from ca. 2000 BC on a new phenomenon: the Amorites (Verderame 2009: 253-254 and 2013: 48, 50 and 52-53).

of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC. In using Elam as a label, one is consequently no closer to the emic conceptions of the inhabitants of the area in question than in imposing a modern term such as Iranian plateau.<sup>40</sup> The lack of descriptive value of *Elam* / *Elamum* / NIM from the Iranian point of view may be compared to the contribution given by the Nazi topical notion *Lebensraum* to the understanding of Poland, Ukraine or Russia. It is consequently of little use to speak about ‘Elamite civilization/culture’, ‘Trans-Elam’, ‘Proto-Elam’ and so forth.

## II) The glottonym (language name) ‘*Elamite*’ and the sphere of use of this language during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC

II)1 A language, linguistically isolated despite several connection attempts, has been associated with the toponym Elam from which comes consequently its name, ‘Elamite’. As Basello (2004) reminds us, this glottonym experienced numerous changes during the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD<sup>41</sup> before getting fixed as ‘Elamite’<sup>42</sup> at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, probably due to the publications of German scholars such as Hüsing and Bork.<sup>43</sup>

Once this language was finally linked to a place, Elam, why was its name not reformulated from the designation of this country in this language, from the autotoponym recognized since Norris in 1855 and finally correctly read by Scheil in 1905 as Hatamti? There is probably no definitive answer to this question, but the influence of biblical studies and Semitic languages on historians of that era may account for the predominance of Hebraic ‘Elâm and its derivatives.

<sup>40</sup> «In using Subir or Subartu as a label, one is no closer to the emic conceptions of the inhabitants of the area in question than in imposing a modern term such as Habur drainage» (Michalowski 2002: 306).

Such a critical approach was also recently proposed for the toponym Šimaški: «It is highly likely that the inhabitants of the “Šimaškian” lands were far from being uniform in terms of their ethnicity and language. To the Babylonians, however, they seemed to form a homogeneous group of highlanders sharing various common characteristics, and so all of them were subsumed in a convenient single category, named after the dominant political group among them» (Steinkeller 2014b: 293); in its typical Mesopotamian Ur III usage, Šimaški was a general inclusive designation of the various polities scattered on the Iranian plateau (Steinkeller 2014a: 698).

<sup>41</sup> Hincks 1844: language of the second kind; Westergaard 1844: Median; Rawlinson 1846: Scythic; Löwenstern 1850: Elamite; Mordtmann 1862: Susian; Sayce 1874: Amardian; Lenormant 1875: proto-Median; Delattre 1883: Anzanite. See Basello 2004 or his internet site <http://www.elamit.net/> to get the full references.

<sup>42</sup> As Susa was thought to be the main centre where this language was spoken, and since according to the Bible (Daniel VIII.2), Susa was part of Elam.

<sup>43</sup> Even then, this label was not generally accepted, like Scheil who, during his whole career, always named this language with the glottonym proposed by Delattre, Anzanite; he considered indeed the texts found in Susa according to two main categories, ‘élamite-anzanite’ and ‘élamite-sémitique’ (Akkadian), ‘élamite’ being for him only a geographical indication meaning from Susa and no a linguistic one.

As Basello wrote (2004: 19-20), the search for the name of an ancient language only comes to an end with the one given in the texts by the actual speakers of that language. Unfortunately for ‘Elamite’, its speakers never mentioned it in the documents currently known, if they even recognized it with a particular name. If the glottonym is unknown or nonexistent, perhaps the less misleading designation would be to build a glottonym from the most ancient name of the places (autotoponyms) where this language was spoken. In the following attempt to determine its sphere of use, ‘Elamite’ language will be labelled X language to liberate our discussion from ancient concepts.

Currently, 12 deciphered (cuneiform) texts written in X language are known for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC. Seven come from Susa,<sup>1</sup> one from Tello/Girsu<sup>2</sup> and four of unknown provenience<sup>3</sup>, to which might be added some ‘Elamite’ incantations written on Old Babylonian Sumerian tablets.<sup>4</sup> It would be obviously important here to know which language(s) might be behind proto-‘Elamite’ (found in Susa, Tal-i Ghazir, Tal-i Malyan, Tepe Yahya, Shahr-i Sokhta, Tepe Sialk, Tepe Ozbaki and Tepe Sofalin), linear ‘Elamite’ (found in Susa, near Persepolis?, Shahdad and Konar Sandal), ‘geometric’ (recently found in Konar Sandal) and Indus writings, but as all of these graphic systems remain undeciphered, they are useless to determine X language sphere of use.<sup>5</sup>

So, according to the currently known texts, X language would have been spoken for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC only in Susa and Girsu. This result is however probably biased by the very restricted use of cuneiform writing in the Iranian plateau and Khuzistan during this period, where it is attested only at Susa, Tal-i Malyan / Anšan, Bushehr / Tepe Sabzevar / Liyan,<sup>6</sup> Tepe Bormi (?),<sup>7</sup> Tepe Surkhegan,<sup>8</sup> Sar-e pol-e Zohab,<sup>9</sup> Chogha Gavaneh<sup>10</sup> and Tepe

<sup>1</sup> Naram-Sîn treaty, Akkadian period (Scheil 1911: 1-11; Hinz 1967; König 1965: n° 2); two small tablets, Akkadian/Ur III period (Lambert M. 1974); two texts partially written in X language, in Ville Royale, op. B, level ‘5 ancien’ ≈ Atta-hušu’s time (de Graef 2006: n° 30 and 82); and two fragmentary tablets with the same inscription of Siwe-palar-hupak (Rutten 1949 = König 1965: n° 3).

<sup>2</sup> Cros *et al.* 1910: 201 and 212. This tablet has been attributed to the Isin-Larsa period by Steve 1992: 19.

<sup>3</sup> A gunagi silver vessel with an inscription of Kindatu (Mahboubian 2004 : 46-47), two fragments of a gunagi silver vessel mentioning Ebarat (II), Šilhaha and Amma-tedak (Mahboubian 2004 : 48-49), a stele bearing an inscription of either Siwe-palar-hupak or more probably his father Sirukduh (Farber 1974), a silver vessel with an inscription of Siwe-palar-hupak (Mahboubian 2004: 44-45).

<sup>4</sup> See Basello 2012: 180-181 (with references).

<sup>5</sup> For Proto-Elamite and Linear-Elamite writings, see Desset 2012, 2016, 2018 and forthcoming; for the geometric writing, see Desset 2014a.

<sup>6</sup> Akkadian inscription of Simut-wartaš (Pézard 1914: 91).

<sup>7</sup> Akkadian inscription of Amar-Sîn (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2005; but see Alizadeh 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Sumerian tablet of Gudea (Vallat 1993: 4 and Steve 2001). D.T. Potts, who met the family of the man who claimed to have found the text in this place, is rather sceptical about its discovery narrative (Potts D.T. 2010: 246-247; Michalowski 2008: 115).

<sup>9</sup> Akkadian rock inscriptions of Anubanini and Zaba[zuna], son of Iddin-Sîn (Frayne 1990: 703-704 and 712-713; see also Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2004).

Sharaffabad.<sup>11</sup> So, except for Susiana, Ram Hormuz, some points in the occidental Zagros, Tal-i Malyan and Bushehr,<sup>12</sup> the Iranian plateau remains in darkness as to any information about actual spoken languages.<sup>13</sup>

Onomastics may represent another way to reach the linguistic domain. Concerning toponymy, only one place name is unquestionably built with X language for this period: Huhunuri/Huhnuri/Huhunri, attested in the cuneiform texts since the Akkadian period.<sup>14</sup> This toponym is to be understood from the X language word *huhun*, meaning fortress<sup>15</sup> and was perhaps located in Tepe Bormi, near Ram Hormuz thanks to an inscription of Amar-Sîn recently published.<sup>16</sup> According to this last document, the tutelary deity of Huhnuri was likely Ruhur[ate/ir], whose name includes at least the X language word *ruhu* meaning progeny.<sup>17</sup>

Anthroponomy is finally the most important source for information about the geographical sphere of X language use.<sup>18</sup> Numerous Mesopotamian texts give, since the end of the Early Dynastic period (Lagaš/Girsu archives), the names of persons said to be/come from places east of the Mesopotamian plain. The X language based anthroponyms (XLBA), associated with toponyms, may consequently show us where this language was spoken.<sup>19</sup>

This method comes up against several limitations:

– our knowledge of the X language is quite limited, above all for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, hampering the identification of names as XLBA (although Zadok tried «to establish criteria for identifying Elamites»; Zadok 1994: 31),

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<sup>10</sup> Several Akkadian tablets and one-cylinder seal palaeographically attributed to Hammurabi's time (Abdi and Beckman 2007: 46-48).

<sup>11</sup> One-cylinder seal and one fragmentary tablet (Schacht 1975: 325-326).

<sup>12</sup> Few items found in Luristan graves, bearing inscriptions of Naram-Sîn, Šar-kali-šarri, Šuturul and Puzur/Kutir-Inšušinak (Langdon 1938-1939: 280-281; Dossin 1962: 149-150) are probably the fruits of relatively recent plundering (Langdon 1938-1939: 279 and Ghirshman 1962: 174-175) and should not be considered here. Those objects consequently suffered two movings: ancient plunderings and recent illegal diggings.

<sup>13</sup> Moreover, some of the inscriptions previously mentioned have probably 'travelled' and do not mean that they have been produced (and understood) where they were found.

<sup>14</sup> Edzard *et al.* 1977: 73 and Schrakamp 2015: 238 (in Lagaš / Girsu texts).

<sup>15</sup> Hinz and Koch 1987: 685-686.

<sup>16</sup> Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2005. Alizadeh (2013) however argued that this inscription was first seen in the Susa museum in 1995 and cannot come from the Ram Hormuz plain since this area was not occupied between 2800 and 1900 BC...

<sup>17</sup> Hinz and Koch (1987: 1045) interpret the name *Ruhurate/ir* as 'the one who sustains the progeny' (*Erbspross Nährer(in)*).

<sup>18</sup> On the relation between anthroponomy and language, see De Boer 2014: 42-53.

<sup>19</sup> Most of the onomastic data used here come from the important contributions of R. Zadok (1984, 1987, 1991 and 1994).



- an X language based name does not imply necessarily that its holder spoke this language<sup>20</sup> (but his/her parents or the person who gave him/her this name should probably practise it); it should be also taken into consideration here the phenomenon of the double names (De Boer 2014: 49), with persons using different names (/identities) according to the situation,
- an X language based name holder may be attested in a place without living or being born there (as messengers, traders...),
- and the precise location of most of the ancient ‘Iranian’ toponyms remains unknown.

Before starting, it must be reminded that the names of people qualified as NIM or coming from supposedly eastern toponyms/regions in Mesopotamian texts are not built only on X language (Zadok 1991: 230), but may be also interpreted as Akkadian, Sumerian, Hurrian, without considering the hybrid cases (Sumerian-Akkadian, Sumerian-X language...) and the too numerous uncertain ones.

### II)1.a Early dynastic period

Numerous persons qualified as NIM are unfortunately anonymous for this period (in Ur notably). In the Archaic texts of Ur (ED I-II), two XLBA holders are documented, Igi-gi-gi and Amar-NAB, probably consisting of the Sumerian term *amar* and the X language word for god, *nab / nap* (Lecompte 2013: 11 and 2016). In the texts of Šuruppak/Fara (ca. 2600 BC / ED IIIa), some NIM are named, but none bears any XLBA (Potts D.T. 1999: 87). Most of the data currently available come actually from ED IIIb Lagaš/Girsu where several XLBA holders were present, free or enslaved (as musicians and gardeners; Quenet 2008: 235).

A list of Lagaš, at the time of Uruinimgina/Urukagina, names 12 slaves from Uruaz, bearing Sumerian, Akkadian and some ‘strange and atypical’ (Zadok 1994: 37-38) names. One of them, *Kuku* (Lambert M. 1953: 68-69), is probably a XLBA (*kuk* means protection in X language; cf. the names of several ‘Iranian’ leaders at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC: Kuk-Kirmaš, Kuk-Našur, Kuk-Nahudi and Kuku-sanit). Two persons from URUXA are also named at that time (Siku [ensi] and Gunidu [lú]; Edzard *et al.* 1977: 180-181), but their names remain etymologically indeterminate.

### II)1.b Akkadian period

In Mesopotamia, XLBA holders are attested in Lagaš/Girsu, Umma, Adab, Nipur, Gasur and Ešnunna. In Lagaš, Zuzuilum and Pulma seem to come from Susa (Zadok 1994: 39).

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<sup>20</sup> It is known for example that Yasmah-Addu, the son of Šamsi-Addu, bore an Amorite name but was unable to speak Amorite while an X language based name holder like Kudur-mabuk, son of the X language based name holder Simti-šilhak, was proclaiming himself as an Amorite ruler and gave his children Akkadian (Warad-Sîn, Rîm-Sîn and Sîn-muballit), Sumerian (En-an-e-du) and X language based (Manzi-wartaš) names (De Boer 2014: 42 and 50).

Attributed to the reigns of Naram-Sîn and Šar-kali-šarri, Susian cuneiform texts, almost exclusively written in Akkadian (everyday language, understood by most of the literate population) or in Sumerian until the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, present at that time numerous Akkadian anthroponyms and some Sumerian or X language based ones (Stolper 1984: 14 and Vallat 1980: 3 and 1985: 49; Steinkeller 2018; Lambert W.G. 1991: 54-55, explains this situation by proposing that perhaps «the Akkadians speakers were a literate minority in a city whose Elamites were not so used to literacy»). Out of  $\approx$  430 names known in Susa (Legrain 1913: 127-130), only 30 would have been X language based, the others being either Akkadian or Sumerian (Steve *et al.* 2002: col. 427), a tendency also observed in contemporaneous Mesopotamian texts («Semitic seem to have been dominant in early Susiana as all the Susians mentioned in sargonic texts bore Semitic names»; Zadok 1991: 226). The Mesopotamian ambience at Susa extended to culture and religion, as reflected in the veneration of Akkadian and Sumerian deities, and the discovery there of Sumerian lexical texts and Akkadian incantations.

The name of the main Susian deity, Inšušinak (oldest occurrence in a mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC theonyms list from Abu Salabikh, in line 71: <sup>d</sup>NIN-šušinak; Alberti 1985: 8 and Potts D.T. 1999: 58), is not based on X language, but on Sumerian: *en* (lord) – *šušin* (Susa) – *ak* (Sumerian genitive ending) and means the lord of Susa.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, this theonym never constituted an important element in XLBA, its use in onomastics being greatly limited to Akkadian anthroponyms born by Susian inhabitants (Malbran-Labat 1996: 43).

The Naram-Sîn treaty, the most ancient X language cuneiform text known up to now, gives in this field a quite different picture through the listing of numerous deities in charge of the respect of the oath:<sup>22</sup>

1) *Binikir*, 2) the ‘celestial protectors’ (*Baha kikip*), 3) *Huban*, 4) A.MAL (transcribed *Amba* by Hinz, *Aba* by Quintana), 5) *Zit/Sit*, 6) *Nahiti* (probably *Nahhunte* according to Steve *et al.* 2002: col. 426), 7) NIN.NINNI.ERIN (Inšušinak), 8) *Simut*, 9) [*S*]i(?)*-ir-napir*, 10) [*H*]usa, 11) [*U*]k(?)*-gabna*, 12) [*I*]m(?)*-itki*(?), 13) ? ([*D*]è<sup>?</sup>-? for König), 14) [*T/D*]ulat, 15) *Hurbi*, 16) *Hutran*, 17) [*N*]in[ur]ta, 18) *Siašum*, 19) *Ma<sup>2</sup>-zi*-[?], -at according to Hinz], 20) <sup>NIN</sup>*Karak*, 21) *Nari/ude* (Narunde/Nahhunte for Hinz and Quintana), 22) *Gu[gu?]-muktir*, 23) *Humkat*, 24) *Ruhuišna*, 25) *Ruhusa*[?], -k for Hinz], 26) ?, 27) ?, 28) ?, 29) *Niarzina*, 30) *Lan/mbani*, 31) *Kirpisir/Kirwasir*, 32) *Hurbahir*, 33) *Ašhara* (Išhara according to Hinz), 34) *Nitutir*, 35) *Tiuk*, 36) *Simit-sarar*[a]r, 37) ?, 38) *Su*[?], -si- for Hinz]-*iba/ipba*, 39) ?-*ahaš* (-*ihšu* for Scheil; according to Hinz, n<sup>o</sup> 39 is not the name of a deity, the list containing only 38 theonyms); then *Napi-p* (40; which means gods in X language) is also mentioned.

<sup>21</sup> According to Steinkeller (2018), the name of the Susian deity is based on the theonym Inana.

<sup>22</sup> Transcriptions used here: Scheil 1911: 1-11, König 1965: 29, Hinz 1967: 91-95 and Quintana, <http://www.um.es/ipoa/cuneiforme/elamita/>.



Indeterminable theonyms	Sumero-Akkadian Theonyms	X language based theonyms (according to Zadok 1984)	Unknown origin theonyms
12, 13, 26, 27, 28, 37, 39	7, 17, 20 (Lambert W.G. 1991: 54 transcribed n° 4, 19 and 33 as Ilaba, Mazziat and Išhara, considering them to be Akkadian; same transcription for n°4 in Steve <i>et al.</i> 2002: col. 426)	1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 16, 18, 19 (Mazat ?), 21 (?), 24, 25, 31, 40	5, 9 (maybe XLB, because of the presence of <i>napi/god</i> ), 10, 11, 14, 15, 22, 23, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, 38

Tab. 1 Linguistic classification of the theonyms recorded in the Naram-Sîn treaty

The Naram-Sîn treaty appears in the Akkadian atmosphere of Susa, by its language and the invoked deities, as a short and unique insight into the cultural situation of the Iranian plateau up to then undocumented by any deciphered text. It confirms also the incomplete state of the Susian-Mesopotamian sources, the bulk of the immaterial information concerning the Iranian plateau seeming irremediably lost.

Finally, among the oriental leaders mentioned in the Akkadian inscriptions, very few have doubtlessly an XLBA, most of them being considered as uncertain / atypical by Zadok. Thus, at that time, only Hisibrasini, Luhišan and Sanam-Simut, all said to be of NIM, «bore definitely Elamite names [XLBA]» (Zadok 1991: 226), as well as perhaps ?-dahru of Šerihum (Zadok 1984 and 1991: 227).

### II)1.c Ur III / Šimaški dynasty period

In the Ur III texts, probably the period with the most precise information about the Iranian plateau, the XLBA holders constitute the most important non-semitic 'foreign' group in Mesopotamia (Zadok 1991: 225 and 1994: 31). They are attested (most of them probably only as messengers) in Lagaš/Girsu, Umma, Puzriš-Dagan, Nippur and Ur. During the Akkadian and Ur III periods, the plain dwellers bearing XLBA seemed to be quite well integrated in Mesopotamian societies, where they held a wide variety of functions: musicians, bakers, millers, farmers, shepherds but also scribes, judges or inspectors. Some of them had however servile status, probably as a consequence of wars, trade or gifts between plateau and plain leaders (Zadok 1994: 43-45).<sup>23</sup>

Documents found in Susa Ville Royale B, level 7 (end of Ur III period, at the time of Šu-Sîn and Ibbi-Sîn), preserved some 70 complete anthroponyms, among which from 59 to 93 % were Akkadian, Sumerian or Sumerian-Akkadian. Out of 17.2 % of potential XLBA, only 3 ( $\approx$  4 %) were doubtlessly based on X language: Igbuni, Simut and Puzur-Simut (the last one is however an Akkadian-X language hybrid). Numerous anthroponyms are indeterminable, while some cannot be considered as either Sumerian, Akkadian or X language based: Damhut-kimer, Gambizum and Ganda (De Graef 2005: 86-88).

<sup>23</sup> A text from Girsu/Lagaš, dated from Šulgi 46, enumerates three persons (two of them bear XLBA: Hanag/kunir and Zanapilir) as «donated slaves of Guriname [K/Girname is a leader of LÚ.SU / Šimaški]» (Steinkeller 1988 : 201-202).

Ur III documents, above all the Puzriš-Dagan archives and Lagaš messengers texts, mention XLBA holders connected with **Anšan** (Ḫundah[i]šer?, Adda- [?]ḫudah, Elakàr/Elaqar and [Tab]guri), **Adamdun** (Amanem, Elagarat and Meriš), **LÚ.SU / Šimaški** (Iabrat?, Addanapia, Addapuni, Gudumeriš, Ḫanag/kunir, Lulu, Meša/inunu, Pipra and Zanapilir), **Zabšali** (Šimaškean region; Indasu), **Duduli / Duddul** (Ḫulib/par), **Ḫurti** (Ḫubame/irsini), **Kimaš** (ḪunḪili?), **Zidanum / Zitanu** (Raši), **Mahili** (Šidagugur/Šedagugu), **Uli / Ulum** (Ḫunkibri), **Iab/pib/pum** (Indadabi?), **Ḫusan** (Ḫundašer?) and **Šazibi / Šaziga** (Še/il-ḫa?-ḫa? ?).

The onomastics of the Marhašeans, during the Akkadian (*in italics*) and Ur III periods includes relatively few certain XLBA (Vallat 1985: 52; «Most of the [...] Marhashites' names may not be strictly Elamite», according to Zadok 1991: 229), such as Libanuk/gšapaš (ensi of Marḫaši) and his messenger Lipanu/aškupī, which include both of them the X language word, *lib/pa*, meaning servant (they «are not straightforward Elamite but could perhaps originate from a related dialect» according to Zadok 1984: 52 and 1987: 15), some members of a ≈ 30 soldiers troop said to be from Marḫaši, active in Mesopotamia at the time of the Ur III dynasty (Da-Hunban, Mašhundahli/Mašhundalihi and Harišhundah; Steinkeller 1982: 262) and finally Panana whose name, although usually considered as 'atypical', is mentioned among the XLBA in Zadok 1984 (: 63).

Some Marhašeans also bear Akkadian anthroponyms (*Kun/mdupum*, Amur-DINGIR/Illum, Laqip), while others were called by «des noms se rattachant à une langue inconnue» (*Abalgamaš*, *Dagu*, *Sidgau* and *Ulul*) according to Glassner (2005: 12 and 14),<sup>24</sup> a hypothesis criticized by Steinkeller (2006: 10), who deems our comprehension of the X language to be far too limited, above all for the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, to draw such a conclusion.

## II)1.d Old Babylonian / Sukkalmah dynasty period

During the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC in Mesopotamia, XLBA holders, probably some messengers or ambassadors (Zadok 1994: 46-47), are attested at Ešnunna, Tuttub and Nerebtum in the Diyala; at Sippar, Dilbat, Lagaba and Babylon in central Mesopotamia; at Ur, Uruk and Lagaš in southern Mesopotamia and also at Mari. The kingdom of Larsa, under the reigns of Warad-Sin and Rīm-Sin (Zadok 1984: 4 and 1987: 6), presented then the most important concentration of XLBA holders outside the Iranian plateau.

In Susa, most of the population, including scribes, still bore Akkadian names.<sup>25</sup> Only the leaders (sukkalmah and sukkals), some senior civil servants and shepherds had X language based names (Scheil 1930: II;<sup>26</sup> Vallat 1985: 49; Lambert

<sup>24</sup> Sidgau and Abalgamaš were however said to be Hurrian names by Zadok (1993: 223).

<sup>25</sup> Differing from the Mesopotamian Akkadian names by the absence of any Amorite onomastic element (Lambert W.G. 1991: 56).

<sup>26</sup> «La population susienne serait devenue foncièrement sémitique, si on en juge par l'immense majorité des noms propres de personnes. Sans doute les princes et quelques

M. 1979: 25; Lambert W.G. 1991: 53 and 1992: 86; Amiet 1986: 118 and 150-151 and 1992: 85-86; Malbran-Labat 1996: 40; De Graef 2005: 88).<sup>27</sup> The highland leaders of Susa left in this town exclusively Sumerian and Akkadian inscriptions (except two fragmentary tablets of Siwe-palar-hupak written in X language; König 1965: n° 3) and seemed to adapt to the linguistic Semitic local substratum by the language, the titles and without changing the Susian pantheon.<sup>28</sup>

The 'Iranian' leaders (sukkalmaḥ and sukka) bear systematically XLBA. In the inscriptions they left in Susa, Tal-i Malyan/Anšan (Siwe-palar-hupak bricks) and Bushehr/Liyan (Simut-wartaš inscription), they claimed in their titles to rule over NIM/Elam/Elamtum, Susa, Šimaški, Anšan and Hatamti. The royal list of Susa (Scheil 1931), which dates from the Old Babylonian period, lists 12 kings of Awan and 12 kings Šimaš(k?)u (i.e. Šimaškians), who most of them bear XLBA (all according to Vallat 1985: 50 and 53 and Steve *et al.* 2002: col. 421, whereas Zadok considers Girname an atypical anthroponym and did not include several royal names in his XLBA list; cf. Zadok 1984).

The recently published Chogha Gavaneh archives (Abdi and Beckman 2007: 48 and 68-73), paleographically attributed to the Old Babylonian period, give information for a region up to now undocumented. The texts, all written in Akka-

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autres portent des noms anzanites, le panthéon présente aussi des divinités non-babyloniennes, mais le fond de la population paraît sémitique» (Scheil 1930: II).

<sup>27</sup> Lambert M. (1979: 25), to explain this situation, presupposed that an Akkadian linguistic layer was put down in Susa above a X language substratum: «sur une population de parler élamite s'est installée une classe de commerçants de parler akkadien». Lambert W.G. developed this theory in 1991 (: 57, accepted also by Malbran-Labat 1996 : 40): «at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium in response to the distress both before and after the Elamite raids, some of the population of the area around Lagaš had fled the district, and had moved to Elam [...] in such towns as Susa and never returned [... Susa would have received] a sudden insurge of Akkadian speakers at the beginning of the Isin-Larsa period which not only increased the population, but also gave its culture a more Babylonian tinge that it had borne previously».

This Susian situation of onomastic differences between the names of the leaders and those of the rest of the population is also known in Mitanni, in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, where the aristocracy bore Indo-Aryan names (as well as gods and the glossary linked to horse herding) and the ordinary people Hurrian ones.

<sup>28</sup> Vallat (1985: 51 and Steve *et al.* 2002: col. 451-452) invokes a 'semitisation' of the highland kingship. But it is possible that the semitic nature (semitisation if it was not the case previously) of the Sukkalmaḥ leadership only concerned Susa (in spite of few Akkadian inscribed bricks at Tal-i Malyan / Anšan, on which Siwe-palar-hupak qualified himself as sukkaḥ, sukka of NIM.MA-tim/Elamtum and Šimaški; Stolper 1982: 57), corresponding then more to a localized adaptation, to a flexible conception of the political and military control which did not require necessarily acculturation. This situation will evolve during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC with a linguistic breaking initiated by Humbanumena, whose chancellery will start to use systematically the X language in his official inscriptions (Malbran-Labat 1996: 43), and by the introduction in Susiana of a great number of highland deities (Napiriša notably) under the reign of his son Untaš-Napiriša (Vallat 1985: 49). This breaking could be interpreted as an identity affirmation, tension or crisis.

dian (with sumerograms), preserved out of 181 complete anthroponyms, 155 (86 %) Akkadian ones, 13 (7 %) Amorite ones, 12 (6 %) uncertain ones, and only one doubtlessly X language based: Zuzzu (cf. Zadok 1984: 183). From the syllabary and the calendar used in the texts, Beckman suggested seeing in Chogha Gavaneh, people «linked to the towns of the lower Diyala, and most likely to the kingdom of Ešnunna in particular». If this group was not just a literate enclave/colony established in a different ethno-linguistic environment (Kaneš type), the simplistic vision of a Sumerian-Akkadian plain opposed to an ‘Elamite’ highland may need some reconsideration.

Finally, Glassner (1996: 242, 2002a: 141 and 2002b: 344 and 350) noticed that, in spite of toponymy and anthroponomy suggesting that, at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, «the people of Dilmun [Failaka and Bahrein] was a Semitic one [Akkadian-Amorite]», the names of the local gods, Inzak and Meskilak, «semblent être [...] élamites».<sup>29</sup>

	MESOPOTAMIA	SUSA	IRANIAN PLATEAU AND PERSIAN GULF
EARLY DYNASTIC	<u>Ur, Lagaš/Girsu</u>	?	Uruaz (Kuku) ( <i>URU.A [Siku, Gunidu]?</i> )
AKKAD	<b>Lagaš/Girsu, Umma, Adab, Nippur, Gasur, Ešnunna</b>	<b>yes (small minority, 30/430 = 7 %)</b>	Dignitaries from ‘NIM’ (Sanam-Simut, Hisibrasini, Luhišan, <i>Emahsini</i> )? -dahru of Šerihum; the toponym Huhunuri; some kings of Awan, according to the Royal list of Susa.
UR III / ŠIMAŠKI	<b>Lagaš/Girsu, Umma, Puzriš-Dagan, Nippur, Ur</b>	<b>yes (small minority), from 4 % to 17 % in the texts of the Ville Royale B.7 level</b>	<u>Anšan, Marhaši, LÚ.SU (/ Šimaški), Zabšali, Hur-ti, Adamdun, Kimaš, Zidanum/Zitanu, Mahili, Uli/Ulum, Iab/pib/pum, Husan, Šazibi/Šaziga, Duduli/Duddul; the toponym Huhnuri; some šimaš(k)ean kings. according to the Royal list of Susa.</u>
BEGINNING OF THE 2 <sup>ND</sup> MILLENNIUM BC	<b>Larsa, Lagaš, Ešnunna, Ur, Uruk, Mari</b>	<b>yes (small minority: the leaders, some senior civil servants and the shepherds)</b>	highland leaders (sukkalmaḥ and sukkaš) said to rule over ‘NIM’, Susa, Šimaški, Anšan and Hatamti; 1 XLBA out of 181 anthroponyms known in Chogha Gavaneh; 2 X

<sup>29</sup> Zadok (1984: 56-57) also considers Inzak as an X language based theonym. See also Vallat 1983.

			language based theonyms in Failaka/Bahrein (?); Simut-wartaš (XLBA) inscription in Boucherh/Liyan.
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Tab. 2 Summary of the XLBA holders (and X language speakers?) geographic distribution, depending on periods (in italics: uncertain XLBA; in bold text: rather representative information; underlined text: partial information; normal font: very incomplete information)

**II)2** If onomastics really reflects the linguistic situation, only information concerning Mesopotamia and Susa from the Akkadian to the Old Babylonian period may be considered as representative of what was going on then in these regions.

**II)2.a** During the Early Dynastic, Lagaš/Girsu archives are probably over-represented in comparison with the other Mesopotamian city-states where XLBA holders should probably also be present, even though Lagaš/Girsu, as the easternmost Mesopotamian city, had close ties with the Iranian plateau and functioned, like Susa, as an intermediary between the plain and the highlands.<sup>30</sup> As soon as the end of the Early Dynastic, XLBA holders were consequently probably attested in all southern Mesopotamia, one of which coming from Uruaz (in Khuzistan?).

**II)2.b** The onomastic/linguistic situation in Early Dynastic Susa, although completely unknown since cuneiform writing had not yet been adopted there, should probably not differ from what is documented afterwards: a constant minority presence of XLBA holders (X language speakers?), too few to challenge the general cultural membership of the city to the Akkadian sphere. This linguistic duality (Akkadian majority / X language minority), perceived a long time ago,<sup>31</sup> is consequently attested in Susa since the earliest data available during the Akkadian period.

From this linguistic / cultural / ethnic duality, established through textual sources, Amiet wanted to graft a cultural / ethnic alternation concept, considering the history of Susa, from its foundation around 4000 BC, according to a cyclic swinging between the Mesopotamian and highland influence spheres.<sup>32</sup>

Here is how Amiet (1986 and 1992) interprets the history of Susa (in Middle Chronology):

<sup>30</sup> According to Schrakamp (2015: 233), «Girsu therewith displays the most far-reaching geographical scope of all Presargonic and Sargonic archives».

<sup>31</sup> Dieulafoy 1893: 55-57 (recognition of a bipartite population, ‘un double peuple’: «D’où venaient les Susiens de la plaine et les Anzanites de la montagne ?»); Scheil 1901 (foreword): «Le dualisme ethnique en Elam [linguistic duality in Susa] est un fait certain».

<sup>32</sup> Amiet 1992: 85: «Le thème de l’alternance lié à la dualité de l’Elam [of Susa] est donc illustré pour commencer par l’archéologie des hautes époques, puis dans la seconde moitié du 3<sup>ème</sup> millénaire par les données historiques».

	Mesopotamian sphere	Highland sphere
4000		Susa I
3500	Susa II	
3000		Susa III
2500		middle of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium BC uncertain
2300	Akkadian period	
2150		Puzur/Kutir-Inšušinak
2100	Ur III	
2000		Šimaški/Sukkalmah dynasty(/ies)

Tab. 3 P. Amiet's interpretation of the history of Susa

But this interpretation probably mixes three different, not to say incompatible, kinds of information:<sup>33</sup> material (archaeological) assemblages, political control<sup>34</sup> and linguistic / cultural membership.

material assemblage	political control	linguistic/cultural ('ethnic') membership
Susa I: local and plateau <sup>35</sup>	?	?
Susa II (Uruk): Mesopotamia <sup>36</sup>	?	?
Susa III (Proto-'Elamite'): plateau and Mesopotamia <sup>37</sup>	?	?
Mid 3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium: Mesopotamia, Zagros, Fars and eastern Iran <sup>38</sup>	? (local ?) <sup>39</sup>	?

<sup>33</sup> On that topic, see Desset 2014b: 14-15.

<sup>34</sup> The political/military control sphere of a state (or a group of persons), may be reduced to the area in which it deducts taxes/wages/tributes. Some states, in order to perpetuate this control and to get rid of its necessary military maintenance costs, tried to use cultural assimilation to eliminate possible justifications/excuses for any difference affirmation likely to lead to revolts/rebellions. Susiana, culturally Akkadian, under the political domination of the highlands since the Šimaški/Sukkalmah dynasty (around 2000 BC in Middle Chronology) never suffered such an assimilation, at least until the 14/13<sup>th</sup> century BC with Humbanumena (language) and his son Untaš-Napiriša (religion).

<sup>35</sup> Amiet 1986: 33-40, Tallon 1987: 37-38 and Voigt and Dyson 1992: 132: local and Luristan (Hakalan/Parchinah), Deh Luran and Fars (Tal-i Bakun) related ceramic; local and Luristan, plateau and northern Mesopotamia (Tepe Gawra) related glyptic.

<sup>36</sup> Amiet 1986: 47 and 52-63, Tallon 1987: 42-45 and Voigt and Dyson 1992: 132-133: Mesopotamian (urukean) related ceramic, glyptic (iconography), statuary, use of cylinder-seals, bulla, numeral tablets and decorative nails; local architecture.

<sup>37</sup> Amiet 1986: 91-104, Tallon 1987: 47-54 and Voigt and Dyson 1992 : 133-134: proto-'Elamite' writing (plateau); Mesopotamian and plateau (middle/late Baneš) related ceramic; Mesopotamian, plateau (proto-'Elamite') and piedmont styles glyptic; plateau related architecture (Desset 2014b).

Mesopotamia, eastern Iran / central Asia and Indus <sup>40</sup>	Akkad (Mesopotamia)	Akkadian majority / X language minority
Mesopotamia and plateau / eastern Iran <sup>41</sup>	Puzur/Kutir Inšušinak (local ?)	Akkadian majority / X language minority
Mesopotamia and plateau / eastern Iran <sup>42</sup>	Ur III (Mesopotamia)	Akkadian majority / X language minority
Mesopotamia, plateau / eastern Iran and Persian Gulf <sup>43</sup>	Šimaški/Sukkalmaḥ (plateau)	Akkadian majority / X language minority

Tab. 4 Dissociated interpretation of the history of Susa

1) Material assemblage: it seems there was a Mesopotamia / Iranian plateau alternation during the Susa I, II and III periods. From 2600/2500 BC, Susa was henceforth characterized by a Mesopotamian-type material assemblage and the presence of eastern artefacts, probably there thanks to exchange (trade).

2) Political control: alternation of the political control over Susa between Mesopotamian, highland and local (cf. Puzur/Kutir-Inšušinak) states, at least since the Akkadian period. The advent of the Šimaški/Sukkalmaḥ dynasty may be consid-

<sup>38</sup>Amiet 1986: 122-129, Tallon 1987: 55-59 and Voigt and Dyson 1992: 134: Mesopotamia, Zagros (Godin III.6: cf. Henrickson 1984: 104 and Quenet 2008: 229; Baba Jan IV: cf. Carter 1984: 134) and Fars (Tepe Jalyan) related ceramic; Mesopotamian related writing (cylinder-seal) and statuary; Zagros/Luristan and Mesopotamia related metallurgy; local and Mesopotamian glyptic; local bituminous vessels and eastern Iranian stone (alabaster and chlorite) vases.

<sup>39</sup>The political independence of Susa towards Mesopotamian cities is probable at the end of the Early Dynastic period. Eanatum mentions indeed, in the Stele of the Vultures (Frayne 2008: E1.9.3.1, rev. vii 3'), that he defeated Susa, which means Susa confronted him and was consequently politically independent (from Lagaš at least). Perhaps this conclusion could be related to a presargonic seal found in Susa (Amiet 1972: n° 1467), referring to a (local and independent?) ensi: «Šulkagina, sahar (squire?) of the ensi», if that seal was produced in Susa however (and not imported).

<sup>40</sup>Carter 1984: 135, Amiet 1986: 142-144, Tallon 1987: 59-62, Voigt and Dyson 1992: 134 and Potts D.T. 1999: 116 and 120: Mesopotamian (cuneiform) writing, ceramic and glyptic; several objects from the Indus valley (weights, beads and seals), eastern Iran / central Asia (beads) and the Persian gulf.

<sup>41</sup>Amiet 1986: 144-145, Tallon 1987: 61 and Voigt and Dyson 1992: 134: Mesopotamian type statuary used by Puzur/Kutir-Inšušinak; Mesopotamian (cuneiform) and highland (linear 'Elamite') writings.

<sup>42</sup>Amiet 1986: 145-148, Tallon 1987: 66-69 (who does not distinguish the Ur III and Šimaški/Sukkalmaḥ dated Susian materials) and Voigt and Dyson 1992: 134-135: Mesopotamian writing, statuary, ceramic and religious architecture (Inšušinak and Ninhursag temples built by Šulgi); eastern Iranian / central Asian axes, stone vessels, compartmented seals, jewels and small columns.

<sup>43</sup>Amiet 1986: 145, 148-150 and 152-154 and Tallon 1987: 66-69: Mesopotamian writing, ceramic, glyptic and statuary; eastern Iranian axes, Persian Gulf and 'Anšanite' type glyptic, local bituminous vessels, highland iconography.



ered as a stabilization of the political situation in Susiana during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.

3) Linguistic/cultural membership: a **constant duality**, at least since the Akkadian period, fits better to the currently available data than an ‘ethnic’ alternation hypothesis (Amiet).

As the Susian case shows, these three types of information often vary independently. Even though the linguistic / cultural membership and the material assemblage seem to follow a parallel evolution since the Akkadian period with a Mesopotamian type locally produced material assemblage and an Akkadian onomastic/linguistic majority, there should not be made any correlation between them, nor any systematic reconstruction for the 4<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC proposing a linguistic / cultural alternation from the material assemblage evolution example.<sup>44</sup> This last position cannot be proven (nor the contrary) and is based on the (perhaps dogmatic) prejudice, according to which these fields are independent,<sup>45</sup> as the cases of the Assyrian traders living in Kaneš (Akkadian from an ethnic / linguistic point of view, but using a local Anatolian material assemblage in their houses<sup>46</sup>) or the ceramic continuity in southern Iran before and after the Alexander the Great political and military episode,<sup>47</sup> may illustrate.

**II)2.c** As the Mesopotamian textual information about the Iranian plateau is in principle distorted, the Ur III documents seem to differ from the other periods by a deeper (or less limited) consideration of the identity subtleties of the highland inhabitants. The Ur III texts attested the greatest number of eastern toponyms, Mesopotamian scribes not contenting themselves any more to write

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<sup>44</sup> Potts D.T. (1999: 111) speaks of «Akkadianization of the native population» during the Akkadian period in Susa, which cannot be proven as well as «la langue akkadienne s’implanta [in Susa during the Akkadian period], supplantant vers la fin du 3<sup>ème</sup> millénaire l’élamite, au moins dans l’administration» (Malbran-Labat 1995: 17).

In the absence of any deciphered texts, there is no way to determine the language(s) spoken in Susa before the Akkadian period, and consequently to consider this epoch in Susa as a linguistic ‘akkadianization’ one (meaning that before, Akkadian language would not have been so important in Susa). Actually, I would think, from the constant linguistic Akkadian majority attested since the sargonic period in Susa, that it was probably the case before, considering the language used in Susa as a historical phenomenon characterized by a ‘longue durée’ type evolution speed.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Roaf (2005: 314): «In archaeology, there are so many plausible reasons for variations in material culture apart from ethnicity, such as trade, economic contacts, political control, social position, way of life, function, etc... that, without the assistance of written texts, it is difficult to distinguish those variations that reflect ethnicity rather than those that reflect other aspects of society».

<sup>46</sup> «Seules les archives retrouvées dans ces maisons permettent d’identifier l’origine ethnique de leur propriétaire [...], leurs maisons, de même que leur mobilier et leurs poteries, sont d’un style purement anatolien» (Michel 2001: 29).

<sup>47</sup> Late plain ware produced and used during the Achaemenid, Seleucid and Parthian political periods (Boucharlat 2003: 62 and Petrie *et al.* 2006: 182).



only 'NIM' but specifying this concept by a distinct toponym (NIM Anšan, NIM Šimaški, NIM Marḥaši, ...).

The onomastics of the people coming from toponyms supposedly situated on the Iranian plateau is far from homogenous. They bore mainly Akkadian and X language based names, some of them having also Sumerian, Hurrian and perhaps currently unknown language(s) related names. If onomastics really reflects the linguistic situation, the Iranian plateau (as well as the Mesopotamian plain) was then characterized by multilingualism.

In view of this amorphous vision of the geographical distribution of these languages, there must be put forward the concept of regionally dominant (but in no way exclusive) languages (see fig. 2). Sumerian and Akkadian probably had this status in the Mesopotamian plain (including Susa) since at least 3000 BC, the south-western part of the plateau probably being dominated by X language (which benefited also from a western 'glacis' in Susa and southern Mesopotamia), and at one point the Hurrian language perhaps had such a role in the north-western part of the Iranian plateau.<sup>48</sup> Beyond this western strip, the situation cannot currently be determined, with still unknown language(s) perhaps waiting to be discovered.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Probable prevailing language in the north-western part of the Iranian plateau, from the association in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC of Hurrian toponyms and anthroponyms with the region sometimes called Šubur/Subartu, generally designating the northern and north-eastern Mesopotamian fringes.

During this period, Hurrian anthroponyms holders are attested in Urkeš/Tell Mozan, Nawar/Tell Brak, Nuzi/Yorghana Tepe, Tepe Chagar Bazar, Urbilum/Arbela, Ebla/Tell Mardikh, Nineveh, Mari, Nippur, Umma, Girsu/Lagaš but also Azuhinum, Gumaraši, Harši, Hibilat, Kummi, Likri, Mardaman, Simanum, Simurum, Šašru, Šerši, Šetirsa, Šuruthum, Talmuš, Ulli, Uršu, or even Marḥaši (Michalowski 1986: 138-139 and 147, Zadok 1991: 228, Potts T.F. 1994: 21-23, Salvini 1998 and 2000 and Quenet 2008: 222-224).

<sup>49</sup> The special features of the Gutian kings' names (in particular frequent endings in *-gan/-kan* or *-lag/-lak*) seem to indicate a distinct and independent 'Gutian' language.

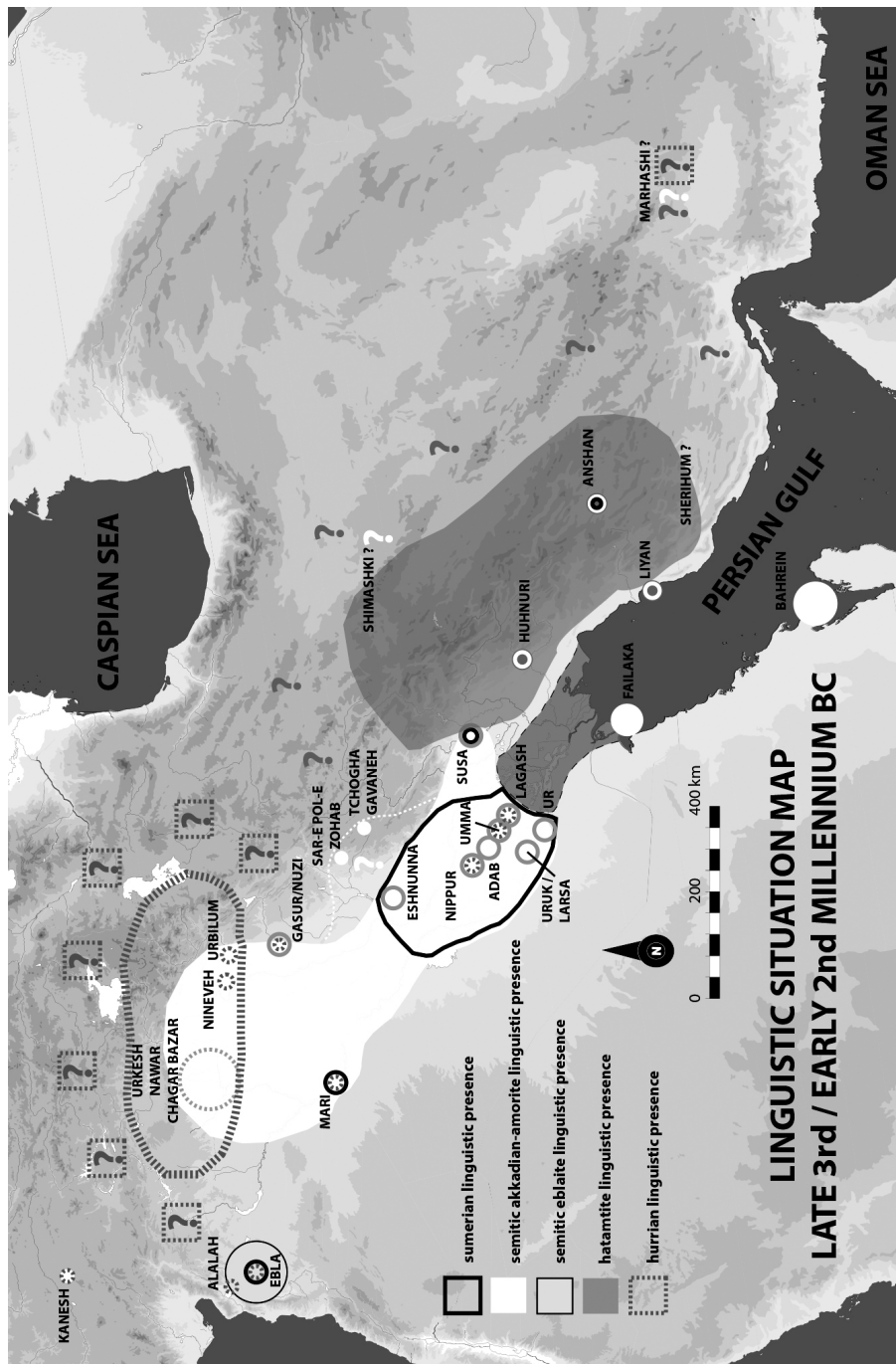


Fig. 2 Linguistic situation map, ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> / early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC

## Conclusion

Hatamti is the most ancient toponym known in X language (except Akkad in the Naram-Sîn treaty), attested since at least Sirukduh/Siwe-palar-huhpak's time, and it seems to correspond to the auto-designation of the territory occupied by this language's speakers. I consequently suggest, in spite of anachronism risks but in favour of an 'autogenous' label, to replace the glottonym 'Elamite' with Hatamtite.<sup>50</sup> This designation is only relevant to the linguistic field (Hatamtite language) and its derivatives, anthroponomy (XLBA are Hatamtite names) and toponomy, and should be carefully used to qualify words such as culture, civilization or even period or site, and never be applied to ceramic, glyptic and generally to any archaeological material.

Elamite spin-off labels should be also revised, such as proto-'Elamite' and linear 'Elamite' writings which are, as everybody is aware of it, only convenient lesser evils since they presuppose a language while these writings are still undeciphered. Since these labels belong to the discipline tradition, and above all, as they are not 'dangerous' since they were never considered too seriously (which was not the case for Elam and Elamite language), they could perhaps be called henceforth PE and LE writings,<sup>51</sup> using the abbreviation to 'hide' their literal meaning.

Finally, it is proposed to epigraphists to stop translating systematically the cuneiform sign NIM as Elam (which gives the impression that we know what the Mesopotamian scribes were meaning, i.e. the modern idea of Elam) and keep in the translation NIM.

All these labels are, of course, only words, but they are nonetheless very important. Indeed, while many of the reasons which led to their construction and current prevalence are now forgotten, they were and are still the conceptual bases on which numerous historical constructions are built, influencing or even determining our mental representations and collective imagination about the populations living in south-western Iran in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> millennia BC.

V. Scheil was writing in 1900 (MDP 2 foreword): «Ici commence l'histoire de l'Elam». Let's hope it now can be said, with all the respect due to this great scholar: here ends the history of Elam.

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<sup>50</sup> Other glottonyms could have been proposed from the main Iranian plateau toponyms where XLBA holders were attested during the Ur III period (best documented one), such as Anšan, Šimaški or Marḥaši. Therefore Anšanite, Šimaškean, Marhašean or Anšanian-Šimaškian-Marhašean (ASM) could have been considered too as valid glottonymic labels.

<sup>51</sup> Desset 2012: 1.

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