

THE POSTING OF LETTERS WITH DIVINE MESSAGES

Jack M. SASSON

The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Among documents from ancient Mesopotamia, the so-called “prophetic” texts recovered from the palace of Mari have commanded significant attention ever since Georges Dossin published the first examples in 1948 and 1950.¹ Retrospectively, it can be said that except for the Code of Hammurabi no single body of cuneiform material from a limited period and place has received as many monographic treatments as this particular corpus.

In letters that they composed and sent directly to the king, the Mari elite embedded “prophetic” utterances they heard from a broad variety of dreamers, visionaries, or messengers – for convenience, let us term them “prophets.” As it eventually proved to be the case, the divine message these elite recorded seems not to have reached the king directly from the mouth of its first human transmitter. It is still at issue whether or not those charged with transporting the letter were to deliver an oral, perhaps also expanded, formulation of its content.

The individuals who communicated the divine message could do just that, adding nothing to what they were asked to transmit. In such cases, an “envelope” bracketing the message could be very terse, stating that such-and-such a person – either by name or merely by title – came by with a message that follows. Optionally, the writer may offer details on where and when the divine message was received or was brought to the writer’s attention. The “envelope” could end abruptly with something like, “this is what X said to me, and I have written to my lord.” In some instances, however, the “envelope” carried the writer’s reaction to the message and offered precise advice on how the king should respond to it. Not uncommonly, the writer alerted the king to hair and garment samples accompanying the letter that were drawn on the body of the prophet.

Over the half-century since the first dissemination of Mari “prophecies” there were to be two more scholarly outbursts around the topic : early in the seventies, after Dossin published a good number of letters with prophetic contents in a volume devoted to the correspondence of elite women (*Archives royales de Mari*, X), and in our own days, after the appearance of J.-M. Durand’s 1988 improved and expanded edition of the collection.² In the interval, something momentous occurred in the study of the Mari archives. Thanks primarily to the work of Maurice Birot, to whom we are doing homage in these pages, the chronology of the reign of Zimri-Lim was to a large extent retrieved, allowing us to place in a correct order hundreds of documents bearing specific dates.³ The same can be said about many undated

¹“Une révélation du dieu Dagan à Terqa,” *RA* 42, 1948, 125-134 (= *Recueil Georges Dossin*, 1983, 169-179) ; “Une tablette inédite de Mari intéressante pour l’histoire ancienne du prophétisme sémitique,” pp. 103-110 in *Studies... Th. Robinson*, 1950.

²G. Dossin, *La Correspondance féminine* ; copies, 1967 ; transliteration and translation (with A. Finet), 1978 ; J.-M. Durand, *Archives Épistolaires de Mari*, I/1 [Archives Royales de Mari, XXVI/1, 1988]. A chronological review of the study of Mari prophecy can be found within L. Ramlot’s excellent and detailed presentation, “Prophétisme,” *Dictionnaire de la Bible, supplément*, 7, 1972, 812-1222. (See especially 884-896.)

³“Données nouvelles sur la chronologie du règne de Zimri-Lim,” *Syria* 55, 1978, 333-343.

documents, especially when they alluded to events with an already established time-frame. Moreover, the recovery of a sequence of year-dates has allowed us to place the careers of major Mari personalities on a more realistic evolution. Armed with a more accurate narrative of events and a fuller appreciation of the life of individuals, we can now offer a more reasonable explanation of the drama that unfolded during Mari's final decades as a major ancient near eastern power.⁴

Let me sharpen the implication of this shift in focus by restating the analytic framework for inspecting a document with prophetic contents. Let us simplify matters reasonably by establishing that written documents quoting divine messages, *in their own time and context* (ie, without submitting them to our own perspective), functioned within three domains of comprehension: that of the bearer of a divine message, that of a writer of a letter recording it, and that of the receiver of such a letter (most often the king) – each with its own contexts of time, place, and circumstance.⁵ During the first two phases of studies into “Mari Prophecy,” the accent was almost wholly on the second of these three domains, that of the transmitter of a divine message, which also meant that of the divine message itself. But because during these phases a primary goal for inspecting the Mari evidence was the comparison with Hebrew prophecy, it was felt necessary to create a parallel by investigating the links among Mari prophets, their gods, and the king. However, because we lacked then (and largely still lack) testimony on the Mari king's reaction to the divine messages, this avenue of research was not particularly productive. Studied in detail, although admittedly with different degree of discernment (consequently, also of persuasiveness), were :

- The **native vocabulary** applied to the phenomenon : *egerrûm, ittum, têrtum, wûrtum*, etc.
- The **typology of the phenomenon** : analyses of genre (oracles, dreams, visions, apocalypics – spontaneous or induced) ; of characteristic vocabulary, phrases, and idioms (*amârum* [for visions], *šuttam naqâlum/amârum* [for dreams], *namhûm* [akin to ecstasy], *tebûm, qabûm, šasûm*, [as prologue to delivering a message, singly or in combination])
- The **titles** applied to the bearers of divine messages : now including *âpilum/âpiltum, assinum, muhhûm/muhhûtum, nabûm, qammâtum/qabbâtum, malikum*) ; distinction between such personnel and diviners (*bârûm*), between spontaneous versus induced revelation, between conscious (of contents, of mission) versus unconscious response to message
- The **divinities involved** : gender, status in pantheon, shrines, etc.
- The **style of messages** : phraseology, imagery, rhetoric, and frequency (repetitive or complementary) of the divine messages themselves
- The **symbolism accompanying its delivery** : emulation or miming the contents/goals of message (as when an ecstatic devours a living sheep)
- The **methods of testing or validating experience** : submitting to divination, with or without symbols drawn on divine messenger (hair tuft, garment fringes).

Among the more startling conclusions were that Mari personnel made no value distinctions among prophecies, dreams, or visions in that none of them was deemed applicable unless confirmed or validated through divination, a time tested method that could also enhance the propitious and deflect the sinister in a given prognostication. Thus, from the perspective of a Mari official, the vehicle a god chose to deliver messages was not as crucial an element as recent scholarship on the topic makes it seem. True, labels such as *âpilum/âpiltum, muhhûm/muhhûtum* and the like were attached to individuals who were vessels for a divine message ; but people of diverse age, profession, status, and gender – male, female,

⁴As an example of the difference it makes to have this fuller vision of events, compare the studies written on the fate of Mari princesses before (eg. J. Sasson, “Biographical Notices on Some Royal Ladies from Mari,” *JCS* 25, 1973, 59-78) and after recovery of that chronology (eg., J.-M. Durand, “Trois études sur Mari,” *MARI* 3 : 127-79 ; “Les dames du palais de Mari à l'époque du Royaume de Haute-Mésopotamie,” *MARI* 4, 1985, 385-436 ; B. Lafont, “Les filles de roi de Mari,” in *RAI* 33, 1987, 113-121).

⁵We will not worry about the language of dictation, to and from Akkadian, and the scribe who may have been charged with effecting their translation. I may just note here that the issue of primary language in which the prophecies was orally delivered remains subject to further research. I had once assumed that it was in Amorite and that, therefore, it was the task of the scribes to translate what they heard into Akkadian and back into Amorite what they wrote. I am no longer certain of this. It is very probable that the Mari elite spoke Akkadian and Amorite, but that all but its specialized scribes knew how to write Akkadian only. (That there were Hurrian and Sumerian specialists goes without saying.) I believe this is the case because the plays-on-words that are *de rigueur* in these prophecies seems to function well within Akkadian.

and berdache (*assinum*) – could also be entrusted with the same. As far as can be gathered, while prophets did not contact the king directly, dreamers or visionaries could. The king may have had his diviners examine the authenticity of a report and, if sinister, establish steps to ward off its consequences. This could be done by asking the diviners to judge on whether or not it was indeed a dream either through criteria internal to the dream or via tangibles sent directly by a dreamer (such as specimens of hair and garment).⁶ In the case of prophecies, however, the king must also worry about the reliability of the transmitters themselves, thereby complicating the process of ascertaining the truth behind the message.

While dreams and visions sent to the king by a third party fared no differently than prophecies, it was otherwise when dreamers themselves posted to the king what they saw. True, the assessment of such reports could be complicated when dreams follow a chinese box construction, in which the dreamer sees a person, sometimes a ghost, who then quotes another person's statement (XXVI : 227 ; somewhat similar, XXVI : 233). Nevertheless, a twofold convention was observed : first, divination was necessary to establish that the dream was indeed seen (see XXVI : 229) ; and second, however obvious a dream's interpretation may be, it was not the dreamer's task to do so. Thus, when Zimri-Lim himself had a dream, he communicated it to a specialist who wrote back, "The dream is very auspicious for my lord. On the road, my lord should either offer sacrifice to Annunitum at Samanum or touch a male sheep so that it could be taken and sacrificed (there in his behalf). My lord should do as it suits him." (XXVI : 224).

As of this writing, we are in the third phase of Mari prophecy studies. And while there will always be room for analyses that continue to focus on Mari prophecies purely phenomenologically or for comparative purposes,⁷ the more enriching results will come from those essays that can chart fuller contexts for the prophetic statement and can suggest a plausible reaction to them by extrapolating from ensuing palace activities. By constructing a political biography of Zimri-Lim's reign as well as a prosopography for the relevant medium and by holding a nuanced appreciation of prophecy among the other avenues for communicating with the divine (extispicy, birth omnia, celestial observations, and so forth), it has been possible for researchers such as Lafont, Durand, and Charpin to fulfill many aspects of this program.⁸

Yet, because these measures tend to privilege historical inquiry when explaining the origin of a prophecy and assessing the impact it may have had on the king, they do not always explore fully the interplay between a prophecy and those who are asked to communicate it to the king. I propose to focus this essay on those who recorded a prophecy for delivery to the king, giving them a first crack at reacting to the messages that are engrossing us so much today. In the analytic scheme advanced above, this is the second of the three comprehension domains. To do so in a manageable way, I have allocated the prophecies in three tables, A-C, collecting letters posted from Mari, the provinces, and abroad.⁹

⁶Lest it may seem odd that diviners are called upon to decide whether or not there was a dream when people report having one, in our own days psychologists/psychiatrists are called upon to decide whether or not memory of a childhood's sexual abuse is based on fact. The case involving Chicago's Cardinal Bernardin is by now notorious (a young man eventually confesses that his false memory of being sexually abused by the prelate was developed during psychiatric treatment). At Mari, a diviner can decide that a dream was not seen, simply because it occurred at a specific period of the night (XXVI : 142 and see below). We do know why Asqudum decided to take so seriously the occurrence of a dream occurring to General Yasim-Dagan that he had it tested by diviners (XXVI : 82).

⁷K. van der Toorn, "L'Oracle de victoire comme expression prophétique au proche-Orient ancien," *Revue Biblique*, 94, 1987, 63-97 ; S. Parker, "Official Attitudes Towards Prophecy at Mari and in Israel," *Vetus Testamentum*, 1993, 43 : 50-68 ; A. Lemaire, forthcoming, in the Actes of the 1993 Paris colloque, "Mari, Ebla et les Hourrites."

⁸B. Lafont, "Le roi de Mari et les prophètes du dieu Adad," *RA* 78, 1984, 7-18 ; D. Charpin, "Le contexte historique et géographique des prophéties dans les textes de Mari," *Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 23, 1992, 21-31 ; J.-M. Durand : "Le mythologème du combat entre le dieu de l'orage et la Mer en Mésopotamie," *MARI* 7, 1993, 41-61. The issue of the *Bulletin* cited above also includes other studies on prophecy in Israel, Egypt, and Mesopotamia.

⁹The list is based on the letters discovered at Mari. For the evidence of the administrative documents see Durand's extensive listing in XXVI/1, 377ff. In the Tables, "ZLa," "ZLb," and "ZLc" in the "DATE" columns refer, respectively, to "after," "before," "circa." Women and female deities are given as bold italic. I hope that the remaining abbreviations are self-evident. Needless to say, there are may other schemes by which to allocate the same information.

text	date	from	in	to	re :	messenger	type	at	deity	speaker	symbols	to do
26 :200	ZLc2'	Ahum	Mari	ZL	-vs Benjamin.	<i>muhhutum</i>	<i>têrtam nadānum</i>		<i>Annunitum?</i>	<i>muhhutum</i>	yes	not stated
26 :201	ZLb2'	BahdiLim	Mari	ZL	reporting	sends Ahum's letter + hair/fringes of the unnamed <i>muhhutum</i> (200 or 214)						
26 :233	ZLc3'?	IturAsdu	Mari-prv	ZL	inform Dagan! (HIST. REVIEW)	MalikDagan lú Šakka	vision in dream	é	DaganTerqa	dialogue	no-"lú šū taklu"	<i>warkat š. liprus šanit. :tell God</i>
26 :226	ZL?	[IturAsdu?]	Mari-prv?	?	agriculture	lú <i>āmir suttim</i>	dream report	?	?	?	yes	<i>warkat š. liprus</i>
26 :237	ZL- Kahat	<i>AdduDurī</i>	Mari	ZL	-dread (dream) -warning	<i>AdduD.-self</i> <i>f. muhhutum</i>	-š. <i>amārum</i> - <i>tebôm</i>	-é* -é**	<i>*beletekalli</i> <i>**Annunitum</i>	AdduDurī	-yes -no	Be careful
26 :195	ZLc3'	<i>AdduDurī</i>	Mari	ZL	king cheated	<i>āpilum</i> (PN)	<i>tebôm</i>	é->	<i>Hišametu</i>	<i>āpilum</i>	[?]	[broken]
26 :231	ZLc4'	Sammetar	Mari?(plc)	ZL	sacrifices	?	š. <i>nanmurum</i>	dream was seen that sacrifices to Addu and Nergal needed				
26 :199	ZL4'	Sammetar	Mari(plc)	ZL	vs Ešnunna	-lú <i>āpilum</i> - <i>qammātum</i>	- <i>tēmum</i> - <i>wûrtum</i>	-é* (D_r) -(Terqa)	-* <i>Diritum</i> -DaganTerqa	- <i>Diritum</i> - <i>qammātum</i>	-no -no	-ZL must reflect -(other topics)
26 :202	ZL4'	KibriDagan via Kanisan	Mari	ZL	vs Ešnunna	[<i>qammātum</i>] - <i>muhhôm</i>	cf 197 not given	é*	*DaganTerqa	- <i>awāt. innepšā</i> - <i>šitassûm</i>	-no -no	-take omens -sacrifice!
26 :197	ZL4'	<i>InibŠina</i>	Mari	ZL	vs Ešnunna	-Šelebum - <i>qammātum</i>	- <i>têrtam nadānum</i> - <i>qabôm</i>		DaganTerqa	<i>qammātum</i>	no	-be careful -take omens
26 :198	[ZL4'?	<i>InibŠina?</i>	Mari?	ZL	complaints	Šelebum	possibly not a prophecy ; but symbols sent ¹		Šelebum		yes	[unclear]
26 :203	ZL4'	<i>Šiptu/Ad.Dr?</i>	Mari?	ZL	festival	<i>qammātum</i>	[broken]		[broken]	deity	yes	gift given ;broken
26 :204	ZLc4/10'	<i>InibŠina</i>	Mari	ZL	enemies	PN <i>āpilum</i>	<i>tebôm/dabābum</i>	?	?	<i>āpilum</i>	yes	omens/on guard
26 :227	ZLb5'	<i>AdduDurī</i>	Mari	ZL	ghosts	[<i>f. b</i>] <i>ila'u</i>	š. <i>natālum</i> re : 2 <i>muhhū</i>		^d Abba	- <i>female</i> - <i>muhhū</i>	?	ZL must act
26 :238	ZLb5'	<i>AdduDurī</i>	Mari	ZL	warning*	IturM.priest	š. <i>natālum</i>	(dream)	<i>BeletBiri</i> ¹	goddess	no	Be careful
26 :208	ZLc9'	<i>Šiptu</i>	Mari	ZL	-control land -divine oath	PN <i>āpilum</i>	-prophecy -apoc. vision	ká <i>ekallim</i>	<i>Diritum</i> -pantheon	- <i>āpilum</i> -dialogue	-no -no	-none stated -none stated
26 :222	ZLc10'	UDharišHe.	Mari?	DarišLib.	<i>princess dies</i>	IrraGamil	<i>namhôm</i>	IrraGamil, a (Nergal) <i>muhhôm</i> , "predicts" the death of the king's baby daughter				
26 :207	ZLc11'	<i>Šiptu</i>	Mari	ZL	<i>igerrûm</i> v KN	male/ <i>fem.</i>	<i>šaqûm...šâlum</i>	?	gods	interrogation	no	-none stated
26 :211	ZL11'?	<i>Šiptu</i>	Mari	ZL	victory!	<i>Išhara-?</i>	<i>izziz. iqbêm</i>	ká <i>ekallim</i>	<i>beletEkallim?</i>	<i>woman</i>	no	none stated
26 :212	ZLc12'	<i>Šiptu</i>	Mari	ZL	vs Babylon	PN <i>assinum</i> -not said	DN <i>išpuraššu</i> <i>šaqû. šâlum</i>	é* -?	<i>Annunitum</i> -ilum	<i>assinum?</i> -interrogation	no	none stated
26 :213		<i>Šiptu</i>	Mari	ZL	guard ag.revolt	PN <i>assinum</i>	<i>namhôm</i>	é*	<i>*Annunitum</i>	<i>Annunitum</i>	yes	none stated
26 :214		<i>Šiptu</i>	Mari	ZL	crush enemy	<i>Ahatum</i>	<i>namhôm</i>	é*	<i>Annunitum</i>	<i>Annunitum?</i>	yes	Be on guard
26 :236		<i>Šiptu</i>	Mari	ZL	triumph	<i>KakkaLidi</i>	<i>amārum</i>	é*	*IturMer	<i>woman?</i>	?	[broken]
26 :82		Asqudum	Mari	ZL		YasimDagan	report : dream is true, important and serious. Confirmed by divination			?	qui-vive!	
26 :205		?	Terqa?	ZL?	triumph		DN <i>ušāhizanni</i>		Dagan	dialogue?	no	[broken]

Table A : Divine Messages Posted from Mari

A. PROPHETIC LETTERS SENT FROM MARI

A quick inspection of "Table A" shows that the larger number of the relevant letters posted from Mari were sent by women; moreover, when the divine manifestation occurred in Mari itself (and not, say at Terqa, but transmitted via Mari), its source tends to be a goddess. This observation fits conditions in the palace during the reign of Zimri-Lim as sketched in Durand's seminal study of 1987, "L'organisation de l'espace dans le palais de Mari : le témoignage des textes."¹⁰

Durand used detailed harem records to show that major change took place in palace organization and living arrangements when Zimri-Lim took over from Yasmah-Addu. Zimri-Lim, mature in years then, brought into Mari his aunt (some say his mother) Addu-duri, two primary wives, Yatar-Aya and Dam-hurāšim, a number of concubines, and many daughters. One sister, Inibšina was a priestess of Addu; she lived adjacent to the palace with her sister Yamama, wife of a major personality, Asqudum. Upon marrying Šiptu of Yamhad early in his reign, Zimri-Lim fathered at least one daughter that died at birth and three sons, two of whom were alive when our evidence peters out. We can speculate that Šiptu, the wife he took early in his reign, bore the boys if only to explain, rather crudely at that, her eventual ascendancy in palace matters.

The harem expanded when Zimri-Lim won battles or when vassals sent daughters and sisters (with their retinue) to be priestesses in Mari, for example, the daughters of Haya-Sumu (XXV : 150) and Ibal-Addu (X : 124). But it also shrank whenever women were assigned to other administrators or were given as gift to kin and allies of the king. Durand estimates that Zimri-Lim quadrupled the size of Yasmah-Addu's harem from around 45 women to about 175, a number that included kinfolk, concubines/songstresses, servants, even their women scribes.¹¹ This expansion so engorged the palace that to make room for the women and their children (as well as for a large contingent of administrators), the gods and their retinue were made to vacate: Not all of them by any means, but primarily the male gods, mostly those with a "national" reputation, such as Dagan, Šamaš, Nergal and Addu. Presumably they were turned back to their original shrines, primarily in the city itself, but presumably also in Terqa, Appan, Mahanum and the like. Left in their chapels were goddesses: Belet-ekallim, Ištar, an avatar called Ištar-radana, and Hanat. A major goddess, Annunitum, who may or may not be another Ištar avatar, periodically moved among three shrines, one in the palace itself, one between the palace and the city's walls, and one just beyond them (= Šehrum). Her moves in and out of the city no doubt paralleled her constant surveillance of Mari. Occasionally, goddesses from nearby Dēr (Diritum) and Hišamta (Hišametum), would be brought in and out for visits. Doubtless, they would be accompanied by a priestly retinue.

There is evidence too that the king himself moved out of the palace too. This occurred around his 7th regnal year, just as Šiptu was becoming increasingly prominent.¹² The king's withdrawal came shortly after the death of Addu-duri (around ZL 5'), from all evidence a strong-willed woman. So when Zimri-Lim's prestige was at its highest, each night, as the king, his courtiers and his most prestigious

¹⁰Pp. pp. 39-110 in E. Lévy, *Le Système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome* [Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg; travaux du Centre de recherche sur le Proche-Orient, 9] Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987.

¹¹We are beginning to suspect that the fate of a harem of a dethroned king was controlled by etiquette: those most intimately linked with the previous king, especially if they were princesses of major powers, became priestesses and thus were kept beyond sexual contacts with the new king. They apparently were not returned to their parent's home. Such was the case of a favored concubine of Yahdun-Lim who writes Yasmah-Addu a rather plaintive, albeit not totally subservient, letter (X : 1):

I keep on praying to Shamash and Dagan for you. May Dagan erase this heartache of yours. Set forth to Mari in peace. May Ištar-radana, your nurturing goddess (*ummaka ilatka*), give you a reign and a [...]. For my sake may she make you live in health. Go to Mari in peace. It pleases me very much to continue praying for you.

¹²If one is into psychological analysis of departed leaders, the evidence of ARMT XXVI : 225 is worth considering, written very likely when Šiptu was rising influence. The writer's name is lost, but it was a person who potentially travelled with queens.

I have listened to the letter my lord sent me saying, "The dream I had is worrisome. I fear that Sutu-nomads will capture Dam-hurāšim--but you also--, saying, 'As long as you don't give us back our female-residents (*tašubātmi*, possibly = Hebrew. *tôšāb*), we will not release them!'" This is what my lord wrote me.

As soon as I heard my lord's letter, I summoned the diviners and posed the following query, "My lord wrote to me forcefully; what do you advise?" This is what I asked them. [Remainder of text fragmented.]

administrators returned to their quarters, the palace at Mari became home mostly to women, and goddesses, and their servants.

This rather dramatic presentation of events in the Mari palace can be buttressed by administrative documentation showing that already early in Zimri-Lim's reign, palace distribution of meat included practically no other personnel but women.¹³ The situation thus promoted actually reverses our normal expectations for the deities and elite that do stay in the palace, ostensibly the center of power, were not necessarily the bearers of the culture's highest authority. In fact, for women real prestige was associated with freedom of movement, as is clear from letters Mari princesses wrote to complain about being too hemmed in by their husbands.¹⁴

Whether they were permanently housed in the palace or not, elite women in Mari did have access to the inner palace shrines, and administrative accounts record sacrifices that they personally offered.¹⁵ Our information is that as Šiptu rose in influence, the king entrusted her with ritual duties that were normally not transferrable. Thus, he tells her, "Kibri-Dagan [governor at Terqa] has written me about accompanying the goddess of Hišamta (a village in the Terqa district). Now, then, do go to Hišamta, and accompany its goddess (to Mari), then offer this sacrifice."¹⁶ Even more striking is the familiarity elite women had with omen taking. Addu-duri, it is clear from her correspondence, knew how to read the omens apparently without consulting the professionals and Šiptu may have taken up this task after her death.¹⁷ We must conjure up a rather elaborate program of queries that accompany the reading of omens on sacrificed animals, a harrowing ritual that involves the death and dismemberment of sheep, the release of blood and of gore galore, activities that many societies considered too macho for women to perform. We have the evidence of X : 15, in which a Belatum, requesting an attendant as well as sheep, speaks of the ardors required to make a sacrifice.¹⁸

Mari women, therefore, participated meaningfully in the cult. That they felt particularly close to the resident goddesses is evident from the recurrent appeals to their benedictions when they wrote the king. But it is also clear from the way they handled prophecies entrusted to them for dispatch. Of the prophecies, visions, and dreams that were transmitted from Mari itself to the king via a third party, all but two (significantly, from rather early in the reign) were entrusted to three elite women for delivery to the king : Addu-duri, Inibšina, and Šiptu, his wife.¹⁹ (see Table A.) Largely, the deities invoked were

¹³For this, best to see Lafont's contribution to *ARMT XXIII*, pp. 231ff. The combination of women, goddesses and palace occurs also in the lists of oil rations that regularly begin with outlays to Ištar and Belet-ekallim, then register distributions to priestesses of royal blood, to a queen-mother, to primary wives, daughters, concubines (often euphemistically labelled "singers"), *kezrētu*-votaries, and menials.

¹⁴At Mari, who among the king's wives could live beyond the palace was a topic for nuptial negotiation. Yarim-Lim of Aleppo, who admits to knowing that in the Mari palace the gods were particularly powerful, nevertheless insists that his daughter live there monthly only during the 5-6 days (presumably when menstruating) ; all other time she must spend it in her husband's own apartment, presumably to ensure for her a successful pregnancy. (Durand suggests the reverse to be the case, see lastly *ARMT XXVI/1*, p.104-105.) But the negotiation was intended to avoid her the humiliation of being treated as a subordinate, needing permission to move in and out of the palace. Šiptu did end up with her own apartments even though her administrative duties brought her back to the palace during the daytime. (Durand thinks she lived in what Margueron labelled "le petit palais oriental," *ibid.*)

¹⁵For examples : Queen Šiptu, M.9779 (Durand, *Système palatial*, 93) ; Beltum, M.5992 (J.-M. Durand, "Les dames du palais de Mari à l'époque du Royaume de Haute-Mésopotamie," *MARI* 4, 1985, 409).

¹⁶X : 128 ; see J.-M. Durand, *MARI* 4, 1985, 397 n.72. This is a strange order to give to a wife, for we know that the palace at Hišamta was so empty that the fear was to become as lonesome as an owl (XXVI : 57).

¹⁷See also X : 142, where she is enjoined to stand before the gods as she sacrifices. See also XXVI : 185 ; 185b.

For Addu-duri's cultic involvement, see XXVI : 454 ; X : 55 (but cf. Durand, *MARI* 3, 156), 142 and 144 ; *ARMT XXIII*, pp. 247-248 ; *ARMT XXI*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁸Collations and new rendering, Durand, *MARI* 4, 415-416. Belatum may be a nickname for (a probably already shortened!) "Belet-mātim," which, despite its imposing coinage, was held in Mari by harem woman, see Durand, *MARI* 4, 420.

¹⁹The two are XXVI : 200 communicated by Ahum, a priest of the goddess Annunitum, and by Itur-asdu, then majordomo in the Mari palace. For the letters sent by Sammetar and Kanisan (XXVI : 199, 202) containing the *qammātum*'s speech, see below. The note (XXVI : 222) of Tamhiriš-Hebat (or however the name is to be read) regarding the death of an infant daughter of Zimri-Lim is written to Dariš-Libur. It warns the king of the tragedy ; but it also tries to shift the onus (but not the blame) on the gods, via Irra-gamil, a *muhhûm* (of Nergal!).

goddesses that either dwelled permanently in the palace (Belet-ekallim, Belet-biri and likely also Ninhursaga?), or stayed there during visits (Hišametum, Diritum, Annunitum). But local (probably euhemerized) ancestor gods also occur (Itur-Mer, Abba). Dagan appears, but when in his Terqa manifestation normally his message is brought into Mari for communication. “National” gods such as Šamaš, Addu and Ea could occur as actors in apocalyptic visions (XXVI : 208) or when Šiptu cites them among the gods supporting her husband’s cause (XXVI : 207); but as *message givers* they are totally absent.

Not surprisingly, when divine messages reaching the Mari palace are communicated by these three elite women, their contents tends to parallel their private sentiments, recorded here or independently. Thus, no matter which divinity is at stake, no matter what prophecy is being communicated, no matter which prophet is chosen as conduit, when transmitted through Aunt Addu-duri, the message will caution the king about treachery or danger (XXVI : 195, 238); via Sister Inibšina, it will warn him about letting down his guard (XXVI : 197, 204); through Wife Šiptu, it will comfort and cheer him (XXVI : 211 ; 213 ; 236). Addu-duri’s constant insistence that the king must keep up his vigilance is such that once, upon getting his assurances that he never travels without propitious omens, she tells him that even so he must not become lax about it.²⁰ Worth quoting is a note from Šiptu (XXVI : 214) where a goddess expresses her fidelity to Zimri-Lim in strikingly intimate imagery, one that an Old Babylonian wife was not likely to express unfiltered to a husband on a dangerous mission, “O Zimri-Lim, even if you are ignoring me, I shall nevertheless hover over you (*u šumma atta mīšatanni anāku elika ahabbu*).”²¹

I first had an inkling of the tendency for divine messages to mirror (or reflect) the sentiments of those transmitting them to the king when inspecting the fate of a particular striking phrase in an oracle sent by three different Mari personalities. It is possible to show that when a *qammātum*-prophetess brought the same message for transmission to Sammetar, Mari majordomo, Inibšina, and Kibri-Dagan (via Kanisan), governor of Terqa, they quoted accurately from it only a brief and thoroughly enigmatic phrase.²²

XXVI : 199 (Sammetar)
Beneath straw, runs water. They keep on writing you about peace-making; they send you their gods, but in their hearts they devise an entirely different “wind.” The king must not take a binding oath without consulting God.

XXVI : 197 (Inibšina)
 The friendship of Ešnunna’s king is false: **beneath straw, runs water.** I will gather him into the net that he knots (or: I knot); I will destroy his city and will ruin his wealth, untouched since of old.

XXVI : 202 (Kibri-Dagan)
Beneath straw, runs water. He came, my lord’s god and handed his enemies over to him. Now, very much as before, the ecstatic broke out into repeated declamation.

We can explain the striking difference among these communications, albeit attributed to the same *qammātum*, by the fact that people in antiquity generally did not need to remain as faithful to an orally delivered statement as to a written one; but they could shape a heard statement according to their

²⁰X : 54; see Durand, *MARI* 3, 158.

²¹In his reedition of the text, Durand reads 10-11 *anāku elika ahabbu* which he translates, “I myself shall exterminate on your behalf,” citing *habāšum* B, a verb that suggests violent action (Durand, 1988 : 443). However, it is not certain that this verb has *u/u* theme vowels or that it is construed with the preposition *eli*. I retain Dossin’s reading, which involves an attested idiom, *habābum eli* [someone]. Additionally, there should be a contrast between *mēšum*, “to maltreat, ignore someone” and the verb in question.

How women expressed their affection/ emotions in written forms is a subject worth investigating. When writing Sisters and daughters of the king could address him as *šamši*, *kakkabī* (my sun, star), sometimes in combination with *bēli*. Women could write incredibly flattering letters to him (X : 92 ; X : 44, from his daughter); they could ask to be remembered by him (eg from Dam-hurāšim, X : 66); they could send little gifts, touchingly presented (eg from Šiptu, X : 17), “May my lord, enter Mari healthy and happy, having vanquished his foes. Now, my lord should place about his shoulders the garment and wrap I have made (for him).”

²²For a fuller study of the relevant documents, a discussion of the core phrase, and a detailed contrasts among the three versions, see “Water Beneath Straw : Adventures of a Prophetic Phrase in the Mari Archives,” forthcoming in a festschrift to a colleague. The same documents are studied by D. Charpin in the *Bulletin of the CSMS* cited above and by S. Parker, “Official Attitudes toward Prophecy at Mari and in Israel,” *VT* 43, 1992, 50-68.

own rhetorical ability and to suit their own understanding of it. For this reason, a harmony of passages with like contents, such as the one offered below, is more likely to give us insight into the personality of each writer than permit us to recover its “original” source.²³ In this particular case, conjectures have it that “beneath straw, runs water,” is warning against trickery. However, *above running water there can only be moving straw*, and this opaque phrase could be an allegory with correspondences that cannot easily be found, a “riddle” whose key is lost to us, or an “enigma” which, by implication, can never have enough levels of meaning. For Kibri-Dagan, who may not have heard the apothegm directly from the *qammātum* (he – or is it his son Kanisan – seems to think it was delivered by a *muhhûm*), reads it reassuringly. For Sammetar, the *qammātum*’s statement was an occasion to embroider prudently, advising the king to seek divine counsel before signing a peace treat. For Inibšina the apothegm gave opportunity to mirror Ešnunna’s moral flaw, so manifest that Dagan himself will bring its king to task. Zimri-Lim was then left with nothing else to do but to concentrate on his sister’s tart counsel, “I have heard it said that he scintillates on his own. Stop doing that!”

The material listed in “Table A” gives other opportunities to advance my thesis that the forms and patterns of “Mari” oracles, dreams, and visions reveal as much on the personalities of those who recorded them for dispatch as on the stage in spiritual development of Semitic religions that they could be reflecting. Indeed, given the capriciousness of the gods, the idiosyncrasy of individuals, the complexity of human languages, and the fluctuation of political or social fortunes, the forms and manifestations of prophecy at any one time in human history are likely to always be flux. Moreover, the media in which the gods used human-beings as conduit for their messages could not achieve the stability, reliability, hence the prestige accorded more empirically-founded vehicles such as extispicy, meteorology, or birth-omina.²⁴ I am bold to propose that in the palace of Zimri-Lim, where the fate of its residents depended on the martial success of one leader, and where this particular leader seems most eager to hear from the gods, a heightened urgency generated a rich variety of avenues to inform the king of heaven’s will.²⁵ I briefly give two other illustrations for its variety, turning first to a document I explored in the early 80’s, just before Birot’s chronology of Zimri-Lim’s reign began to take effect on the field: Addu-duri’s blood-curdling dream first published as X: 50 and reedited with good commentary as XXVI: 237²⁶:

Since the peace/destruction of your father’s house, I have never had a dream such as this. Previous portents of mine were as this pair.

In my dream, I entered the chapel of the goddess Belet-ekallim; but Belet-ekallim was not in residence! Moreover, the statues before her were not there either. Seeing this, I broke into weeping. This dream of mine occurred during the first watch.

I turned around, and Dada, priest of the goddess Ištar-bišra, was standing at the door of Belet-ekallim’s chapel; but an eery voice kept uttering: “Return, O Dagan; return, O Dagan.” This is what it kept on uttering.

Another matter: A woman-ecstatic (*muhhūtum*) rose in Annunitum’s temple to say, “Zimri-Lim, you

²³In this particular example, I am arguing against the approach of S. Parker, *VT* 43, 1992, 59-60, who selects Inibšina’s version as the most “authentic.” There is no “original” to be had!

²⁴It is not surprising, therefore, that Zimri-Lim could keep a variety of prognosticators on his ration rolls, but he seems to have avoided direct contact with those who were actually carrying a message. He seemed content to ask people in diverse religious centers to keep their ears open (XXVI: 196) or dispatch a trusted *âpilum* to investigate for him the oracles by Dagan of Terqa (*ana Dagan ša Terqa piqdanni*, XXVI: 199: 8-9); but when he really needed to learn what god wanted of him at any particular moment, he turned to his resident-scholars, the *bārû*-diviners.

²⁵This is a possible explanation for the sharp insight of Charpin, *Bulletin of the CSMS*, 1992, 26 and n. 23 about the lack any “prophetic” material from the tenure of Yasmah-Addu. Worth quoting is the following (p. 27), “Or *muhhûm* et *âpilum* n’ont pas brusquement surgi de néant à l’avènement de Zimri-Lim. [True; but why not redirected positions and given more prestige?] Peut-être ne se sont-ils pas manifestés auparavant parce qu’ils savaient qu’ils ne seraient pas écoutés... Il ne faut pas exclure que des sensibilités religieuses différentes selon les individus et les milieux aient pu exister. On rappellera simplement ici la brusque apparition des prophéties à l’époque néo-assyrienne, qui datent pour l’essentiel du règne d’Asarhaddon.” Esarhaddon, of course, was notoriously pietistic.

We do have one recording of dreams from the reign of Yahdun-Lim (or Sumuyamam); but it was a memorandum rather than a letter addressed to the king.

²⁶“Mari Dreams,” *JAOS* 103, 1983, 283-93.

must not go on a journey. Stay in Mari, and I shall continue to be responsible (for you?). My lord should not neglect his personal safety. I have now personally placed sampling from my hair and garment under seal and have sent them to my lord..)

When I first commented on this letter it was known then that Addu-duri died around ZL 5'. It was therefore impossible to judge her a bearer of jeremiads, that is writing doom when her lord was comfortably seated on the throne, or a Cassandra, telling about a catastrophe to which everyone else was blind. Then (as now) it was possible to set this letter within the year "Kahat" on the basis of a quotation from it embedded in a Zimri-Lim's reply to her that can be dated to the ninth month of that year.²⁷ But not until after Birot's reorganization of Zimri-Lim's chronology could we know that "Kahat" was year-name from his early years on the throne. At that time Zimri-Lim was preparing for the visit of Simahlane of Kurda, possibly one his earliest hosting of such *durbar* (to use a term from India of the Rajj), when and oath-taking, fealty ceremonies, and gift exchanges took place.²⁸ Even as Zimri-Lim was cementing his new throne through ententes with Yamhad and Babylon, he was still embroiled in wars against the Benjamins and was fearing attacks from Ešnunna.²⁹

Addu-duri is so troubled by political events that she replays her anxiety by juxtaposing divine messages : her own dream, introduced by amphibolous language and dividing into two segments, and an oracle for Annunitum that was manifestly sinister.³⁰ This document is by no means unique in having a piggy-back posting for divine messages of multiple origins or sources (see XXVI : 199 ; 208[?] ; 209 ; 212 [see below] ; RA 78, 8);³¹ but it is unusual in that Addu-duri was offering Annunitum's words as an interpretive "key" for her own dream. As such she was dodging a convention that dreamers normally may not interpret their own dreams.³² Moreover, when Zimri-Lim read her letter in its entirety, he must not have failed to note that the lesson Addu-duri was promoting, about having to remain on guard, was being taught by three major goddesses : Belet-ekallim (through her disappearance), Ištar-bišra (through a ghost), and Annunitum (through a *muhhūtum*). At Mari, therefore, elite women have come to confidently verbalize the opinions of goddesses.

My final illustration comes from the time when Zimri-Lim was brooding about the activity of an arch-enemy, Išme-Dagan. He must have asked his wife Šiptu, in which he was increasing his reliance, to submit to a series of questions to the diviners.³³ Rather than relying on divination, however, the

²⁷I do realize how unlikely it would be for us to have Addu-duri's entire correspondence ; nevertheless I make this connection on basis of stylistic divergence among the formulas she uses when urging the king to protect himself. Here is a list :

XXVI : 238 : 17-19 *bēlī ana našār pagrišu la igge* (quoting prophecy of Idin-ili, priest of Itur-Mer, l. 16 : *pagaršu liššur*)
X : 54 : 16-18 *bēlī ana našār pagrišu la igge*
X : 55 : 21-24 *bēlī pagaršu liššuram littalkam* (opening [6-8,11], and closing letter)
X : 60 : 25 *bēlī pagaršu liššur*
XXVI : 237 : 27-28 *ana pagrišu našārim bēlī ahšu la inaddi*
X : 142 : 6-7 Zimri-Lim to Addu-duri (8.xi.Kahat) "(you wrote) *bēlī ana pagrišu našārim ahšu la inaddi*."

²⁸On the *durbar* (*darbar*), see Bernard S. Cohn, "Representing authority in Victorian England," pp. 165-209 in *The Invention of Tradition* (E. Bosbawm and T. Ranger, ed.), 1983.

²⁹Pinpointing Zimri-Lim's political involvement depends on a precise location of the year "Kahat." A good discussion of the issues is in P. Villard, "La place des années de 'Kahat' et d' 'Adad d'Alep' dans la chronologie du règne de Zimri-Lim," *MARI* 7, 1993, 315-328.

³⁰Durand has connected the first portion of Addu-duri's dream, said to have occurred during the first watch, with the observation of the diviner, Šamaš-in-matim, that dreams seen during such a period are in fact not seen at all. See his comments on XXVI : 142 and in XXVI/2, p. 456.

³¹This is not to be confused with documents in which the same "prophet" sequentially supplements a message (eg XXVI : 200) or is cited twice after a time interval (eg. XXVI : 221b ; 234).

³²In fact, this is reason why Joseph was so resented by his family ; not so much for his dreams, but for interpreting them himself, and in a way that was manifestly self-serving.

³³Zimri-Lim's dependence on Šiptu is betrayed by another note (X : 120 ; see *ARMT* XXVI/1, 29 n. 118 ; 284 ; *NABU* 1991/91),

About what you have written me, saying, "I am now absorbed with divination regarding warfare." This is what you wrote me.

So you are now absorbed with divination regarding warfare! Why are you not absorbed with divination on the taking of the city? And why did you not write to me, saying, "This city will be taken" or "this city will not be taken."

queen chose a vehicle that was exceptional in that it did not quote the gods, but yet emulated their authority (XXVI : 207). Šiptu unlocked the future through a skillful quizzing of soothsayers to whom she had given potions. The technique she used is still obscure to us : it is given here in the phrase *ittātim zikaram u sinništam ašqi*, “I gave male and female the signs to drink.”³⁴ As we are not given any inkling on how the soothsayers were physiologically affected, it is difficult to ascertain the kind of potion they were administered. It is possible that she was emulating on earth an activity she herself reported a few months earlier in XXVI : 208, where someone (Qišti-Diritum?) had a vision of male and female deities taking solemn oaths to protect Mari just after they were made to imbibe clay from Mari’s gates dissolved in water. If so, there is no reason to think the soothsayers of XXVI : 207 drunk.³⁵

Later still in Zimri-Lim’s reign, Šiptu used the same procedure. This time Zimri-Lim had asked his wife to establish Hammurabi’s martial intents (XXVI : 185b : 18-25), “Make an oracular inquiry about Hammurabi of Babylon : “Will this man die? Will he be truthful with us? Will he start a war against us? When I go North, will he besiege us? What? Ask about this man, and when a first time you have inquired, then do so once more, and write me whatever you gather about him.”

In writing back (XXVI : 212), Šiptu first alludes to a prognostication critical of Hammurabi that Annunitum had sent through a berdache, Ili-haznaya.³⁶ She continues, “About news of Babylon, I gave to drink the “signs” and made inquiries. This man [Hammurabi] is plotting many things against this land ; but he will not prevail. My lord will see what God will do to this man : You will capture him and stand over him. His days are numbered ; he will not live long. My lord should know this.” Šiptu then attaches the following justification (10’-16’), “Even before the message of Ili-haznaya that Annunitum sent through him – 5 days ago in fact – I myself posed (a similar) query. The message which Annunitum sent you and the information I obtained are one and the same.”

There is little doubt that by attaching this double affirmation of Hammurabi’s ultimate discomfiture, one through an oracle the other through a divination, Šiptu has followed Addu-duri’s path of finding a means to give authority to her way of quizzing the gods. Durand has suggested that this technique adopted by Šiptu to provoke divine response may have come from Yamhad/Aleppo, her home.³⁷ This is possible, of course ; but I think it more likely that, in the exceptional atmosphere of fin-des-jours Mari palace, she developed it by imaginatively combining features from the oath-taking protocol of apocalypticising scenes (eg XXVI : 208) and from the extispicy quizzing (*šalum*) with which she was already familiar. At any rate, because to Zimri-Lim Šiptu and her method had proven themselves, we find that for one brief moment, at Mari, queens and goddesses had distinct voices, but spoke the same language.

B. DIVINE MESSAGES POSTED FROM THE PROVINCES

For letters with prophetic contents that were sent from provincial (for that matter also foreign) centers to yield insights on the interplay among divine messengers, letter posters, and letter receivers (the king), we will need fuller descriptions of the social contexts obtaining in each of these centers. This

Yet it must be said that Zimri-Lim did not follow blindly on any single person’s reading of the gods. In X : 124 : 18-23 (collations, Durand, *MARI* 3, 152 n.18) he tells Šiptu how his own inspection of the omens agreed with what she reported to him.

³⁴My translation allows *šaqûm* a double accusative. Durand renders, “j’ai fait boire les signes mâle et femelle” and argues (most fully in “In vino veritas,” *RA* 76, 1982, 44-45) that the prophets themselves were metonymically equated with the “signs,” a notion seemingly vindicated by XXVI : 212 : 2’, where just *ittātim ašqi* alone occurs. This may be so, citing Isaiah 8 : 18 is not the best justification. There, the prophet and his children are themselves not the signs, but are set by by God “as signs and wonders (*le’ôîôt ûlemôpetîm me’im YHWH*).” In the full Isaiah context, in fact, the signs apply to the names of Isaiah and his brood. (The TOB translation cited by Durand is simply not precise enough here ; see for a similar construction Gen 1 : 14.)

³⁵XXVI : 207 and 208 have been widely discussed in the literature ; see lastly and richly by J.-M. Durand, “À propos des méthodes de divinisation utilisées à Mari,” *MARI* 3, 1984, 150-156.

³⁶The connection between the two texts was noted by F. Joannès, apud Durand, *ARMT* XXVII, 441.

³⁷Actually he only implied it, by suggesting that “la pratique du couple constitué par le divin-*bârûm* et l’*âpilum* représente une des caractéristiques du domaine alépin,” p. 127 in “Unité et diversité au Proche-Orient à l’époque amorrite,” *La Circulation des biens, des personnes, et des idées dans le Proche-Orient ancien*. [RAI 38], 1992. See already *ARMT* XXVI/1, 386.

program is somewhat possible for locales such as Terqa and now, thanks to Birot's recent rich volume (*ARMT XXVII*), for Qattunan; but with nothing of the detail that we achieve when reconstructing the social fabric at Mari during the reign of Zimri-Lim. For this reason, what I offer below are preliminary observations.

A glance at TABLE B's "from" column will bring out the obvious: women writers are few in number. The exception here is the letter of Zunana (XXVI: 232), itself exceptional in that it is written by a dreamer/visionary who knows exactly what God wants the king to do: give her justice by releasing young woman (her daughter/servant?) to her care. As such, it fits as nicely among petitions sent to the king as among letters imparting divine messages.

Another column on which to focus is labelled "deity." There the sparse participation of female deities is striking. The exception here is XXVI: 229, itself a lone document from the period before the rule of Yasmah-Addu that originated in Šehrum, a suburb of Mari. I have placed XXVI: 219 in this table for admittedly dubious reasons: the deity involved, Ninhursaga, had shrines at Terqa and at Mari, and it seemed to me more likely that Zimri-Lim be accused of neglecting the Terqa goddess than the one in his capital.³⁸

A final column to notice is the last one, "to do," with gist of what letter writers advise the king upon recording a divine message. These authors prove themselves excellent bureaucrats. In contrast to the elite women who are writing from downtown Mari, writers in the province rarely advanced an interpretation of what they were recording, no matter how bizarre, sinister, or auspicious were the divine messages. They hardly offer their king practical suggestions or advice on what must be done. (Admittedly some of these documents are not complete.) Rather, either they ended their notes abruptly or, if sensing the need for the king to take action, they could add "my lord should do as he pleases" (or the like). Ordinarily, it took much to produce a reaction from them. Kibri-Dagan had to feel harassed by local ecstasies on the proper way to rebuild the house of the deceased Sammetar before he would ask the king to instruct him on how to proceed. He even offered a suggestion on how to proceed (XXVI: 243), gingerly to be sure. Occasionally, as if to stress that they have other things on their minds, officials would change the subject (with or without inserting *šanitam*) and make perfectly administrative requests. A case in point is XXVI: 196, written by Šamaš-našir, a majordomo at the Terqa palace. He writes,

When my lord was about to set out on a campaign, he charged me, "You are living in the city of God. Report to me whatever oracle that you hear occurring in God's temple." Ever since that moment, whatever [I heard God's temple, I have sent it to my lord.... A number of lines missing, opening again on a quote from, apparently, Dagan.] ... "Tišpak should] be summoned [before me]; I want to give him judgment." Tišpak was summoned and to him Dagan said, "Because/since/as far as Šinah(?³⁹) you have ruled the land. Your uT/D/T [Durand: "day"] has departed. You shall meet your uT/D/T, as (did?) Ekallatum." This occurred in Dagan's presence. But Yaqrubil [*sic*] said, "says Hanat, 'Do not neglect the judgment that you have given.'"

Another matter. The grain (produced) by the plows of the Terqa district palace is now is storage in Terqa.

Remarkable here are the matter-of-fact tone and the suppression of curiosity, themselves hallmarks of the bureaucratic mind. Even if our difficulty in completely understanding the message was never at issue when Zimri-Lim heard it recited by his scribe, it is still surprising that Šamaš-našir would not try to express a judgment on the extraordinary apocalyptic drama being staged in heaven. We may, of course, decide that in writing it in this special way, Šamaš-našir was in fact setting his stamp on what went on in heaven, for it is obvious that what he conveyed did not come from "prophet." Nevertheless, for an official of Šamaš-našir's status who, moreover, knew that his boss solicited words from heaven, this reticence is noticeable. When, at the end of his missive Šamaš-našir did indeed change the subject, it was to report on a matter that served only to reflect on his attentiveness to duty.

³⁸Moreover, the letter mentions Šurahammu, a Benjaminite chief, whose visit to Mari around ZL 4' (hence my suggested date) left us a nice paper trail, among which are letters posted from Terqa. See G. Bardet, *ARMT XXIII*, p. 17-21.

³⁹This reading is hypothetical on my part. In fact, the sign I want to read as *-ah* would be an unusually formed one; but not without approximate parallels, see *ARMT XV*, p. 17, compartment No. 233s.

text	date	from	in	to	re :	messenger	type	at	deity	speaker	symbols	to do
26 :229	YL/SY	memo!	Šehrum?	YL?	struggle	<i>Ayala</i>	š. natālum	bāb*	* <i>Annunitum</i>	<i>Ayala</i>	yes	natlat! must act!
26 :224	ZLc2'?	Sumu+	Samanum?	ZL?		king?	report on šuttum				no	as pleases ;[šanīt.]
26 :216	Zlp2'	TebiGirišu	Qattunan?	ZL	omens for ZL	nabū ša Hana	fērtam šūpušum	Hana Meet	?	queries	no	be on guard!
26 :230		report?	Qattunan?	ZL?	divine tribunal	<i>female</i>	šuttum (apocap.)		IturMer	Man ;IturMer	no	none stated
26 :206	ZLp5'?	YaqqimAddu?	Saggarat.?	ZL	public oracle	muhhôm	t.idbub/iqbi/iddin	puhur šu.gi	[Dagan?]	muhhôm	no	[explanation]
26 :218	?	?	Saggarat.?	ZL?	set up stela	?	[oracle?]		?		no	do as promised!
26 :196	ZLc3'	ŠamašNašir	Terqa-pal.	ZL	vs Ešnunna	igerrûm ibaššu	Tišpak judged	é ilim	Dag/YqrubEl	Dagan ; <i>Hanat</i>	no	none ; šanītam
26 :232	ZL3/4'	^f <i>Zunana-self</i>	Terqa?	ZL	girl taken	<i>woman</i>	sullulum		Dagan	dialog	no	give girl back
26 :219	ZL4'?	?	Terqa?	ZL	seeks donation	āpilum	tebûm/dabābum	é	<i>Ninhursaga</i>	āpilum	yes	as pleases ; šanīt.
26 :142	ZLb6'	ŠamašInMat.	Terqa?	ZL	dream of*	Sammetar	report : "dream occurred during the first watch : it was not seen."				no	not said
26 :220	ZL4'?	KibriDagan	Terqa-prv	ZL	pagra'u	muhhôm*	qabûm	?	*Dagan	lú šû	no	as pleases king
26 :221	ZL4'?	KibriDagan	Terqa-prv	ZL	YL's kispum	muhhôm*	ilum išpuranni		*Dagan	lú muhh. šû	no	as pleases king
26 :234	ZLc6'?	KibriDagan	Terqa-prv	ZL	rebuilding	lú.tur	š. natālum-2x		Ilum	god	yes	boy is ill!
26 :243	ZLc6'?	KibriDagan?	Terqa-prv	ZL?	é Sammetar	Dagan muhhû!	idabbubûnim	report, not a prophecy		muhhû	no	as pleases ; but...
26 :210	ZL10'	KibriDagan	Terqa-prv	ZL	vs Babylon	<i>dam.lú</i>	DN išpuranni	?	Dagan	Dagan	brk	none stated
26 :221b	?	KibriDagan	Terqa-prv	ZL	fix gate-2x!	muhhôm	personal plaint?	?	*Dagan (?)	lú muhh. šû	no	none ; send people
26 :235	?	KibriDagan	Terqa-prv	ZL	warning	lú->Ahum	š. amārum	?	Dagan?	Ahum	no	onus on KD!
26 :209	ZLc11'	Mukannišum	Tuttul?	ZL	vs Babylon	aplum! ša (2x)	tebûm/qabûm	?	DgnTut/Nrgl?	-aplum!-2	brk	broken
26 :246	?	Lanasûm	Tuttul	ZL		malikum*			*Addu	may not be "prophetic"; item among many topics		
26 :215		Lanasûm	Tuttul	ZL	clear water	muhhôm	tebûm/qabûm	IGI*	*Dagan	muhhôm	yes	bēli lizakki ; šanīt.
26 :225	?	(male?)	?	ZL	<i>DamHurasi</i>	king	š. amārum	convocation of diviners to advise on sinister dream of king– nb no symbols sent for testing!				
26 :223		?	Tuttul?		request gifts?	āpilum*	Dagan oracle?	?	Dagan?	Dagan?	?	broken
WdO17	?	administ.	Terqa?			<i>DaganNahmi</i>	š. amārum	Expenditures for kispum (see 26 :221)				

Table B : Divine Messages Posted from the Provinces

There are exceptions to this monumental bureaucratise ; but they are few and worth a few comments. Lanasûm, governor of Tuttul, pulls no punches when he writes XXVI : 215. Amidst the good will that was being generated by a communal meal-sharing courtesy of Zimri-Lim's *largesse*, a Dagan ecstatic nevertheless uttered the god's complaints about the lack of (ritually pure?) waters. Lanasûm sends symbols on which to validate the oracle, but he also espouses its complaint and urges his king to propitiate the god.⁴⁰ Tebi-gerišu, a person about whom I wish I knew more, writes XXVI : 216.⁴¹ Going to meet Ašmad, a major personality around Qattunan, Tebi-gerišu had *nabû*-diviners take omens, with specific queries about how (and for how long) Zimri-Lim should be involved in cultic activities. This specific document, despite its fine reference to a term we etymologically readily compare to Hebrew *nābî'*, may therefore not belong to my topic, but to the large study of Mari *bārûtum* that Durand has given us.⁴² Because it was communicating the results of extispicy, Tebi-gerišu's letter needed to end with instructions to the king.

There is also XXVI : 206, a letter that could be attributed to Yaqqim-Addu, governor of Saggaram. One of the more dramatic examples among the lot collected in TABLE B, it opens on an ecstatic (*muhhûm*) who requests, in a twofold formulation, something to eat. When Yaqqim-Addu fulfilled his second request and gave him a sheep, he eat it, at the city gate, apparently while it is still alive. (Perhaps "uncooked"; but Yaqqim-Addu, as we shall note, needs to be dramatic.) At this point, Yaqqim-Addu (or the ecstatic) summons the town's elders, before whom the ecstatic issues (but not in Dagan's name) a threatening prognostication that plays on the root *akālum*.⁴³ The pun itself gains its punch by linkage to an act of sympathetic magic that occurred at the city-gate, but this was obvious only to Yaqqim-Addu who witnessed it, to the *muhhûm* who staged it, and to Zimri-Lim for whom the conjunction was being made manifest ; but not necessarily to those in Saggaram who were not milling around the city gate when the sheep was being devoured. Sensing potential blame for setting off this chain of events that led to such a public denunciation of abuse against the property of the gods,

⁴⁰On this text see Durand, "La Cité-état d'Imâr à l'époque des rois de Mari," *MARI* 6, 1990, 51, 58.

⁴¹The day after when I reached Ašmad, I gathered the "prophets" (^{lú}*nabî*^{meš}) of the Hana-tribes. I had them take omens about the welfare of my lord, asking : "whether my lord will enter the city safely upon performing the "x" ablution ceremony while dwelling 7 days beyond the city-walls...."

[Probably Tebi-gerišu speaking] "... When my lord goes out to the shrine of Annunitum-at-the-outskirts, he should protect himself and keep soldiers at his ready disposal. The sentry for the city must be strengthened. My lord should not neglect protecting himself."

Tebi-gerišu is best known from early in ZL's reign, mostly from Mari itself. Datable entries for him are from ZL 1' (M.7331, re : fields) and "Annunitum" (an early year, M.12109, gir re : grain). He dies in or just before ZL 3' (22 : 130 : 3 [22.vii.2']). (First 2 references unpublished, courtesy J.-M. Durand.) As to the Ašmad he went to visit, he seems to have functioned in the region of Qattunan, about the time of the Benjaminite revolt. See Durand, *ARMT* XXVI/1, p. 147 n.73 ; Birot, *ARM* XXVII, p. 40.

⁴²It is also possible that in this text ^{lú}*na-bi-i*^{meš} is the more precise (Amorite) term for *āpilû* that are provoked into answering specific questions ; see Durand, XXVI/1, p. 386. *nabûm*, occurs elsewhere also at Ebla and Emar ; D. Fleming, in *JAOS* 113, 1993, 175-183 ; *CBQ* 55, 1993, 217-224. The etymology for ^{lú}*na-bi-i*^{meš} is commonly derived from *nabûm*, "to give a name, summon, invoke"; but people differ on how to parse the verbal form. Provoked or otherwise, their activity parallels those of *bārû*-diviners. Since *bārûm* is derived from the Akkadian verb *barûm*, "to see," it is interesting to turn to I Sam 9 : 9 where, in an aside, the Hebrew narrator tells readers that the *nābî'*--a word of non-Hebraic origins--used to be known as *rô'ê* ("seer"). Therefore, in both Akkadian and Hebrew the equations between the two sets of terms (*nabûm* : *bārûm* || *nābî'* : *rô'ê*) have more to do with the function they filled than with any hypothetical activity that we recreate on the basis of etymology.

⁴³XXVI : 206 :

An ecstatic of Dagan came to me saying, "Now what shall I eat (*akkal*) that belongs to Zimri-Lim? Give me a sheep to eat (*lûkul*)." When I gave him the sheep, and while it lived still he ate it at the city gate. I/He gathered the elders at Saggaram's city gate, and he said the following, "There will be a "consumption" (*ukultum*). Demand of the various cities to return consecrated objects. He that has done violence should be ejected from the city. For the sake of your lord Zimri-Lim, you must provide me with a garment."

This is what he told me and for the sake of my lord I provided him with a garment. I have now recorded the oracle that he pronounced and I am sending it to my lord.

[PS] He did not privately tell me the oracle, but delivered it at the assembly of the elders.

M. Astour, "Sparagmos, Omophagia, and Ecstatic Prophecy at Mari," *Ugarit Forschungen*, 24, 1992, 1-2, assumes that because the prophet asked for an article of clothing that he was naked. In fact, requesting garment as form of acknowledging value of service is common in Mari. I have not yet seen Anbar's article on this text just issued in the *Kutscher Memorial Volume*.

Yaqqim-Addu steps out of the usual bureaucratic distancing pose by clarifying that the oracle would have been delivered anyway, since the ecstatic spoke it not when he saw Yaqqim-Addu privately (*ina simištīm ul iqbēm*) but waited for all to be assembled before doing so.

C. DIVINE MESSAGES POSTED FROM ABROAD

When focusing on conveyers of divine messages from beyond Mari territory (TABLE C), we must ask whether these writers were themselves Mari personnel, whether the “prophets” involved had attachments to Mari, and whether the pertinent gods were also worshipped at Mari? We are hampered by the lack of data on centers generating the prophecies or the letters. Crucial are why and how the writers came to know the message that the gods want heard. Here XXVI: 371 may be brought into consideration. Yarim-Addu, Zimri-Lim’s envoy to Babylon, reports on the declamations of an *āpilum* of Marduk as he hounded Išme-Dagan of Ekallatum, then in asylum with Hammurabi. This letter’s contents are indeed spectacular, not just for telling us that prophecy was alive in Babylon, but for allowing a glimpse into hard-ball politics played on all sides.

About the news my lord keeps on hearing that Išme-Dagan was going up toward Ekallatum: he is in fact not doing so. There has been rumors of it and they began to circulate about him. An *āpilum* of Marduk stood up at the palace gate and kept on declaiming, “Išme-Dagan will not escape from Marduk’s grasp. It will tighten the (barley) net and he shall be destroyed by it.” This is what he kept on declaiming in front of the palace gate, but no one would tell him anything.

He forthwith stood at Išme-Dagan’s door and in front of the whole citizenry he kept on declaiming, “You went seeking peace and good-will from the viceroy of Elam; but in so doing you have had the treasures of Marduk and the city Babylon brought out to the viceroy of Elam. Because you have emptied silos and my storehouses, you have not returned the favors I have done you. How then could you make your way (back) to Ekallatum? Anyone who has brought out my treasure cannot request its increase from me.”

No one talked to him as he kept on declaiming before the whole citizenry ... As to Išme-Dagan, he is so gravely ill that his life is in doubt.

It must be realized that Yarim-Addu was so struck that the *āpilum* could make charges without being challenged, that he twice commented on it (15-16; 31-32). The charges were against two major personalities, but in reverse order. At Hammurabi’s palace, he attacked Išme-Dagan; but at Išme-Dagan’s lodge, he was also indirectly attacking Hammurabi, allegedly for allowing the Elamites access to Marduk’s treasures.⁴⁴ This is precisely the charge that Isaiah levelled against Hezekiah (ordinarily a “good” king), after he permitted Marduk-apla-iddin’s good-will emissaries to inspect his treasures (2 Kings 20: 12-19). We know from other Mari documents that in his waning days, Zimri-Lim was troubled by the behavior of Hammurabi toward their erstwhile allies turned enemies, the Elamites. So this letter served notice also on how his ally was behaving at a critical moment. From Zimri-Lim’s perspective, therefore, Yarim-Addu’s letter was strictly of political interest and if he were moved to consult diviners, it would not be about the reliability of the *āpilum* of Marduk, but of his ally Hammurabi.

I have placed XXVI: 239 and 240 on Table C although they may have been sent from transit points within Mari territory. Essentially, they convey dream manifestations that the dreamers themselves communicated, and as such they differ little from similar examples we surveyed above. Princess Šimatum (and Ilaņšura’s queen) remains true to the strong character we extract from her dossier: she insists to have her way if the diviners confirm that indeed she had a dream.⁴⁵ Timlu’s letter, XXVI:

⁴⁴Charpin offers a different explanation for lines 23-25.

⁴⁵J.-M. Durand (XXVI/1, 457-458) thinks that there is a political motivation behind the choice of name. For Šimatum and Kirum, both daughters of Zimri-Lim given in marriage to Haya-sumu of Ilaņšura, see D. Charpin, XXVI/2, pp.43-46; J.-M. Durand, *MARI* 3, 162ff; B. Lafont, “Les filles de roi de Mari,” pp. 113-121 in J.-M. Durand, *La Femme dans le Proche-Orient Antique*. 33^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, (Paris, 7-10 Juillet 1986) 1987. It should be noted that marriage of 2 sisters to one vassal or ally, although rare, is known. Hattusilis III gave two of his daughters in marriage to Ramses II.

txt	date	from	in	to	re :	messenger	type	at	deity	speaker	symbol s	to do
A.1968 M7, p44	ZLb3'?	NurSin	Kaliassu? (Yamhad)	ZL	(HIST. REVIEW)+be just ; check omens	Abiya, <u>āpilum ša*</u>	<u>umma</u> d _{IM}		*IMbēlHalab	d _{IM}	yes	not stated
A.1121+ RA78,p 8	ZLb3'?	NurSin	-Kallassu -(Yamhad)	ZL	-give tribute -(HIST. REVIEW)+be just	<u>āpilū</u> (plr!) <u>āpilu</u> (sngl)	omens! <u>qabū</u>		d _{IM} Kallassu d _{IM} bēlHalab	d _{IM} Kallassu d _{IM} bēlHalab	no IGI PN	-not stated -not stated
26 :217	?	Bassum?	Nahur	ZL?	dynastic/personal (HIST. REVIEW)	<i>munus</i>	<u>idubam</u>	?	?	" <i>woman</i> "	yes	act on omens ; <u>šanitam</u> ..
26 :239	?	<i>Šimatu</i>	Ilaņura	ZL	girl-naming	SELF!	<u>š. naṭlat</u>	transit?	NA	<u>lú-lum izziz</u>	no	name girl after taking omens
26 :192	ZL9'?	-[AdduHalab]? -Ištar (Nineveh) -Šamaš	Andarig?	ZL	-weapons vs Elam -build temple -[broken]	3 letters compiled in 1 document	letter from gods		-AdduHalab? -Ištar (Ninev.) -Šamaš	gods	no	broken
26 :194	ZL10'	<u>āpilum ša</u> <u>Šamaš</u>	Andarig?	ZL	-throne to Šamaš* - <u>asak</u> to Addu% -gift to Dagan -sword to Nergal@ - <u>andurārum</u> at Kurda -send litigants#	[written by <u>āpilum</u> of Šamaš]	letter from God with diverse requests	Sippar é% - @Hubšalum ? - #Sippar	*Šamaš %d _{IM} Halab - -Nergal - -Šamaš	Šamaš (2x)	no	not stated
26 :240	ZLb5'	<i>Timlu</i>	Kasapa	<i>Addu</i> <i>Duri</i>	recalling past dream	SELF!	<u>š. āmurakkim</u>		<i>Beltekallim</i> !	<i>Timlu</i>	no	<u>šanitam</u> , send pers. effects
26 :371	ZL10'	YarimAddu	Babylon	ZL	IšmeDagan must not stay in Babylon	<u>lú āpilum</u> <u>ša Marduk</u>	<u>šitassû</u>	- <u>bāb ekallim</u> - <u>bāb</u> IšmeDagan		<u>āpilum</u> --2x!	NA	CHECK
27 :32	ZLb9'	ZakiraHammu	Yamutbal		NA	muhhū	NA	NA	d _{Ami} Hubšalim(ki)			unclear reference to a band of <u>muhhū</u>

Table C : Divine Messages Posted from Abroad

240, is not well preserved.⁴⁶ I have included XXVI: 194 and 192 on this TABLE, because 294 gives the addressor as the *āpilum* of Šamaš; but typologically they are better studied under the rubric of “letters from God.”⁴⁷ The two differ, however, in that the XXVI: 194 expresses the opinions of one god, Šamaš (albeit in behalf of other gods) whereas XXVI: 193 compiles separate declaration by at least three gods: Addu, Ištar of Ninet, and Šamaš.

The remaining letters are exceptional in that they contain prophecy in which to the demands of the gods are attached a review of their past activities in behalf of Zimri-Lim. I follow Durand (XXVI/1, 226) in attributing XXVI: 217 to Bassum, an official who functioned in Idamarāš; but I wonder if it could not have been sent by Šaknum who at one point commanded Mari’s garrison in Nahur before Itur-asdu replaced him, probably around ZL 5’.⁴⁸ I have set Nahur as its origin for the (admittedly fragile) reason that the deity’s request is to be sent there, “I am being kind to you ever since your youth, guiding you to wherever there is security. Yet when I request my gift, you do not give it to me. Now do transport a donation to Nahur, delivering this gift of mine about which I told you. That which in past days I have bestowed upon your [ancestors], I shall now bestow upon you. Whatever enemy that there is, I shall heap up under your feet, restoring your land to bounteous prosperity.” The deity’s attachment to Zimri-Lim’s cause, presumably even before he rose to kingship, is declared not just to give Zimri-Lim remorse for not sustaining his end of the bargain but also to impress on him the deity’s faithful support of the entire dynasty. Other documents listed in TABLES A and B do include prognostications that review a divinity’s previous support of Zimri-Lim (eg XXVI: 199, 233); but the expansion of the time-frame to moments before Zimri-Lim’s earthly existence seems to be a feature of prophecies launched beyond Mari’s sustained control. The two letters that Nur-Sin sent from Kallassu, somewhere near Aleppo, are excellent illustrations of the phenomenon.

When the Mari dossier on Alahtum and on Yamhad is fully published, we might explain more fully the phenomenon just mentioned. These two documents, however, are exceptional not only because they drive deeper into the past than others, but also for their call on norms of royal behavior that are elsewhere hardly matched in our dossier.

The two letters of Nur-Sin are obviously related to each other, in theme as well as in time of writing. A.1121+A.2731 is the longer, written in the form of a diplomat’s dispatch, where each of 4 blocks of information ends with *annītam bēlī lū idi*, “my lord should know this.” But as Nur-Sin opens it with “I have written as often as 5 times to my lord,” we know that this is not the first time that he broached the subjects of his missive: *zukurum* for Addu; *nihlatum* for Addu of Kallassu. A.1968, shaped as a normal letter that relay prophetic statements, is not about either of these subjects, but is certainly the original copy of the Addu of Halab prophecy that Nur-Sin cites right after defending his motivation for doing so (A.1121⁺: 34-45). We can be sure of its originality because Nur-Sin accompanied it with samples of hair and fringes taken from the *āpilum* who brought him the divine words. On this occasion, I shall turn to a harmony of the statements attributed to Addu of Kallassu and of Halab to comment on Nur-Sin’s role in shaping their contents.⁴⁹ It should be stated that Nur-Sin wrote A.1121⁺ initially

⁴⁶There is also the problem on how to understand the dative suffix in the idiom *šuttam āmurakkim*. Durand’s “J’ai eu un rêve qui te concerne” is a good possibility.

⁴⁷On having XXVI: 194 originate in Andarig, see XXVI: 414: 29-42, a letter Yasim-El sent Zimri-Lim from there,

Another matter; Atamrum the *āpilum* of Šamaš came here to tell me, “Send me a discreet scribe so that I could dictate the message that Šamaš has sent me for the king.” This is what he told me. I dispatched Utukam and he wrote this tablet. This man then had witnesses stand by and then told me, “Promptly send this tablet so that he could act according to what it says.” This is what he said to me.

For a ZL 10’ date, see F. Joannès’s comprehensive study of the Yasim-El’s dossier, XXVI/2, pp. 235-243. On statements by Šamaš, see D. Charpin, “Les décrets royaux à l’époque paléo-babylonienne,” *AfO* 34, 1987, 40ff.

⁴⁸On Nahur, see D. Charpin, XXVI/1, 117. Although controlled by a Mari garrison during most of Zimri-Lim reign and allocated to one or another of his vassal, Nahur cannot be regarded as a province of Mari. Hence my allocating XXVI: 217 to TABLE C.

⁴⁹An enormous literature has collected around A.1121⁺, and they are reviewed in the articles of Lafont and Durand, cited sub note 8 above. Add [re: A.1968], A. Malamat, “A New Prophetic Message from Aleppo and Its Biblical Counterparts,” pp. 236-241 in *Understanding Poets and Prophets. Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson*, A.G. Auld, ed. 1993. The weapons of Addu are mentioned in a letter of Sumu-Ila (A.1858) Durand has recently published (*MARI* 7, 1993, 53), “The

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because a certain Alpan had asked him, in the name of Zimri-Lim, to release animals for sacrifice to Addu (no doubt of Kallassu), and Nur-Sin was assuring his lord that he took measures, including the reading omens, to verify that the order was indeed Zimri-Lim's.

I. A.1121⁺ : 13-33

During the taking of omens, Addu, Lord of Kallassu is present, saying,

"Am I not Addu, Lord of Kallassu, who has raised him between my thighs and have restored him to his ancestral throne? Having restored him to his ancestral throne, I decided also to give him a dwelling place. Now since I restored him to his ancestral throne, I shall take from his household a property in perpetuity. If he does not hand (it) over, I – the lord of throne, land, and cities –, can take away what I have given.

But if it is otherwise, and he does hand over what I am requesting, I shall give him throne upon throne, household upon household, land upon land, city over city; I shall give him a territory, from its eastern to its western (corners).

This is what the *āpilū* said – with (Addu) remaining continuously there during the taking of omens. Now, moreover, an *āpilum* of Addu, Lord of Kallassu, is demanding the shrine at Alahtum as property in perpetuity. My lord should know this.

II. A.1121⁺ : 46-62

The *āpilum* of Addu, Lord of Halab, came here along with Abu-halim and told me the following :

Write to your lord, "Am I not Addu, Lord of Halab, who has raised you in my thigh/armpit and has restored you to your ancestral throne? Ought I not request something from you?

When a wronged person, male or female, appeals to you, be there to decide their case. This is what I want from you.

If you do what I have just written to you, paying heed to my word, I shall give you a country, from its eastern to its western (corners), as well as the land of [...]."

This is what the *āpilum* of Addu, Lord of Halab, told me in the presence of Abu-halim. My lord should know this.

III. A.1968

Abiya, *āpilum* of Addu of Halab came by to tell me,

Addu says, "I had given all the land to Yahdun-Lim and by means of my weapons, he had no opponent. But when he abandoned me, the land I gave him, I gave to Samsi-Addu. Then when Samsi-Addu... I wanted to bring you back. I brought you back to your father's throne and I handed you the weapons with which I battled against Sea. I rubbed you with oil from my numinous glow so that no one could stand up to you. Now listen to my only wish :

Whenever anyone appeals to you for judgment, saying, "I am aggrieved," be there to decide his case and to give him satisfaction. This is what I desire of you.

When you go out (to war), don't do so without consulting the omens. When it is I who stands at my omens, then proceed. If otherwise, don't come out of your door.

This is what the *āpilum* told me. Now then, I am sending my lord hair and garment fringe from the *āpilum*.

weapons of Addu of Aleppo have arrived here. I am storing them in the temple of Dagan of Terqa, and will do whatever my lord writes me." If related to the same event, and if Sumu-ila and Samu-ila, governor of Terqa before ZL 3', are the same, then we have a firm date before which to fix this correspondence. See also the remarks of Lafont, RA 78, 1984, 17.

Assuming, as explained above, that A.1968 (column III) was primary in delivering Addu of Halab's original *prophecy* (about which I shall return presently), and that column I (A.1211 : 13-33) is primary in containing Addu of Kallassu's original *omen-taking* that permitted Nur-Sin to release objects requested by this god, it can easily be noted that column II is a pastiche that draws on information from both. Nur-Sin has manipulated the demand for social justice that Addu of Halab has made of Zimri-Lim (A.1968 : 7'-10', *inūma mamman ša dīnim išassikkum ummami habtāku izizma dīnšu dīn išariš apulšu*) into a tighter, perhaps less personalized formulation (A.1121⁺ : 53-54, *inūma awīl hablum u habiltum išassikkum izizma dīnšunū dīn*). This is sandwiched between the two poles (positive/negative) of the argument presented in the omen-taking in the presence of Addu of Kallassu.

The invention of a new oracle by Addu of Halab by Nur-Sin is itself subtly promoted in Nur-Sin's *apologia* of A.1121⁺ : 34-45 which ostensibly was to be a coda for the discussion regarding the omens recovered under Addu of Kallassu's sponsorship ; but now it serves also as prologue to the new formulation of Addu of Halab's oracle. In that section Nur-Sin says "Formerly, when I lived in Mari, I would report to my lord whatever information an *āpilum* and *āpiltum* would tell me. Now that I am living in another land, should I not write to my lord what I hear or what they tell me?" So far, a *qal wahômer* argument, that is perfectly logical. But Nur-Sin continues, "If in the future there comes to be a misfortune of whatever sort, will my lord not say the following 'Why did you not write me the statement which the *āpilum* – while he is demanding your [ZL's] shrine – told you?' I have herewith written my lord. My lord should know this." This reference to territorial request is then transferred by Nur-Sin into his new formulation of Addu of Halab's prophecy.

I do not know whether the time lapse and/or the pressure of duty played havoc with Nur-Sin's memory of A.1968, with its Addu of Halab prophecy. This is perfectly possible, especially if Nur-Sin did not keep a copy (or draft) of the original. The only lesson I want to draw from this exercise is that A.1968 is the only legitimate vehicle for *an Addu of Halab oracle*. And why have I gone to this great length to argue this point? Because by removing from discussion the Addu of Halab oracle of A.1121⁺, with its promise to give Zimri-Lim land from East to West – a rather unlikely promise by a God of a potentially over-run country (Halab) but a perfectly reasonable one from the god of an Mari enclave (Kallassu) – we are left with a prognostication at once more modest (politically) but also more sophisticated (theosophically). The contrast is between utilitarian or pragmatic universalism (A.1121⁺) and rhetorical universalism (A.1968), where the call to history becomes the instrument of persuasion. As a god of a foreign land, Addu of Halab does not demand the gifts of beasts and servants that are commonly requested of Zimri-Lim in the documents of TABLE A and B. But Addu of Halab can appeal to the experience of past history that when properly observed can teach lessons on morality of power and the cost of its abuse. He can offer Zimri-Lim not more territory, but the authority of his weapon and the shield of his numinous glow by which to perpetuate his legitimacy and dynasty. (As they did when challenged by Yam.) Addu can also appeal to higher callings, sentiments that are by no means foreign to Mari ideology, but unlikely to surface readily in the masses of administrative and political documents. Addu can even urge the king not to make major moves without consulting him. This counsel is commonly met in Mari documents, stemming from many of its gods ; but the little notice that seems but an appendix – about not stepping out of the door – takes us back to TABLE A and the Mari's palace where, among the Mari elite women who sought to shield Zimri-Lim from harm's way, operated Šiptu, the princess who grew up worshipping the god of Halab, Addu.