

ARAH (Heb. *'ārah*)

1. The oldest son of Ulla of the tribe of Asher (1 Chr. 7:39).
2. An Israelite whose descendants (775, according to Ezra 2:5; 652 at Neh. 7:10) returned from the Exile at the time of Zerubbabel. He is probably the same as the Arah mentioned at Neh. 6:18, whose son Shecaniah was the father-in-law of Tobiah the Ammonite.

ARAM (Heb. *'ārām*) (**PERSON**)

1. One of the sons of Shem and grandson of Noah; eponymous ancestor of the Arameans (Gen. 10:22-23; 1 Chr. 1:17).
2. The son of Kemuel and grandson of Abraham's brother Nahor (Gen. 22:20-21).
3. A son of Shemer of the tribe of Asher (1 Chr. 7:34).
4. An ancestor of Jesus (Matt. 1:3-4; Gk. *Arām*), often rendered "Ram" in English versions (cf. Luke 3:33; NRSV "Arni").

ARAM (Heb. *'ārām*) (**PLACE**)

The territory of the Arameans, comprising the area from the Ḥabur triangle in the East, to the middle Euphrates region, through most of Syria, and south to the Beqa' Valley, Damascus, and the Golan Heights. In some occurrences Aram refers to this area in general or at least to large parts of it (most clearly in 1 Kgs. 10:29 = 2 Chr. 1:17, where Solomon trades with the kings of Aram), but at other times to specific components (e.g., Judg. 10:6). In Amos 9:7 it is a general designation for the people of the region.

Use of the term corresponds to the fact that Aram never became a large unified state, but rather consisted of various entities. Only in the late 9th century B.C.E., under the leadership of Hazael, did Aram-Damascus dominate most of Assyria and even rival that power. The regional division of Aram is reflected in the compound names designating the area, the main city, or the local dynasty:

Paddan-aram: Region along the road (Akk. *paddanu*) through the Ḥabur triangle, to Haran at the Balikh River, and on to the Euphrates.

Aram-naharaim: Western part of Paddan-

aram (cf. Gen. 24:10) and areas along the great bend of the Euphrates (cf. Deut. 23:4[MT 5]; Judg. 3:8). In Num. 23:7; Judg. 3:10; Hos. 12:12(13) the general term Aram designates this area.

Most states of these two regions were named after the ruling dynasty or the capital, e.g., Gozan (2 Kgs. 17:6; 19:12), Haran (cf. Gen. 11:31; 29:4), Pethor (cf. Num. 22:5; Deut. 23:4[5]); Bit-Adini (cf. 2 Kgs. 19:12; Amos 1:5).

Aram-zobah, also called Aram-beth-rehob (after the founding dynasty): Comprising the Beqa' Valley of Lebanon, stretching partly along the Orontes, down to Hamath, and into the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, possibly also to the Euphrates (cf. 2 Sam. 8:3, 9). In the 10th century Aram-zobah became part of Aram-Damascus, but the name Zobah is still found in Assyrian lists from ca. 700 as the name of an Assyrian province in the Beqa'.

Aram-Damascus: According to 1 Kgs. 11:23-24, some time after David's defeat of Aram-zobah, Rezon seized power at Damascus. Damascus thus became Aramean much as Jerusalem had become Israelite through David. Aram-Damascus became the most powerful state in southern Syria. In the 9th and 8th centuries it initiated and led coalitions against Assyria. In the last third of the 9th and into the early 8th century, Aram-Damascus fought and captured parts of Israel, notably the Golan Heights (cf. 2 Kgs. 10:32-33 and the Tell Dan inscription). Under the reign of Hazael (ca. 842-800) Aram-Damascus became an empire dominating large parts of Syria and Palestine. Hazael even crossed the Euphrates to attack Assyria. Assyria recaptured Damascus in 732. Aram-Damascus represents the Aramean power in the OT, where it is often simply called Aram.

Aram-maacah and Geshur: Small states in Transjordan, between Mt. Hermon and the Yarmouk River, mentioned only in the OT. Aram-maacah sided with Aram-zobah against David (2 Sam. 10:6, 8). Geshur was apparently S of Aram-maacah. Maacah, daughter of Geshur's king Talmi, married David and was the mother of Absalom (2 Sam. 3:3; cf. 13:37-38). The Aramean character of Aram-maacah and Geshur is disputed, but in 2 Sam. 15:8 Geshur is explicitly called a part of Aram.

The Aramean state of Sam'al/Ya'udi, modern Zinjirli in southeastern Turkey, ca. 100 km. (62 mi.) W of the bend of the Euphrates, has yielded important documents but is not mentioned in the OT.

Bibliography. S. C. Layton, "Old Aramaic Inscriptions," *BA* 51 (1988): 172-89; P. E. Dion, "Syro-Palestinian Resistance to Shalmaneser III in the Light of New Documents," *ZAW* 107 (1995): 482-89; N. Na'aman, "Hazael of Amqi and Hadadezer of Beth-rehob," *UF* 27 (1995): 381-94.

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